

The Story begins Part one in November 1992 & December 10-14.

I'll come up with a title to this at some point, right now, there just isn't anything that fits! So, I'll just begin!

Over the course of the last 15 years people have said, "You should write a book". Well, that's a whole lot easier said than done! Those who write books know this from experience. I'm not one of those people. SO! I decided I would just start now and begin to journal it through this blog! Let's just see where it goes from here.

Chapter one:

The journey of being pastors of a wonderful congregation of people in Cocoa, Florida to starting a whole new ministry among the Native Americans in South Dakota actually during a missions trip Tim took in May of 1992. You would have to know Tim "intimately" to know he keeps most of what he is thinking and feeling to himself! So when he returned from the missions trip I had NO idea God had begun to speak to his heart about missions. We had just completed building a beautiful new facility and had a congregation who loved us very much! I, for one, was extremely happy and content where we were and doing what we were doing. After all, our son, daughter & grand daughter were there close to us and all was going and growing very well.

During a Sunday night service, actually, the Sunday night following Thanksgiving 1992, we had a missionary friend Dennis Preston scheduled to share his missions story. But before Dennis began sharing about his and Martha's new ministry as Assembly of God Home Missionaries to the Native Americans, he got side tracked telling us of a place called "Pine Ridge Reservation" in South Dakota. It was a tale of poverty, depression, murder, suicide, desperate for the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared and on and on and on. The fact that the Assemblies of God had tried to get a missionary on Pine Ridge for over forty years. A sad situation to be sure; but there are many of those stories told by many and most all Missionaries when they share in your services. The service was a good service. I enjoyed it as I did "most" all our services. We cried with through the stories and laughed at Dennis humor and had a good night blessing him and ready to send him on his journey. As we usually did following a service with visiting ministers, we took Dennis to eat following the service. I could actually take you to the exact spot at the Village Inn in Titusville, Florida where we were sitting enjoying a nice meal, Tim, myself and Dennis. During the conversation between Dennis and Tim, as I sat eating minding my own business and letting them talk, Dennis stopped, looked at Tim and said, "Pastor, you sound like you might be interested in Pine Ridge". And to my sheer SHOCK I heard Tim reply "I think I am". To this I stopped, looked at him and asked, "You think you am WHAT"? He looked at me and said we would talk about it later!

On Monday following that "insightful Sunday night", Tim and I discussed the fact that the Holy Spirit had begun to deal with his heart about missions while in Mexico that May of 1992. He shared how the Holy Spirit awakened him around daylight and asked him "Would you leave where I have blessed you and come to a place like this?" He and several men of the church had been ministering all week in a desolate, depressed area in the mountain area of Mexico.

As he tells it, he could only cry because he couldn't immediately answer a hearty "YES" to the question the Holy Spirit had asked of him. His room mate, Izzy Irizzary our worship leader at Cocoa First Assembly awakened and stated "Pastor, the Holy Spirit is in here". Tim replied, "Yes, I know". Izzy spent the next half hour or more worshipping and praising the Lord as Tim wept and pondered the question the Holy Spirit had posed to him.

Now, what exactly am I suppose to say to a story like that? I sat and thought. How do I deal with this. I SURE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE OUR CHURCH and all those we love as family and MY ministry. I have a beautiful home, our daughter, son and grand daughter are here. My friends are all here and in the Florida area. And WHERE IS PINE RIDGE SOUTH DAKOTA anyway? After thinking this all over for a day or so I came up with this idea. Now for several years I had been working diligently to get us out of debt (as I am the bookkeeper of the family). We finally had gotten to where we owed nothing. We had a house payment and utilities and car payment and the usual. Other than the norm we were out of debt and growing a savings account. Now we had some money saved and I thought, *"why not take a trip to South Dakota and check this place called Pine Ridge Reservation out and get this out of Tim's heart and mind"*.

On Thursday, December 10, 1992 we got on a Continental air liner bound for Rapid City, SD via Denver, CO. Here you had two people who rarely got out of Florida except to go to Greenville, NC to visit Tim's family. We raced across the airport in Denver just in time to get on a thirteen passenger plane headed for Rapid City, South Dakota! WHAT A RIDE! This being only my "second" time to get on a plane and here we sit on a thirteen seat passenger "plane" flying along the Rocky Mountains with winds blowing ninety to nothing! We left Orlando International Airport where there are people buzzing around like busy bees to land in Rapid City Regional with MAYBE three dozen people in all in the place. We walk outside to six foot snow drifts on either side of us and wide open spaces! Never had either of us ever seen anything like what we had come to that long week end.

