

 MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD SERIES

THE
HEFLINS
in
Costa Rica



BETTYE WHITE WILSON



THE HEFLINS

IN

COSTA RICA

Bettye White Wilson, 1932 -

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Frances and Duane Heflin - 1999

The Dedication

**In loving memory of our godly mothers
and deacon fathers,**

Robert and Mattie Heflin

Delma and Aline Marshall

Honor to our lovely children

Robert Marshall Heflin

David Duane Heflin

Charlotte Ann Heflin Hudler

Darla Gayle Heflin Moore

Gena Kay Heflin Easterling

grandchildren and great grandchildren,

whom we pray will forever follow in His footsteps.

Duane and Frances Heflin

Acknowledgments

We are deeply indebted to the Duane Heflin Family for providing information used in this book. The first hand accounts are the basis for the story of two people who have given their lives in service to the Lord in foreign missions—in the country of Costa Rica. Their children have been a vital part of the work as they grew up on the field and continue to contribute to the ministry by being supportive of their parents in many ways. Their stories of growing up on the mission field adds much to the enjoyment of the book. The Heflin Family has written the book—I have just arranged their stories for you to enjoy.

The Heflins are still very active missionaries in spite of the fact their status is retired. They are retired in word only, and one look at their schedule reveals their enthusiasm for the work.

Thank you, Bro. Duane and Mrs. Frances for inspiring us with your dedication and being an example of what can be done when lives are under the direction and guidance of the Lord.

When the manuscript was completed, Bro. Danny Pope, editor of the *Baptist Progress*, started the process to complete another missions book. He lent his hand and expertise to the project as long as possible. We remember his work and readiness to make other books possible. Although he is gone, we have memories of his work and ministry in this area. Since Bro. Pope was unable to complete the book, we thank Dian Pope for her work to help the book become a reality.

Thanks to the Women's Missionary Auxiliary of Texas who provided for the printing of missions books by establishing a Revolving Book Fund, many years ago.

I praise the Lord for giving us such awesome opportunities to touch the lives of others by sharing how He works, through whom He works, and how mighty are His works!

Bettye White Wilson

Chapter 1

Early Life

Robert Duane Heflin was born April 25, 1930. His mother was Mattie James and his father, Robert Heflin. They lived near Hollis, Oklahoma. His sister, Maudie Miree, was older than he; brother, James Orville, and sister, Nannie Jorene, were younger.

He was born into a Christian home, and his family attended a Baptist church. His father's father, James Gilbert Heflin, was a descendent from Heflin, Alabama. He gave a plot of land on the corner of his farm north of Hollis for the Baptist church building. His mother's father, Fred Alexander James, also from Alabama, was an active member of the Baptist church. Duane's father was a deacon of the church that later ordained Duane to preach in May, 1950.

Duane's parents were strong leaders of this farm community and worked hard on their farm. They lived

ten miles north of Hollis and operated a small dairy. They lived by the Bible, were hospitable, and often entertained the preachers and pastors of their country church. The ministers lived in other communities and came on certain Saturdays and Sundays to preach. The Heflins were compassionate neighbors, ready to help when people around them were in need.

Duane was called "Duke" by his family. He started to school in 1936 and graduated from Ron High School in 1948. Each year of high school he entered his animals, fruits, and vegetables from the farm in the county and state fairs to be judged. He won many blue ribbons. He was a very active member of the 4-H club and regularly won trips to the State Fair in Oklahoma City. Under the watchful eye of an interested county agricultural agent, soon he became a judge of animals. While many were interested in different sports, his interest was agriculture, animal husbandry, and related fields. He enjoyed riding horses. He got up before daylight to milk cows before he went to school. The farm afforded many responsibilities. Besides milking cows and attending other animals, there were crops to plant and harvest, tractors to drive, cotton to hoe or pull, storm cellars to build, fences to mend, and a thousand other chores.

He tells of one time when he and his younger brother were supposed to be working with their daddy but began playing. They found a nest of field mice and put them in their overalls' back pockets. Mr. Heflin warned them a time or two to get to work. In spite of the warnings, they kept playing. His patience wore thin, and he whipped them. He did not know he pulverized the little mice in their back pockets! Discipline was practiced regularly. A child did not consider saying "no" to parents. They learned to respect others. Daddy did not smoke, drink, nor curse, and the children saw that was the best example to follow. On his mother's side, Duane and one other Christian boy of the community were the only ones who did not consume liquor, although all were professing Christians.

