

REFLECTIONS

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**If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!**

Ecclesiastes 4:10

Heck of a ride...

The roads we are each traveling through life once intersected at a small church. And they ran parallel to each other for a while. It was the time when George and Louisa, Joe and Jane, and Richard and Janice were beginning their lives, building careers and rearing children. We became fast friends sharing the challenge of getting by on what little we had, but our spirits were not dampened by it. We had each other to help to keep us all in good cheer.

During those many days, we played together, we ate together, we celebrated together, we grieved together, we watched our children grow, and we worshiped together. And it was in that early time that we started coming together to celebrate Christmas each year. The Christmas gathering became an annual tradition that we have now celebrated for more than 40 years. Some years have been easier than others. Some have been light and fun. Some have been marked with laughter, some dimmed by disappointment, and a few were burdened with controversy. But all have had love.

Through the years our roads have drifted apart and taken us all in different directions, to cross paths with different friends and experience different interests. But those roads circle back from time to time to intersect once again so we can share all that we have learned from our travels and to remember the intersection that formed our lives and laid a foundation that will endure until our roads lead us home.

Last year Joe and Jane celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. As we departed the warm and elegant celebration, Joe shook my hand and gave me a hug. Then he looked me straight in the eye and said, "If I never see you again, I want you to know, it's been a heck of a ride." Then with a twinkle in his eye he said, "My children fuss at me for saying things like that, but I would rather say it than to later regret that I hadn't."

None of us have traveled roads that have been very wide or very smooth. But even when the pavement runs out on this life, I see the roads converging again at an Intersection that will be our final destination. There we *will* see each other again. Without each other, none of us might have made it there.

That's why it has been a heck of a ride.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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