We picked up a rental car, Rent a Wreck, and began our journey. Missionary Dennis Preston told us of some friends he had made, Sonny & Mary Schriener, who owned a motel in Custer, SD and we might could stay there for little or nothing. Now December in Custer, SD, there are "very few tourist" and plenty of motel rooms. The Schriener's were so generous and let us stay at their place at no cost.

On our way to Custer, we HAD to go past Mount Rushmore. Now you have to understand, Tim had rented a video of South Dakota and the views they had of Mount Rushmore were like you could see them from miles and miles away. NOT! I thought we were never going to find the Mountain, and THEN! There it was! Mount Rushmore, a herd of deer and US! The ONLY hot blooded things within miles of Mt. Rushmore! What a sight! It was truly breathtaking, our first view of the Mountain with the faces on it! We toured around Mt. Rushmore that Thursday afternoon then headed to Custer to find our room.

On Friday morning December 11th before daylight we got on the road, with map in hand, and headed to Pine Ridge Reservation! We had no idea where we were going or what exactly we were doing. Since we've decided God sends people on "Vision Trips" and this is what we were on. At least Tim was! I just wanted him to see this place, get over it and go home to what we were doing. To what we 'knew' and to our friends and family.

On our way to Pine Ridge that dark COLD December morning, we got behind a little VW Bug going extremely 'slow'. Now we were on a "mission". We were headed 'somewhere' and here we were being slowed down by some local person puttering down the road. SUD-DENLY! The VW in front of us came to a near stop. "What on earth are these people doing" was our thought. As we watched the car very slowly make it's way "down" a near 12-16 inch drop off, we thought, "DON'T CURSE YOUR ANGEL". God put that "local" driver in front of us to keep us from tearing that poor rental car to pieces flying down a road we were not familiar with to a place we had never been, reading a map in the DARK! So we continued the journey in a bit of a slower pace. Taking in what we saw by moonlight then as the sun arose on the vast Prairies! What a beautiful sight!

We drove through the Black Hills and was overwhelmed with it's beauty. In the winter with snow on the evergreens photos made looked as though they had been shot in black and white. Being from Florida, we had never seen such a beautiful sight. And for me, I had never really seen snow, at least none in these amounts. I had never seen deer in such numbers or ever an antelope. Of course the song immediately came to mind, "Home, Home on the range, where the deer and the antelope play..." we were in awe. We found Highway 18 going East and headed toward Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. After a drive of fifteen miles or so, we came to the sign declaring we were about to enter the Pine Ridge Reservation, a nation within a nation. It's own Tribal Laws, it's own police and very, very few white people as we were soon to realize. We stopped and made pictures and wondered what it was we were about to experience.

We drove the vastness of the open plains seeing smatterings of old house trailers, run down houses and dodging stray dogs. We drove through the community of Oglala, then number 4 (as we have always known it) and then into Pine Ridge where we stopped at the one and only place we found, 'Big Bats Conoco Station'. There you could fill your gas tank have a one of the BEST sub sandwiches or chicken strips, coffee, and JoJo's. We did learn to love to hang out at Big Bats with a good cup of coffee, spit a sub sandwich and an order of JoJo's.

We felt very 'intimidated' being the only white faces among a vast room of Native Americans. You could 'feel' they were NOT impressed with our presence and it didn't take me long to realize I didn't quite fit in this place. We made our purchases and headed toward "White Clay" just across the state line of SD and Nebraska. There where more alcohol is sold than Omaha and Lincoln Nebraska combined. You have to understand, Shannon County, the whole of Pine Ridge Reservation, is a "dry county" meaning they aren't allowed to SELL alcohol on the reservation, thus all who consume this drug of choice fill this little spot across the state line to purchase alcohol and all those who 'bootleg' it to the surrounding communities of Pine Ridge. It was so, so, so very cold and there were 55 gallon drums dotting the landscape with a burning fire for those trying to stay warm. Many were lying on the sidewalks huddled together trying to stay warm. Others just walking and wondering around with no place to go. Once we moved and began our ministry on Pine Ridge, we learned more and more of the lives and families of those who frequented White Clay. We drove through, made our "U-Turn" and headed on down highway 18 to see more of Pine Ridge Reservation.