Duane accepted Christ as his Savior when he was nine years of age. He was working on the farm with his mother when he realized he was a sinner. He told her he wanted to be saved, and she gently guided him to receive Jesus as his Savior. The pastor's son who was about the same age, had encouraged him. He asked him one day why he did not ask Jesus to come into his heart. This confirmed in Duane's mind, children could and should lead other children to Christ. He was baptized in a tank by the Tea Cross Baptist Church. He attended there regularly with his family as they went to church "rain or shine, sleet or snow." In those days there was little emphasis on visual aid teaching, but much learning was done in spite of the old methods used. Revival time in August was conducted under a brush arbor each year because of the heat with such evangelists as Roy B. Flippo and Gordon Thompson, among others.

As soon as Duane graduated in May 1948, he enrolled in summer school at Oklahoma State University, then known as Oklahoma A&M College at Stillwater, Oklahoma. He entered with plans to major in agriculture, in particular, animal husbandry. He became a member of the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, Stillwater, Oklahoma where he was active. He found a job on the college campus to supplement the money he had saved for college expenses.

At the age of 14 He relates like a bolt out of the blue, it came to him: God wanted him to preach! Of course, like Moses in the Old Testament, he had a list of reasons why he could not. This first call came precisely while he was milking the cows on the farm. He did not surrender to that call until he was 19. He attended the national encampment at Latham Springs, Texas in August 1949. He surrendered to preach in a service led by former Foreign Missions Secretary Jeff Welch and his wife. Later in the encampment he was invited to preach the morning devotion. Frances was

attending the camp, so she saw him for the first time. However, they did not meet formally until September when they both attended Jacksonville College as sophomores. He returned to Stillwater where the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church gave him a license to preach. His pastor helped him transfer to Jacksonville College to prepare for the ministry. What would he do with all those 42 semester hours of agricultural oriented courses? They served as many of the electives toward his degree.

He finished 26 semester hours of college subjects and five semester hours of seminary courses at Jacksonville College in 1949-50. He was an active member of the Mission Band and was selected "Most Popular Boy" by the student body. During the year frequently he preached at churches in the Trinity River Baptist Association in Leon County, Texas. He went to jails in Palestine and Corsicana when he did not have an appointment at a church. He obtained permission to preach to the prisoners who could not get away from hearing the Word. Some of the prisoners made professions of faith. He had a passion for souls and was known to pick up hitchhikers, just so he could witness to them.



Duane, 5; Orville, 3; Maudie, 8



***Robert M. and Mattie; Maudie, Orville, Jorene,
Duane in the Center, 7 Years Old***



Duane, 7; Brother, Orville, 5



***High School Graduation
16 Years Old; 1948***



Duane and Frances' Wedding Picture - August 4, 1948

Chapter 2

The Girl He Married

Tommie Frances Marshall was born to Delma and Aline May Koonce Marshall at Gary, Texas, October 5, 1931. Her only sister, Helen Maurine was 12 when Frances was born. Helen had married already by the time she started to school. She said for the most part she was reared alone. Her father worked a small farm where he raised cotton, corn, tomatoes, and several other crops. They had a variety of farm animals, especially cattle, upon which her father later depended completely for his livelihood.

Having a birthday in October, Frances entered first grade when she was almost seven. She had an inquisitive mind and loved hearing Bible stories read aloud from the big family Bible. She learned the alphabet by asking what the letters were on the "Mother's Oat" box, and before starting to school she was reading the discarded primer books someone gave her. Her first grade teacher wisely gave

her extra work to keep her busy and to prevent boredom. The result was two months into the second grade, the teacher recommended she be placed into the third grade. That year she had a young third grade teacher who had just graduated from Stephen F. Austin State College, Nacogdoches, Texas. She was very enthusiastic about teaching. She found time each week to introduce the third grade class to a wide Spanish vocabulary, some Spanish phrases and songs. Only God knew why!

Gary was a small town, and the community activities all centered either in the school or the church. The family participated strongly in both. Mr. Marshall was a deacon at First Baptist Church, Gary, Texas and a trustee on the school board. Frances participated in the regular seasonal programs and attended sports events and plays.

When she was ten years old, she and her parents accompanied her sister and brother-in-law on a trip. They went to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and New Mexico where they went to Carlsbad Cavern. They visited the state capitol in Austin and San Antonio's historic and tourist attractions. For a small town child, these sights were awesome! Her horizons were to be broadened even more when she was 13. She went to San Francisco and Los Angeles, California by automobile and returned to Houston by train.

Frances attended the same school in Gary, Texas from 1938 to graduation in 1948. She was 16, and the youngest in the graduating class. That occurred because of being advanced one grade, second grade to third, then when grade 12 was added to the school system, all students advanced one grade.

