

“...How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” Romans 10:15

Jacquelynne and I met in the late '50s at the old Temple Baptist Church. It was then on Grand River Avenue in Detroit. The church was huge and had two young people's Sunday School departments. These were divided by age. The youngest grouping was for ages 15 – 18. The second was for people 18 and older. The groups were rather un-imaginatively named Young Peoples #1 and Young Peoples #2. I was still in my late teens and had already been a member there about eight years. Jackie was new to the church, having moved into the city to attend college. On any given Sunday morning the combined Young People's attendance would total about 700.

The departments were divided into classes. Each class had its own teacher. My mother taught a Sunday School class in Young Peoples #2. It was a class which she had started and during her tenure as its teacher she was able to build its numbers until there were over 100 young women attending. It was my mother's second family and she loved them, and this love was reciprocated.

In those days (late 50s – early 60s) Detroit was growing and became a magnet for young people who would come from far places – the South mostly- in search of career opportunities and, of course, marriage partners. The city was full of apartment buildings that catered to single young women (no men allowed). My mother knew where all of these facilities were. Like many women of her era, she neither worked outside the home nor did she drive. She did, however, keep an active list of ladies who did drive and would be willing to transport her into the city from the far Northwest side. She would often spend the day knocking on doors in these buildings seeking to share the Gospel with the women and, of course, inviting them to her Sunday school class.

My mother died in her fifty first year. She had cancer and death came slowly and painfully. Her passing involved many stays at the old Florence Crittenden Hospital in Highland Park. I remember visiting her at the hospital one night and as I approached, I noticed that a large group of people had formed a human pyramid on the lawn below a window on the second floor. It was my mother's room. They were using their creation to pass gifts and notes to her. The raw material for this construction was, of course, young women from my mother's class.

The years have passed, and it has now been almost sixty years since I have seen her face. My guess is that in the passage of those years, most of my mother's students have, themselves, been graduated to be with The Lord.

Jackie and I retain many friends from the early days of our acquaintance and marriage. One of that number is good enough to plan twice-yearly reunions for one of the old Temple Baptist Sunday School classes. When we are gathered it is not at all unusual that a little lady or two – now in their nineties - will approach, introduce herself and relate that she had been in my mother's class. Sometimes she will go on to relate how it was that one day she had opened her door to a friendly knock and found my mother there with a gospel message and an invitation to Sunday School.

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