From White Clay we traveled highway 18 east. Once spotting the signs we turned back north toward Wounded Knee going through Porcupine. We made our first stop ever at Wounded Knee. Neither of us knew much of anything about Pine Ridge, Wounded Knee or even South Dakota for that matter. There we learned just a little of the story of the "Massacre at Wounded Knee" and some of the history of the atrocities that took place against the Sioux People. We left there, after a short stop because it was December and cold. We traveled on across the reservation seeing the poverty and the pain in so many faces.

We left Pine Ridge headed back to Custer and the warmth of our room. But it took us a while to get back as we thought we would take a "short cut" through Custer State Park. Not too smart for two people who had never been in the area before. It was darker than we had ever known and were as lost as we could be. Thank God HE was watching out for us and kept all the wild life, especially the Bison (or Buffalo) off the roads. We finally arrived back at the motel near 10p.m. worn out and brain weary. We had a lot to absorb from our day of travels through the reservation.

After spending the day at Pine Ridge and all its poverty, and the sense of despair in every face we saw, Tim decided to take me to Rapid City where we found a huge craft fare at the convention center. This sure helped my mental state greatly UNTIL we looked outside and saw the snow begin to fall. Tim began to nudge me to finish my looking and let's get back on the road back to Custer. Now for two Floridians, driving in snow was certainly nothing we were cut out for. I finally gave up my looking and reluctantly headed to the car. Headed back south on Highway 16 a young man driving a Jeep came speeding around us. Tim's remark, "wonder if we'll see him off the road somewhere". Sure enough, we come around a curve and there he and his vehicle were on their side. We "crawled" back all the way to Custer in blinding snow! Once arriving we got in our room and watched the snow fall, and fall and fall some more. Later in the evening, we ventured out to the Taco John's next door. What a sight, I had never seen snow so thick, so beautiful. It formed the most perfect shape on all flat surfaces. I can't explain it. You would have to see it for yourself if you've never seen it before. It was amazing and so much fun. It was so dry though we couldn't make snow balls at all. We trotted around until we were nearly frozen. After a good nights sleep, we awoke to a "Winter Wonderland", something we had NEVER seen before. We were 'snowed in'. We had experienced our first (of many in our future) blizzard! We stayed in our room until mid afternoon until I was about to go stir crazy. We ventured out to find food at the Wrangler Motel where we enjoyed a nice warm meal. Later that night we went into town and found Tortilla Flats. It was then while trying to choke down a hamburger that through tears I told Tim "I can't do this. I can't move out here. If you make me do this I'll backslide, die and go to hell". I truly felt that way. I'm a people person. We knew NO one and there was NO work started and we couldn't live on Pine Ridge (which was a relief to me at the moment). And I had NO idea what would be required to do what Tim was looking at doing. He patiently and lovingly looked at me and said, "I'm not going to make you do this". We finished eating, went back to our room. Awoke EARLY Monday morning December 14th to drive back to Rapid City and catch our flight back to Denver and then on to Orlando and home to Cocoa, Florida and our church family and our children. I thought surely Tim would forget Pine Ridge and the feelings he had for the people there and return to continue loving and ministering to those who meant so much to us. I thought surely God would understand and move on the heart of someone else to go to those poor souls on Pine Ridge. Surely HE wouldn't require of me to leave what I knew and where I was content and comfortable. Surely He would understand. Surely He would.

PART TWO

We arrived back in Cocoa on Monday late. Up early on Tuesday to get ready for our annual Ladies Christmas Party. It was a time I so looked forward to. We had, as I best remember, about 125 women at the party. We brought cookies to exchange and gifts for our (as I remember it being called then) Chinese Gift Exchange. By now, we had done this for several years and we had quite a number of people who brought hand made gifts and by this year there were some people were ready to "fight" over! The one that was the greatest hit was brought by Roxanne Mette. She had brought a wooden cut out of a Christmas Stocking with a doll head "hand painted". It was adorable and everyone wanted it. But there were so many others that were "swapped" around a pretty good bit. The first person (who always became the last to pick) had her choice! It was a great time and we always loved those get together. I wasn't ready to give those great times up to start all over again. It seemed every time we moved with the Lord in a new ministry (which was not all that many times, this was our third move) it looked like a "back ward step". Course HE always brought us back and more every time he moved us. But this move He was asking of us was way more than just starting over. It was leaving EVERYTHING and going to a "foreign" place; and so far from everyone we loved, knew and cared about.