Frances gives the following highlights of high school that stand out in her mind. She was chosen because of high grade points to tour the Freedom Train. The train came to Tyler, Texas as a part of a tour for the whole country to be able to see the original U. S. Constitution and other historical documents. She was selected to ride

in the parade in a convertible at the opening of the Panola County Fair to represent Gary schools. She managed the booth advertising the new Panola County Junior College about to open in the 1948 spring semester. Being an active member of the Future Homemakers of America, she served as an officer both locally and statewide. The FHA afforded many trips to cities over Texas and participation in programs and business meetings.

Frances graduated with honors from Gary High School in 1948 and enrolled in Panola Junior College at Carthage, Texas. It was the first full school year of the newly formed college. She took the courses required for a B. A. degree. Her father was a trustee of Jacksonville College for 18 years, and she had a great desire to attend there. The way opened for her to transfer to Jacksonville College for the sophomore year, 1949-'50, where she was to meet Duane.

Frances remembers, "I can count the Sundays in my entire life I missed a church service." She remembers going to one corner of the original wood temple of First, Gary to the "card class." Sunday School rooms came later. Their home was open to preachers and evangelists. News traveled quickly about the delicious fried chicken, dressing, and dumplings, which her mother made on Sunday. Frances sometimes wondered if there would be enough left for her! It was a privilege to entertain such men of God as Bro. Waller, Bro. Overall, D. N. Jackson, E. D. Keller, R. N. Davis, T. J. McCain, and J. P. Jones, among others. Her father, Mr. Marshall, attended Baptist Missionary Association state and national meetings consistently for 40 years. He was with the group that met at Lakeland, Florida those many years ago and served on numerous committees and programs, locally, state wide, and nationally.

Saved at the age of 13 in a summer revival Frances was baptized in the sawmill pond. Soon she was asked

to teach Sunday School classes. She considered herself fortunate to be taught to give "parts" on youth programs, locally, in the Mount Olive Association and the Texas Baptist Young Peoples Union. She is very thankful for the training and experiences she had in her home and First Baptist Church, Gary, Texas. Mount Olive Association claimed two other missionaries, Rufus Crawford and Paul Robinson.

Frances relates, "What a blessing to have been born into a Christian, even a Baptist home! My grandfather, James Augustus Marshall, was a deacon and charter member of First Baptist Church, Gary, Texas. My father was a deacon there. I must add with pride this church ordained our oldest son, Robert Marshall Heflin, as a deacon in his early 20s."

Frances was elected "Girl Most Likely to Succeed" at Jacksonville College. Duane and Frances met and fell in love there. During the fall of 1949 and spring of 1950 they were seen together frequently. He invited her to go to Oklahoma with him in May following their graduation from Jacksonville College. Their courtship was serious, and he wanted her to meet his family and attend his ordination at his home church, which she did.

And the Two became One

August 4, 1950, Duane and Frances were married at Frances' home by Bro. J. M. Stringer, pastor First Baptist Church, Gary, Texas. Johnnie Stringer (who later married Paul Bearfield) and Jimmy Reed attended them in a simple double ring ceremony. They made their home in Jacksonville where Frances worked briefly at a local variety store. On weekends they went to Leon County to visit, work, and preach at a church. At this time they had to decide where they would continue their studies. By the end of August they moved to Marshall, Texas to attend East Texas Baptist College (University) and enrolled as

Seniors. It was a challenging time—with both of them studying, living on a small salary. They traveled about 200 miles on weekends to serve the churches in Leon County, where Duane served as local missionary. Finally the old car gave up the ghost and quit running; so, they had to buy a new one, a 1951 Studebaker!

They learned to depend upon God from day to day, and He never failed them. June 23, 1951 Robert Marshall Heflin was born. Duane worked for a roofing company during the week to pay hospital and doctor bills. By this time Duane was pastor of Friendship Church in Leon County and Liberty Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas, each half time. This gave them two weekends a month closer to home. As time passed the Lord moved them to several other locations: Amarillo, Plainview, Lubbock, and Port Neches.

September 19, 1953 their second son, David Duane, was born in Amarillo. He had a problem of his lungs not completely expanding at birth, but he responded to special care. Within the next two weeks he joined the family at home.

November 5, 1954 Charlotte Ann was born in Plainview, Texas. Also while living at Plainview, Frances attended Wayland Baptist College, adding more credits toward a degree.

Darla Gayle was born May 23, 1961 at Port Arthur, Texas.

Gena Kay was born August 27, 1964 in San Jose, Costa Rica.



1960



1965



1973



1980



1985



1990



1995



2000

Chapter 3

Called to be a Missionary

While serving the Harwell Heights Baptist Church in Lubbock, Duane talked with W. J. Burgess who was Secretary of Foreign Missions and was preaching in special services in Lubbock. Duane told him about his call to be a missionary. He had received the call in 1950 while attending Jacksonville College. Bro. Burgess was very supportive and continued to pursue the subject when possible.

