



REFLECTIONS

September 1, 2013

A cheerful look brings joy to the heart,

Proverbs 15:30

Jane

The story might have begun for us when a 1960's vintage Volkswagen bus pulled into the church parking lot, the laughter of children ringing from its open windows. It was the days before those vehicles were air conditioned; but a little discomfort did not lessen the cheerful smile of the beautiful young mother beaming through its windshield.

"A happy heart makes the face cheerful," Proverbs tells us. And a happy heart made the cheerful smile of the young mother that day. It was the happy heart and cheerful smile that defined her being and brightened the lives of everyone she ever knew.

From time to time, I reflect on the life of someone who has made mine a little better than it might have been. I share them in the hope that something in the beauty of their lives might also be enriching to someone else. So it is that I reflect on the life of Jane Harrison. I found passages from Proverbs that describe her so very well.

"The cheerful heart has a continual feast," a passage describes. And Jane cheerfully feasted on all of life. She liked travel, adventure, fine dining, and friends. She was a cheerful, loving, wife and mother who was a rock of courage and faith standing with unyielding support of her husband and children.

Even in the most trying times, Jane's cheerfulness was still there. When a stroke took her eyesight, limited her mobility, and increased her dependency on others, her *"cheerful heart [was] good medicine,"* just as Proverbs said. It was the medicine of her cheerful heart that helped Jane accept her diminished quality of life with elegance and grace—almost as if nothing had happened at all.

But maybe, *"A cheerful look brings joy to the heart,"* is the Proverb that describes her best. Her cheerful look revealed her way of life. It was full of *"love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."* These are the fruits of the Spirit Apostle Paul described to the Galatians. Perhaps it is these fruits of her life that inspire the hope that my life and yours would reveal them as well as Jane did.

She is in the loving hands of our Lord today, but Jane's cheerful smile still radiates in our lives. We can feel its *gentleness and peace* giving comfort to our pain; its *kindness and goodness* encouraging us to practice her unselfish ways; its *forbearance and self-control* offering forgiveness for any wrongs; and its *faithfulness* sending endless rays of hope. Her *joy* fills our souls.

And her *love* forever indwells the memories of our hearts.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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