Chapter two:

We had our Christmas parties and our GRAND Christmas Banquet, the largest ever! Those two were highlights of our ministry at Cocoa First. Then came the New Year and somewhere in the month of January 1993 I was making our bed one morning and all this was going on and on in my mind. SO! I stopped making the bed, picked up the phone and called our "home pastor's wife" Myra Railey. She and Crawford were still in Panama City, Florida at St. Andrew Assembly of God. I called her KNOWING she would understand what I was facing and would surely agree Tim was just going through "something" and to give him time and he would get over it and we could get on with our ministry. Well, I made the call, shared what was going on in tears when she STOPPED me in mid sentence and said, "Elaine, you know if the Lord is telling Tim to make this move, then you have to be willing to move". THAT WAS NOT WHAT I WANTED TO HEAR! I 'suddenly' ended THAT conversation, hung the phone up, not so gently, and declared standing there by the bed with a pillow in hand "GOD, I AM NOT GOING TO PINE RIDGE AND YOU ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE ME!" And seeing as how it is now 17 years or so later and I am writing this, HE did NOT strike me with a lightning bolt. I had learned many years before that God knows and sees the heart so you might as well not try and 'gloss anything over' or hide anything from Him! So I didn't. AND He stepped back and did NOT make me do anything. Now, have you (if you are a true follower of Jesus and know him intimately and know his prompting and leading and voice) ever had him just 'step back and leave you alone'? I for one can tell you that is a hard place to be!

Now, this is January, NO one knows the turmoil I am going through except Tim and God. I have NO one to talk with. I couldn't share my fears, my confusion, my turmoil. And God wasn't doing a whole lot of talking to me either. I was stewing in my own thoughts and they were constant. I continued my long days at the church office. I planned meetings, worked on the music ministry. Hey we were pastors of a church bouncing around 400 and 500, three

Children's Churches, three Nurseries, a going strong Youth group, a strong Men's and Women's ministry. Weddings every time I turned around and LOVED DOING and a worship team of nearly forty! This was a "preachers dream church". We had volunteers all over the place and everyone loved us (well pretty much everyone) and I was loving my ministry and we were all like family! I was closer to those folk than my blood family. I and a couple friends planned our "annual Sweetheart's night out". This particular year we pulled together an "Elvis" impersonator, one of our worship team members Jack who looked and sang just like Elvis, and Earl who sang just like one of the Temptations. This was at the Cocoa Beach Country Club where 50 couples came. It was a time to remember! Then we Celebrated Easter and immediately began putting final plans on our annual Mother/Daughter Banquet. This too was always a great hit from the very first one we did. The men always did the cooking, serving and most of the cleaning. Summer came with all the weddings then it was time to prepare for Thanksgiving and Christmas again. And through all this I was experiencing panic attacks with severe chest pains, with no one to talk to. So somewhere in all this during the month of September 1993 there was a Pow Wow at the community college. Of course Tim wanted to go so we went and it was so, so hot! I left Tim and took our little grand daughter Alexis home where it was cooler and let Tim visit. Close to four o'clock that Saturday afternoon it was time for Lexy and I go pick up her Papa. We left the house, and while sitting at the traffic light at Michigan Ave. and Clear Lake Road there in Cocoa I heard the Holy Spirit 'whisper' in my heart, "Have I ever called Tim to do something that I didn't prepare the way and prosper the work?" I KNEW IT WAS TIME TO GIVE IN. We picked Tim up and I remember we went to eat Bar B Que at Fat Boys in Rockledge just south of where we lived. I told Tim there, "if you really think this is what God is wanting you to do, then let's do it". I went home with a happy man!

A few days later I was vacuuming our living room. Suddenly I was NOT in my living room, I was standing in a vastness of Blue/Gray and standing in front of me close enough to see his face only there was a Native Man with chin length hair, dark tormented eyes with a tortured look on his face. This man was standing there and behind him were two other men which I could not see their faces. This man close to me that I could see pointed his finger at me and said "YOU WOULDN'T COME". And just as suddenly, I was in my living room stricken with the thought, "I'm not going to stand in eternity before God and this or these men are going to stand before me knowing they were going to hell because I couldn't or wouldn't leave what I loved to share Jesus with them". I sat down on the hearth of the NEW fireplace and cried.