"When are you going to make application to be a missionary?" Bro. Burgess would ask, every time he saw Duane. Duane felt he should study in the seminary and get more pastoral experience.

While living at Lubbock, Frances commuted two days a week to Plainview. This was the fifth college she had attended, and she lost credits because of so many transfers. Continually, Duane encouraged her to complete

work toward her degree, even to the point of caring for their three small children two mornings a week. An honor she received at Wayland was to have her short story chosen by the head of the English Department to be printed in the College Literary Magazine. To hurry things along the summer of 1956 the children went to stay with grandparents. This arrangement enabled Frances to live on campus and finish the requirements during summer school. She finished requirements for a major in English and minors in Bible and history for a B. A. degree at Wayland Baptist College. She graduated with honors after the summer session.

Duane commuted to Jacksonville with several area pastors to attend the North American Baptist Theological Seminary from the spring of 1958 through May 23, 1961. He graduated on the same day their fourth child, Darla Gayle, was born in Port Arthur. She arrived in the early morning hours after which he went to Jacksonville to receive the degree of Master of Religious Education.

Duane could not get away from the call to be a foreign missionary. He had served as local missionary, pastor of six different churches, graduated from college and from seminary. Now the greatest problem was the field where the Lord wanted him to serve--Mexico or maybe Brazil? He decided to visit his sister and her husband who were Baptist missionaries to Chile. They were studying Spanish in Costa Rica at the best Spanish language school in Latin America. He wanted to see first hand what it was like in a Latin American country. The Lord used this experience to impress on his heart the people in Costa Rica.

Mission Field for the Heflin Family

Things began to happen quickly when he returned from this trip. He made his application to be a missionary in Costa Rica. He was elected in 1961 by the North American Baptist Association. May 23, 1962 on Darla's first birthday,

exactly one year from the day he graduated from seminary, the family flew from Houston, by Pan American Airlines to San Jose, Costa Rica.

They arrived in the early afternoon hours in the Central Valley just after the usual late morning rain. The country was beautiful from the air with mountains, valleys, fruit groves, coffee plantations, and more. Everything looked especially green and fresh. Duane had met and Mrs. Frank Martin on his previous trip, and they met the newcomers at the airport. They had rented a furnished house for the Heflin Family. The house was well located, roomy, and comfortable. They found milk and groceries in the refrigerator and cabinet, enough to last until they went to the grocery store which was one-half block away.

The Martins helped them get acquainted in the surroundings. They were close friends for the next two years; then they moved to Guatemala. The Heflins realize they would have many obstacles as do all missionaries. There was a new language, new lands, new people, new customs, new government, and new challenges to accept. They were anxious to get busy in the work of the Lord.



Final Service at Temple Baptist Church, Port Neches before leaving for Costa Rica



Typical Open Market



Funeral in Neighborhood

Chapter 4

The Country Where They Serve

Costa Rica is bordered on the north by Nicaragua, on the south by Panama, on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by the Pacific Ocean. It is called "Garden of the Americas and Land of Eternal Springtime" because it is breathtakingly green, and flowers and fruits abound. The principal crops are coffee and bananas. The country produces oranges, avocados, and other tropical fruits, cocoa, sugar, maize, rice, tobacco, cattle, tuna, and textiles. Cattle thrive in the grasslands to the northwest, and there are jungle rain forests in the interior. The tropical climate is warm on either coastal region, but the temperature in the central valley where the capitol, San Jose, is located is a pleasant 70° average year round. There are two seasons instead of four which are: dry season from December through April (summer), and rainy season

from May to November, during which it rains almost daily. An umbrella is almost considered part of one's daily dress during that time, known also as winter.

The orchid is the national flower and grows in abundance with more than 50 different types. Poinsettias grow to be trees as tall as the walls of a house, as well as other well known flowers and plants used as pot plants in the states. Costa Rica exports bananas, coffee, and many fruits. Sugar cane, cocoa, pineapple, and precious woods, like mahogany, are produced.

Costa Ricans are mainly a peaceable, steady-going people, known as the quietest of the Central Americans. They are primarily of Spanish decent, with few Indians, and are quite friendly and congenial. They have the "manana" philosophy, that is, a casual attitude toward schedules and deadlines, which is common to Latin countries.

Costa Rica is a prosperous little country which values education. Eighty per cent of its population of over 4,000,000 is literate. Education is compulsory and free through the sixth grade. There are many high schools as well as private schools, trade schools, and the best university south of Mexico City.

