

MEDITATIONS FOR MOTHER



by Michael Craig Pratt

DEDICATION

My Mother

She carried me under her heart;
Loved me before I was born;
Took God's hand in hers
and walked through the Valley of Shadows
that I might live;
Bathed me when I was helpless;
Clothed me when I was naked;
Fed me when I was hungry;
Rocked me to sleep when I was weary,
and sang to me in the voice of an angel;
Held my hand when I learned to walk;
Suffered with my sorrow;
Laughed with my joy;
Glowed with my triumph, and while I knelt at
her side, she taught my lips to pray.
Through all the days of my youth she gave
strength for my weakness, courage for my
despair, and hope to fill my hopeless heart;
Was loyal when others failed; Was true when
tried by fire; Was my friend when other friends
were gone;
Prayed for me through all the days,
when flooded with sunshine or saddened by shadows;
Though we lay down our lives for her
we can never pay the debt we owe to a mother.

Author unknown

GIVEN AS A GIFT

TO: _____

DATE: _____

MY MOTHER'S NAME

No painter's brush or poet's pen,
In justice to her fame,
Has ever reached half high enough
To write my mother's name.

Make ink of tears and golden gems
And sunbeams mixed together,
With holy hand and golden pen,
Go write the name of Mother.

In every humble tenant house,
In every cottage home,
In marble courts and gilded halls
And on every palace dome;

On mountains high, in valleys low,
In every land and clime,
On every throbbing human heart,
That blessed name enshrine.

Take childhood's light and manhood's
age, Celestial canvass given,
In beauty trace her name and face
And go hang it up in heaven.

Thrice upward to the Heavenly Home,
And midst music soft and sweet
Thank Jesus for your Mother's name,
And write it at His feet.

MOTHER & FATHER

Harold & Leona Pratt were married on March 31, 1945.

They were blessed with 3 children—Steve, Mike, & Marilee.

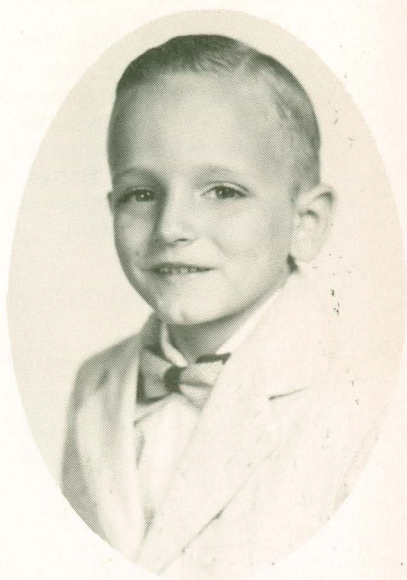
They lived on a farm in western Iowa & brought up their children in the nurture & admonition of the Lord.



THE CHILDREN



STEVE



MICHAEL



MARGIE

A TRAGEDY FOR MOTHER

On July 23, 1966, Harold Pratt took his wife & daughter by plane to Sioux City, Iowa. It was about 9:00 in the evening. The night was beautiful & the winds were calm.

A few feet from the runway they encountered severe turbulence from an airplane which had just landed.

Mike's father, Harold, & his sister, Marilee, perished in the crash. Mike's mother received 52 fractures but somehow miraculously survived.