By the time Tim contacted the U.S. Home Missions Department at the National Office in Springfield, Missouri and they got the 'very large' application for 'each of us'. It around November. Almost a year from the Sunday Missionary Dennis Preston was at the church and all this business about Pine Ridge Reservation began. We began the application. I forget how many questions A LOT I do remember and each question required nearly a page answer (typed). Now this is still before "computers" for us. It was write it out for Tim and then I decipher and type and the same for me since I didn't have spell check or auto correct! This while still pastors of a very large congregation and getting ready for another packed out Christmas Banquet. We got the application done and in the mail back to U. S. Home Missions in Springfield close to the end of December 1993. NOW, you have to know this part in order to understand my thinking.

We knew "Interviews" were held in February and September back then. Now we are just getting our application in first of January since the National Office was closed a week for the holidays. OK, the don't get this till January, February is rapidly approaching so we are most likely NOT going to make the deadline for those Interviews SO, we won't get scheduled until September 1994. And we will need at least till the first of 1995 before we resign. It takes on average two to two and a half years to raise a budget (whatever that was) so we're looking at most likely end of 1997 or 1998 before we are even ready to go to Pine Ridge and SURELY JESUS WILL COME BY THEN! I had it ALL figured out!

Well, sometime in MID JANUARY 1994 Tim receives a call from U.S. Home Missions and they want us in Springfield for an "Interview" and they want us to arrive February 4th 1994 for the following week meetings. WHAT? YOU MUST BE KIDDING! How are we going to pull this off? They JUST got our application. How on earth could they read through BOTH our apps this rapidly? Surely Tim got his facts wrong! But NO! We were expected in Springfield on February 4th and plan to be there all the next week! SO! We tell our church board and secretary and church we are going on a Missions Trip. NO LIE! So we book flights and head to Springfield, Missouri on February 4th and off we go!

We arrived in Springfield, MO sometime late afternoon on the fourth where we were picked up and taken to our motel. We unpacked, then headed to headquarters to meet some of the other missionary candidates. We had a relaxing Saturday and Sunday then hit the road EARLY on Monday morning. We all met for breakfast then meetings, meetings and more meetings. One lady who was especially helpful to us was Faith H. she helped us figure out where, and when we were suppose to be in a meeting. A lot of that week is a real blurr as it was NOT what I was expecting. If memory serves me, I think we were scheduled to meet with the Home Missions Committee on Wednesday or Thursday. Monday flew past and then it was Tuesday. We arrived and was somewhere in AG headquarters when Faith found us and said a couple who were scheduled for their interview didn't show so would we like to take their time slot. My response, "well, I didn't come dressed to meet the big guys"; but we agreed to meet at 1p.m. with the committee. Now understand, I thought we were there JUST TO MEET THEM for just an "interview". We arrived in this large conference room at a table surrounded by all these "important" people. I do remember the head of the US Home Missions Department Charles H. was not there because he had come down with something. But everyone else who was anyone with Home Missions was there!

I have to say this meeting for me was very 'intimidating'. I still wasn't sure about this "call" and all the change. I was sure Tim was going to change his mind. But up to this minute everything was still the same and here we were to share with this group "why" we "wanted" to go to Pine Ridge.

We sat down, and Brother Kessler, who was the Intercultural Department Head at that time. He looked at me, leaned back in his chair, crossed his arms and said directly to me "Delores, (and first of all NO one ever calls me by my first name)! Delores, tell us, just why are you here today. Now, I'm sitting there thinking, I have NO idea! So I figured, girl you can be 'spiritual' and LIE or just TELL THE TRUTH. Well, I know the truth always comes out so just go for it! I began with, "Well, I've been married to Tim for 24 years (at that time) and I if I am

going to stay married to him, I have to go to Pine Ridge"! And from there whatever was coming out of my mouth I don't recollect other than I felt "Oh Tim is going to be so very upset cause these folk are going to figure 'this girl is NOT ready for this" and then life was going to be pretty tough. Course for me either way I figured, was going to be "pretty tough".

The committee then turned to Tim and asked him the same question and he touched their heart with his heart felt call! I can't remember what all he said because I was still trying to get over my part of the interview. Tim finished and I was ready to get out of that room WHEN Faith H. spoke up and said "This is not usually the course of action for our committee; but I think perhaps we should go ahead and take a vote on accepting this couple as Nationally Appointed Home Missionaries to Pine Ridge Reservation". I thinking WHAT??? Now the normal course of action is, you meet with the committee, share your heart, leave, they vote and then they contact you no later than the end of March. "WHAT JUST HAPPENED" is flooding my thoughts and my heart began to pound like mad. I just knew they could see it beat! Within a couple minutes I hear all those in favor of this couple becoming NA Home Missionaries raise your hand, EVERYONE RAISED THEIR HAND! So all smiles they shake our hands and congratulate us and give us their encouragement and inform us we are now to put together a BUDGET and have photos made for Prayer Cards. My head is swirling, what is a Budget for and why do we need prayer cards. This was not soaking in!