The country boasts of having more schools than members of the police force and literacy rate is the highest in all Central America. Except for some private schools, all students wear uniforms to schools from kindergarten through high school. The favorite sport is soccer, called "futbol" however, basketball, tennis, and other sports are popular. The school year begins just before March and goes through November with a two week vacation in July.

The government is a congress, cabinet, and a president, and there is full enjoyment of civil rights. The country has no army. It is democratic with elections every four years of president and congressmen. Costa Ricans enjoy a form of democratic government and freedom of worship.



The 5 Colone Bill Tells the History of Costa Rica

The language spoken is Spanish. The money is called the colon, and the U.S. dollar was worth 520 colones (In 2006) with the value changing weekly. There are many swimming pools and beaches, with both sides of the country bordered by oceans. In the central section of the country there are mountains and plateaus, including ten active volcanoes; earth tremors are common.



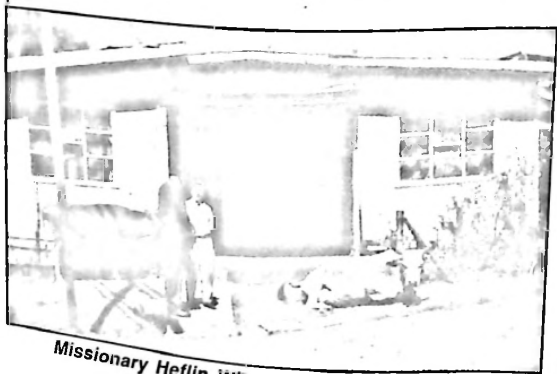
Cart Buggy Used as Transportation Lumber for Benches

The most common food is a plate of fried rice served with black beans on top. The party dish used most is arroz con pollo (rice with chicken).

Arroz Con Pollo Recipe

- One chicken boiled and cubed (save the broth)
- 2 cups rice (not pre-cooked)
- 2 Tablespoons shortening
- 2 Tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- ½ teaspoon culantro seeds (if fresh culantro is not available)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ cup cubed carrots and potatoes
- 1 small can English peas

Wash rice; fry onion and pepper slightly in shortening adding rice and stirring continually for two minutes. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Add chicken broth (and more water if needed) to cover the rice mixture by about ¼ inch. Stir well once, and let cook fast until water cooks down even with the rice (without stirring any more). Turn burner to very low and put on lid. Let cook on very low about 20 minutes; stir and serve with a salad and potato chips.



Missionary Heflin Witnessing in Costa Rica

Chapter 5

Life in Costa Rica Begins

They loved the country, the climate, and the friendly people who were very helpful! The delicious fruits and vegetables were wonderful, and prime meat was very inexpensive. Frances had to substitute and forget many traditional U.S. meals. There were no dry cereals. Crackers and cookies were sold singularly from storage jars, bread was fresh but unwrapped, jelly came in wax paper bags as plastic bags were nonexistent. Bro. Heflin's salary was \$375.00 per month with no work fund except their own tithe; so, they could not afford a car.

The children had finished the school year in the states. Marshall, 11, finished the sixth grade; David, 8, the second grade; and Charlotte, 7, the first grade. The plan was to enroll the children in the only bilingual school there, but the classes had been in session two months when they arrived. They could not receive credit for the year and

would be in the same grade they had finished in the states. Duane and Frances decided to enroll them in the public (Spanish speaking) school. They could learn Spanish and would not have to pay tuition. It was necessary to get special permission from the Ministry of Education for them to enroll in Escuela Franklin D. Roosevelt Elementary School where 800 students attended. They were very happy to find one teacher who spoke a little English and who helped the children one hour each day with their lessons and Spanish. The other children helped them as well, and within three months they were speaking like "Ticos" (Costa Ricans)!

They had to have uniforms for school, and the daily schedules were very hard to remember. One day they went to classes from 7:00 to 12:00, and the next day from 12:30 to 5:00. The third day was back to the morning. You can readily understand the confusion of having three children going at different hours. As if that were not enough, it was the rainy season (May through December, called winter). They had problems getting shoes and uniforms dried. Out of the first 42 days in the country—it rained 41, usually from 11:00 a.m. into the night. An umbrella was part of their dress.

Duane and Frances had a few weeks free before language school classes began. They needed that time to adjust to the many changes. They got their ears attuned to the language and learned their way around by walking or riding the bus.

They needed a trustworthy maid who would care for one-year old Darla and get the other children to school. Duane and Frances hoped to attend classes from 7:30 to 12:00 each day. They had problems! The first three maids did not arrive on time even though they loaned them an alarm clock. Frances had problems leaving at the proper time for classes.