We walked out of that conference room and looked at one another and I asked Tim, "What just happened?" His reply "I think we are now Notionally Appointed Home Missionaries with the Assemblies of God to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation!" OK, what does that mean? It meant, we go to the motel and TRY and figure out how much we are going to need to raise to get to the field! How much do we need to raise, HOW DO WE KNOW? We've never done this before? Who do we talk with, we have NO idea. Now since that time, Home Missions has figured out a budget for Missionaries being appointed and set that budget for you; but in 1994 they didn't do that. So now we are back at the motel trying to figure out how much money we are going to need each month for living allowance and work budget? Somehow after a lot of praying, we came as close as we could think of and had it ready to turn in.

Now on Thursday we were to come in "dressed" for our photo opt for pictures for Prayer Ministry Cards. That was fun I must admit. They came up with some good pictures and we settled on one and off we went to have cards made to have on hand when we started our "deputation" (raising our money to go on the field).

On Friday we all met together for a wonderful banquet where we sat with Brother Kessler at his table. It was then he shared with me his wife gave 'almost' the same answer the same question as I when it was posed to her. So I should feel ok. It seems many Missionary wives have that first feeling about the call to missions.

OK somewhere in all these meetings I can't remember when exactly; but a night meeting, we all met with Brother Charles H. and it was then he informed us as National Missionaries we were to go home and get prepared to begin our budget raising. Understand this point, The Assemblies of God must recognize you as Missionaries and then they give you "authority" to

contact churches in order to raise your "budget" that will get you onto the Missions Field. Thank the Lord for Speed The Light that provided all Missionaries who make request a Speed The Light Vehicle. We went to Brother H. and explained, we can't go home and "just resign our church". During those days, they published photos of newly appointed missionaries. We requested they hold off on us in the Pentecostal Evangel until we could tell our congregation. His response, "Well, you need to do it quickly". Easier said than done when you've developed a "family with your congregation" and you have many things scheduled that you are responsible for! Saturday morning we caught our flight and headed HOME to Cocoa, Florida to our Church Family wondering HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO THIS NOW?

We arrived back to Cocoa on Saturday, February 12th 'trying' to get ready for Sunday's service. We had a lot on our minds. Many details to work out. Main one being when and how do we tell our church family? How do we work out this budget issue? How do we get services scheduled to raise this budget? A lot to get figured out and get it all worked out. We're back just a few days to be ready for our annual "Sweet Hearts Night Out" and this one this year was going to be a BIG one.

February 14th arrives and we are ready for our annual big night. This was always a "SWEETHEARTS ONLY" night. This year we booked the Cocoa Beach Country Club and had our "Elvis Impersonator" Jack S. He is awesome and from what we know, he began a regular "Elvis Show" in Orlando. He was awesome as well as Earl W. who sang "ONLY YOU"! Sandy C. and Sally S. were great helps with getting Jack into his "costume". Now we're working on NO budget. What we paid as couples was for the use of the facilities and the great meal. We had an awesome night and it, again, was a huge success.

We got through February and then came March. We knew we had to begin to let the church know what God was calling us to do. Now dates on all this are a little sketchy for me. I do know our Sunday to tell the Congregation was March 27, 1994. So I'm thinking Tim and I took our head board member and his wife to dinner sometime the weekend maybe before and let them know. We had all four been very close friends for a very long time. He had been the board member Tim spoke with when we first went to Cocoa First in 1984. We felt we had to talk with them face to face first. Then Tim scheduled a board meeting and asked the wives to come. Tim told the board, then all came out and the wives were told. We asked that no one discuss this outside of the board and wives so Tim could let our Youth Pastor, Children's Pastors and Associates know. I had worked for so many years so closely with out worship team, I didn't want them hearing this "cold turkey" on Sunday morning, so we planned a big Bar b Que at our house on Friday night the 25th. This was the HARDEST meeting for me. We were all so very close especially our lead key board-est Sandy. Needless to say, this was one of the hardest weekends we were going to face.