Services in Living Room

They began conducting church services in their living



April 1968 Children in Public School Uniforms



117 Present at Night Service in Living Room - 1963

room two months after they arrived. They moved in wooden benches on weekends to accommodate the people, then stored the benches on the back porch during the week. The results were overwhelming! They used translators for the messages. Frances taught Bible lessons for Sunday School using a flannel-graph for the children. She used the limited Spanish she had acquired. A small handbell was used to announce the services. Up to 130 people came to meetings in their living room. They do not know whether from curiosity to see the "gringos" or whatever, but many accepted Christ as their Savior.

Sad News from Home

The first Sunday in August after they had arrived in May Duane's mother was killed in an automobile accident. She and his father were driving to church when a car at a crossing near their home hit them. The driver was not familiar with the rural area. Mrs. Heflin died instantly, and his dad received serious injuries. There were very few telephones then in Costa Rica. They were unable to reach Duane until Monday morning when he and Frances arrived at language school classes at 7:30 a.m. The director helped them in every way, and in two hours Duane boarded a plane and was on his way to Oklahoma. He attended the funeral and visited his father who soon recovered from his injuries. Her death was a great blow to them. She was a fine person and a great encouragement to them. She was only in her '50s.

About a year later Mr. Heflin married Mrs. Ola Beatrice Robberon. She was a fine Christian lady whose husband had died some years earlier in an automobile related accident. She had no children, but she took all the Heflin children, grandchildren, and now great grandchildren as if they were her own. Mr. Heflin died seven years after their marriage. This was the second great blow by the hand of death.

The First Conversion

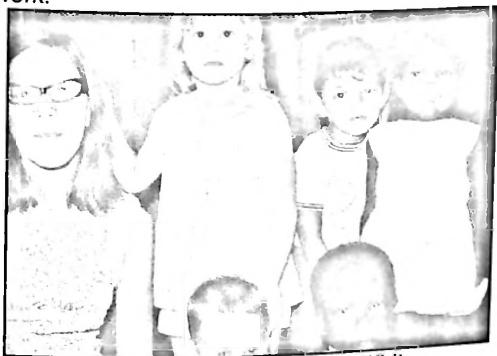
On the same day Duane's mother died, they saw the

first conversion in Costa Rica—a young man in high school. He came because he was interested in practicing his English. He later became a dentist.

As they learned more Spanish, they saw many more saved, and the attendance grew. It was hard to get them to learn true Bible doctrine. They had to teach and re-teach doctrine to overcome their former religious teachings. Many were not married legally and had to comply before being baptized. It was some time before they had the first baptism.

They found a house with three bedrooms for rent and moved the church from their home. Bro. Gomez became the first national pastor of First Baptist Church, San Pedro. He helped start a mission on the Atlantic Coast in Puerto Limon, some 110 miles from the capitol. Then the only way to get there was by train—a trip of six hours. Bro. Fernando Nunez was the national pastor there for several years.

Later, a mission was started in the south side of San Jose with the national pastor, David Orellana. They disbanded after two years. Bro. Pedro Orellana and several others are still members of our churches as a result of that work.



*Red and Yellow, Black and White
They are Precious in His Sight*



Calvaries' First Building



Recognition for 34 years in Costa Rica

Chapter 6

Co-Workers at Last

Bill and Jeanette Gibson

After working alone for nine to ten years with little Baptist fellowship in English, in October 1971 the Lord sent some fine co-laborers to Costa Rica when Bill and Jeanette Gibson came. This was a great blessing. They enjoyed many blessings together. The two youngest Heflin children grew up with the Gibson's two, and still cherish many experiences together.



Bill, Jeanette, Monica Gibson

. In February 1972 a new work was begun in Pavas where some members lived in a new addition and asked

for services. They used a shed built on the property of a family and grew until they spilled into living rooms of willing neighbors where they had classes.

A building was started after a year on the back of two lots they had bought on the main street. This work has grown to be the largest in attendance and self-support. They finished and paid for a new auditorium in front of the previous building. They had about 200 in attendance and maintained a new mission in Barrance on the Pacific Coast with the help of the missionary and the First Baptist Church in San Pedro. They helped to start several missions that are now strong churches in Tirrases, Cartago, and San Lorenzo.

Phil Knott Family

In August 1983 the Phil Knott Family joined the missionary families in the work in Costa Rica. and the Heflins became "grandparents" to their four girls.



Phil Knott Family

During the years besides working with the Gibson and Knott families, the Heflins also had for a short time the Butch Shipp

and Dennis Murr families. From time to time they enjoyed the fellowship with missionary couples and their families who were in Costa Rica for a year of language school before moving to their respective Spanish speaking fields of labor. They included the families of Larry Hendren; Jimmy Swindoll; Randy Scaggs; David Beirne; Wayne Ely; Jim Fink; John Callaway; Tom Jopling; Andy Schalchlin; Collin Jones; and Gordon Montgomery.