Sunday morning March 27th came way too quickly. I was sick getting up that morning. I knew this was going to be a "shock" to our congregation. We were FAMILY and this was a hard thing to do. No matter you know it's from the Lord, it is still a hard thing resigning to a group that you have loved a long time.

Sunday morning March 27, 1994 came way too fast for both of us. FIRST though, I forgot that somewhere during the week Tim talked with the board about 11p.m. one night he decided to tell our son David about the changes coming into our lives. Let me say, it was not a good thing! David came running into our bedroom (I was already in bed reading) he was screaming and his face was blood red. He was screaming "Dad is crazy, Dad doesn't know what he's doing, Mom, you have to stop him"! Well, at 'that' point in time, I was pretty much in agreement with David! I still wasn't any too happy to be leaving the greatest part of our lives either. David had told me when he was about ten years old that his plans were to 'never' leave home. And to this day, he pretty much hasn't. That story comes in way later though.

OK, back to Sunday morning. We made it through worship and Tim began his message. Somewhere in that message he NEVER actually said the words "Resign". It was something of a dialogue of "change". I remember our friend (and Elvis impersonator) Jack said his wife leaned over to him somewhere in the message and asked him "did pastor Tim just resign"? His response was "I think he did"! Needless to say, there were lots of tears and hugs following the service. The next few months were busy, time consuming and hard! Our last Sunday would be June 26, 1994.

In April 1994 we took a "fact finding trip" to Pine Ridge so the church would know more of what we were doing. OH just brought back a memory of 1993. August of 1993 we rented a car to go to General Council/Vacation in Minneapolis where I suffered with chest pains and high blood pressure all throughout the meetings from the stress of the changes coming and having NO one to share all of it with. We made ONE more trip out to Pine Ridge with long time friends Pastors Ed & Barbara. Tim promised we'd go back home via Colorado but that didn't happen. The four of us were going to stay a few days when Ed received an emergency call that his dad had been hospitalized and they had to head back to Minneapolis. We continued on taking another day through Pine Ridge Reservation. Had been nearly a year since our first visit there and my feelings had NOT changed at all. We did take a cool trip back through Branson, Missouri where it was hotter than all get out. Whew! General Council comes during the HOT-TEST time of the year no matter where you are! That trip, we put 5,400 miles on that rental car!

OK back to 1994! April we flew back out to SD on a fact finding trip. Didn't find out many more facts than we had in 1992 and 1993! Nothing had changed, the poverty, the squallier, the oppression and depression, nothing had changed. Alcohol still ran rampant, children were hungry, grand mothers were raising way too many grand children. We shared on Sunday morning at a Wesleyan Church in Pine Ridge Village. That was quite an experience, way different from what I was use to. Met some very nice people. The pastors had been at the church for nearly 30 years. They had raised quite a number of native children. We stayed just over the week end then returned back to Cocoa on Monday.

That May we celebrated our last Mother/Daughter Banquet with an Italian Theme. It was as all our others, a great success. Sunday, June 26th came way too fast for me, our last Sunday as Pastors of Cocoa First Assembly of God.

Chapter three:

Tim had begun calling and setting up services in our district, Peninsular Florida, as soon as our resignation was announced. Tim had served our section for a number of years as the Assistant Presbyter, for those who have no clue what I'm talking about. In the Assemblies of God we have a National Office in Springfield, Missouri with a General Superintendent. Then states have District Superintendents. Each District then is divided by sections who have a Presbyter, Assistant Presbyter and secretary/treasurer, we were in section five of the Peninsular Florida District and Tim was the Assistant Presbyter for a number of years and the duties of the Assistant Presbyter is to schedule Missionary services with section pastors. So, now he was calling Pastors to schedule services as well as the District helped schedule some services. Our phone bill was close to \$400 a month just calling and trying to reach Pastors. We always knew, if you could get past the Pastor's Secretary, you had a chance. We truly appreciated Pastor's secretaries because most were good at protecting the pastor especially pastors of large congregations. But it sure was a learning experience in scheduling services.

We had our FIRST deputation service July 3, 1994. Tim had us scheduled in Hudson, Florida on the west coast of Florida for Sunday morning and Palm Bay, Florida on the east coast of Florida in the evening. What a trip! After ten years of service at Cocoa First Assembly, the church board and congregation voted to purchase a 32 foot motor home for us to travel in and live in when we got to South Dakota as long as necessary. When we resigned and held our last service there were some 400 to 500 in attendance with the purchase of the remainder of the ten acres the church sat on paid in full and a savings account of \$139,000.00 in the bank. God had blessed the church in all ways and our church family blessed us going out. Almost 2/3 of our monthly support came from individuals of Cocoa First AG. That we were so thankful for as well as those who partnered with us as we traveled and shared our vision.