***James and Billie Stroud—Guatemala
Duane and Frances Heflin—Costa Rica
Paul and Mickey Robinson—Nicaragua***



***Juan Meneses and wife, Natalio
Pastored Many Years***



First Service in Heflin's Home in 1962



Preacher Fellowship with Bro. Heflin



Frances with New Converts

Chapter 7

Training and Caring

During most of the 44 years in Costa Rica, Bro. Heflin has maintained Bible training in institute classes. They were held at different churches and missions. This was a burden as they had to teach these classes. During the later years the younger missionaries have taken over this responsibility.

We had the opportunity to start a mission in Siquirres, about an hour and a half, east of the capital toward Limon. This is our greatest desire—to see souls saved and new missions and churches begun. We are thankful for all who have prayed for us and helped in many ways. We are rejoicing in seeing some of the children we taught in years past now forming their own Christian homes and teaching their children the way of the Lord. When we see this happen, we know all the work, difficulties, and prayers were worth it, and will be even more when we see our Savior!

Believers were Baptized

A grandmother, 68 years of age, was baptized in December 1964. She had been saved for a number of years, but finally she came asking for scriptural baptism. She was baptized with her two youngest daughters.

Bro. Heflin tells of one service where he baptized on Sunday evening. "We held a brief service on the river bank and baptized in a light rain, but the people were happy, singing choruses and hymns in the rain as some 30 of us traveled to and from the river in an open truck."

Another incident is related by Bro. Heflin: "The devil seemed to be trying us last Sunday when we had plans to go to the river to have our services and baptize. A bus had been chartered to take us; of course, it was late. There were four candidates for baptism, and only two of them were there, but we just happened to meet one of them as we left. We enjoyed singing a medley of choruses along the way, until we came to the steep grade down the side of the mountain to the valley where the river was.

The highway was very narrow and had been cut out of the side of the mountain with a wall of dirt remaining on either side. The chauffeur of our bus moved the right wheels onto the shoulder to let an oncoming bus pass, but during this rainy season, that was the wrong thing to do. When he tried to get back on the pavement, the bus slid sideways, right over against the wall of the mountain. We could not pass through the front door, nor would the emergency door in the back open; so, we all had to crawl through a window. To our surprise he was able to drive right out. We arrived at the place to baptize to find a group of people fishing. We went a little farther down the river and had our service, during which the fishermen left, except for one family which moved closer and listened to the service. Then when the candidates were ready to enter the water, some boys on motorcycles stopped on the bridge to disturb the service. Then a car came, and they had to move off the narrow bridge. The Lord blessed with a beautiful baptismal service.



Church Group Going to Baptismal Service in River



Pre-baptismal Service on Rock Pews



Baptizing in a Very Strong Current

Abandoned Children

In July 1989 Sally McWatters felt the Lord's guidance to begin a home for abandoned children. She was authorized by Costa Rica's Child Welfare Department. She received the first three children within a short time. The number soon reached 20 permanent children. The Home has been the means for a number of children to have a Christian home, some only briefly. When problems are solved, they sometime return to parents or other relatives. All personnel and children of the Home are members and attend the San Pedro Church. They work faithfully, bringing visitors, teaching classes, playing musical instruments, and leading singing. Presently (2002) the youngest is two years old, and the oldest is 19. They are home schooled, approved by the welfare department, and subject to the standard government tests. They are taught in Spanish and English.



Children's Home in 1994

The Heflins serve as "grandparents" to all the children. They see their birthdays are celebrated with a cake made and decorated by Mrs. Heflin, gifts and a fast food meal at the place of their choice or a picnic. It is a blessing to

see them come to know the Lord and grow spiritually. Each child could tell terrible stories of abuse in many forms and abandonment. God's love is shown to heal the hurts in each heart.



Christmas at Children Home in 2001



Rosa, Fabiola and Wendy of the Home for Children with the birthday cakes Grandmother Heflin made