Our first weekend of deputation we came up \$250 short of our weekly budget. On our way home from Palm Bay Victory Assembly of God, I remember looking out the window of the motor home weeping as the rain fell thinking "God, what are we going to do?" Monday was the 4th of July. We had a cook out with our Daughter, her husband and our grand daughter (we kept our Grand daughter, Alexis, nearly EVERY weekend). I made it through the day and then Tuesday it was time for Tim to start making phone calls again for services. That afternoon Tim went out to get the mail. In the box there were two pieces of mail. One had been forwarded to us from a lady in Potato Creek, South Dakota on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The other from a dear pastor friend Karl Strader. Tim read the first weeping all the while desiring so much to be able to go to SD RIGHT THEN. Then he opened the other from Carpenter's Home Church in Lakeland, Florida & Pastor Karl. In "that" letter, Pastor Karl had written us a personal letter telling us he had great confidence in our call. He said, although their missions budget had been set and designated, he wanted to sow seed into our call and thus sent a check in the amount of \$500. WOW, HOW GOD MET THE NEED OF OUR \$250 SHORT FALL WITH \$250 IN RESERVE! How much more could God confirm what HE had called us to!

July 1994 through June 1995 was like living in a whirl wind. God truly blessed us with services pretty much every weekend except holidays. In October of 1994 we went back to Cocoa First to perform a wedding. That was a difficult thing to do. We had been a part of the church family for ten years. We had been there when babies were born, when loved ones went to be with the Lord and graduations, weddings any and all aspects of peoples lives. Going back

into the church where a lot of blood, sweat, joys, tears every emotion one could have had been experienced just flooded us both with memories. There were lots of hugs and tears and "Oh Pastor, are you sure about this" questions. Our lives and that of our two children's were wrapped up so much in this body of believers. Although we knew there was NO going back, it still brought thoughts of, "did we do the right thing?"

A few days following that wedding and all those memories, Tim found himself lying on the floor of our grand daughter's bedroom of our house crying out to God for confirmation AGAIN that we had done the right thing. We were hurting so much and missing our church family.

Not long after that time of crying out for confirmation again, Tim received a phone call from his mother in North Carolina. She was about to move to a smaller place and needed to get rid of years of "stuff". While cleaning out a dresser drawer that was Tim's Dad's she came across a address/phone book from back in the 1940's when his mom and dad lived in Los Angeles, California. She began looking through book and on first glance there was nothing in there when suddenly she saw in the middle of the book where Mr. Harris had written "Holy Rosary Mission Pine Ridge, South Dakota" and NOTHING ELSE. So, she called Tim asking him again exactly where it was he was going in South Dakota and did he know anything about Holy Rosary Mission. His interest was suddenly peeked. How did his mom know of Holy Rosary and why was she asking?

He told his mom that Holy Rosary Mission is now Red Cloud School on Pine Ridge Reservation. WHY was she asking. She told him the story of the "little book" and he asked her to PLEASE HOLD ONTO IT FOR HIM. Talk about confirmation!

In February 1995 we were in North Carolina to share our vision to the Assembly of God in Greenville and visit with his mom. We will NEVER forget standing in his mom's living room and Tim holding that book that his dad had written in in the 1940's the very place the Lord was calling him to go to now in 1992!

Tim's dad was an alcoholic pretty much all of Tim's life and to have this little book with Pine Ridge Reservation written in his dad's handwriting knowing God had called him, Tim, to go and carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the people there was a bit overwhelming.

While glancing through the "little book" Tim came to the back and there, written in his handwriting when he was a first grader most likely, was his name. Here is this "little book" with nothing written in it but what his dad had written probably when Tim was just a couple years old and his name, TIMOTHY. I looked at Tim and said "God had you sign a contract when you were probably 6 years old to go to Pine Ridge some forty years later when the Assemblies of God were wanting someone to go to Pine Ridge. How much more can God do to give you a "confirmation of HIS call in your lives". AMAZING! Tim keeps that little book in his Bible always. When life gets hard, we both remember the Calling to come to South Dakota first to Pine Ridge Reservation.