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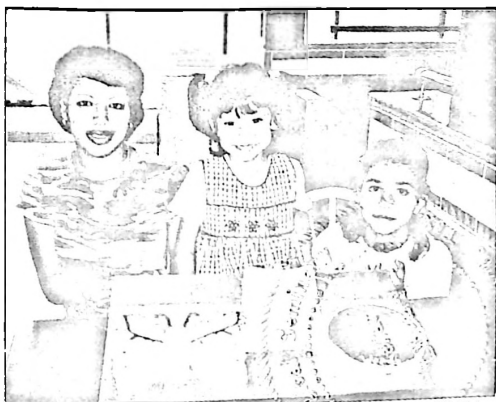
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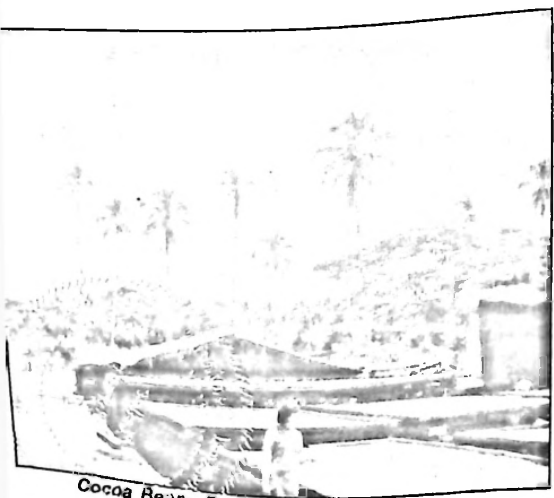
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***Rosa, Fabiola and Wendy of the Home for Children
with the birthday cakes Grandmother Heflin made***



***Home for Abandoned Children 2001
They are not abandoned any more!***



Cocoa Beans Drying in the Sun in Limon

Chapter 8

Daily Challenges

Sarah, a Young Teenager

One of the young people who made a profession of faith at Calvary Church was Sarah, a young teenager, who because of problems in her own family, was living with one of the families of the church. She began to attend the services, but her mother forbade her to go to our church any more. Sarah was very interested in attending the services and knowing how to be saved, so she would slip off to church every time she could make an opportunity. She managed to slip away and attend every day of Vacation Bible School. She delighted in the activities and teaching throughout the week. She made her profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. She was afraid to even mention that to her mother. One Sunday Sarah was sitting in the service singing praises with rejoicing, when she happened to glance back at the door and saw her mother looking. She was frightened but stayed through the service.

After the service her mother whipped her and told her not to go back to church. The missionary requested many people pray for Sarah. This often happens when one leaves his or her former religion against the wishes of the family.

Dona Teresa

Dona Teresa's husband is not a believer and forbade her and their ten children to attend our church. She suffered many things at his hands because she dared to be true to her faith in the Lord. When she was baptized, along with several of her children, they were presented Bibles, which they treasured highly. One day her husband decided to destroy all the Bibles in the house. He tore up three with his hands, but the last one was hidden under the skirt of one of the young Christians and was saved. Her testimony was that he might destroy all the Bibles, but he could not take away the Word that was hidden in her heart.

Mario

Mario was a young boy ten years old. One Sunday morning at 9:30 he came into the tabernacle for the services with a group of his friends. Mario lives just across the 'alameda' (park) from the church, but his mother would not permit him to attend. He wanted to go very much, especially since all his friends attended. He just got settled on the bench when his mother screamed his name from across the street where she saw him seated there. Quickly, he ran home under the shouts of "dirty evangelical" and "Do not you ever be seen going there again." Our thoughts were of pity for both the boy and his mother and we did not expect him to come again. To our surprise when the evening services began at 2:30, there was Mario seated in the middle of the tabernacle with his friends. Our grateful feeling was deflated again soon, however, this time his mother appeared at the back door of the tabernacle and yelled his name during the introduction of the service. He

ran out with fear written all over his face, and with good reason. She bent his left ear together between her fingers giving it a half twist, and he went home in this manner yelping. Again we thought, "That is the end of Mario." Can you imagine our disbelief again, when the 7:30 p.m. service began, there sat Mario on the second row of seats with his friends? Apparently his mother had gone off to town and left him home that night, and he was as free as a bird. He tried his best to sing along with the others, and he listened to the message very attentively. When those wanting to be saved were asked to raise their hands eagerly he raised his, only to take it down again when some began to whisper to him that he could not because he was of another faith. He continued to attend when his mother was not home, and he wanted to be saved, but with such a background as he had, it took awhile for him to make the final step.

Maria de los Angeles

Maria de los Angeles was only 12 years old, but she accepted Jesus as her Savior with great joy. Her father forbade her to attend the church services. When he would leave she would attend services, but when she was not there, we knew her father was at home. He threatened to send her away to an aunt and Maria was heartbroken. We prayed the Lord would solve her problem.

Troubled Lady

One woman, past 50 years of age, was under such a terrible load of problems that she was actually on her way to find the house of a witch who reportedly lives in the area. This was her last resort when she was saved. People who knew this lady said that she was possessed by demons who made her believe things that were not true, even about herself, and she had tried everything known to rid herself of this dilemma. Someone told her the witch could help her, but God arranged it so that on the way to