MEET MICHAEL

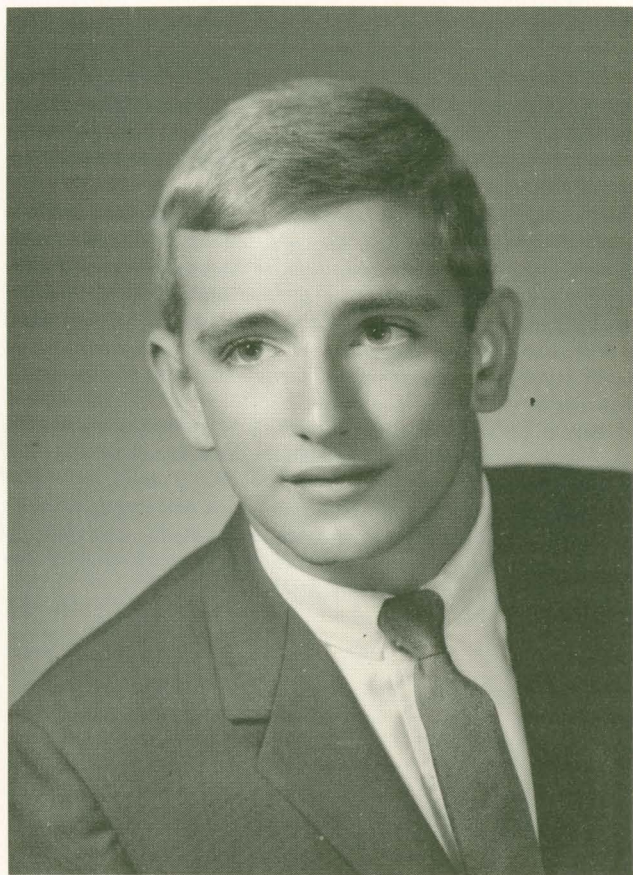
Michael Craig Pratt was born Feb. 20, 1948 in Sioux City, Iowa.

When his father & sister perished in the plane crash he was used of God to bring comfort & strength to his critically injured mother.

Mike would himself die in a plane crash nine years later.

He had no idea that people such as we would be reading his personal mail. It is, therefore, with a certain sense of reverence & awe that we ask you to prayerfully consider his words.

There is a very real sense in which he being dead, yet speaketh.



Michael wrote many letters to his mother while she was in the hospital.

Here are excerpts from a few.

*Thursday, August 25, 1966
1111 North Main
Joplin, Missouri 64801*

Dearest Mom,

I can't begin to express in words the way I feel right now!

I can fore-see the greatest year of my life coming up, for the rewards of Christian love are so wonderful, as I am just beginning to find out.

In the devotion tonite, I could just feel the presence of God, and the radiating love of brother for brother, sister for sister, Christian for Christian.

Mom, I'm beginning to see possibly a purpose for what has happened; although we had the greatest and closest family possible, and spent many happy years together, our loss has enabled me to have the capacity to love others as a Christian family, and has cemented my faith that we will soon be reunited with Dad and Marilee, and become part of a Christian family whose love for one another will be far greater than ever possible here on earth.

I only hope you can retain the faith Dad always instilled in us, and carry on from there. It would be easy for all of us to fall back in a shell and blame God for our loss. But if we did this, Dad would truly have died in vain. However, if we can strengthen our faith, it will only be a matter of a few short years, and then we will once again be a loving Christian family, with God as our father! I know your faith will hold fast!

September 22, 1966

Dearest Mom,

Yesterday was just about the most beautiful day I've ever seen in my life. The sun was shining, about 75 degrees, and a gentle breeze....

Mom, it really uplifted my spirits seeing you, as you really looked and acted great!

Although I know many trials will come the next few weeks, and you will become depressed at times, I only pray you will strive with all your might [with God's help] to keep the faith and attitude you showed me this past week-end. I'm sure God will help you.

Tuesday night we had floor devotions in the dorm, and after it we had prayer requests. I requested the guys would pray that God would give you strength and keep you out of periods of depression, and help you realize that you are needed so much, not only by Steve and me, but for the up-building of the kingdom. There were a lot of us on our knees, with the lights out and heads bowed, praying for this, so I know God heard our prayer; it will be mostly up to you whether it is answered or not.

This devotion last Tuesday night did me a lot of good, and it also did some of the other guys on my floor alot of good, as there were not too many dry eyes at the conclusion of our prayer service...

I'll close for the present. May God watch over you, and may He constantly be with you!

Love, Mike

October 2, 1966

Dearest Mom,

"Words can't begin to express how happy I was to see your own handwriting again! I was really thrilled..."

I've come across two little passages that have done me a lot of good lately! I'd like to write them down for you to think about!

[1] LIFE IS SHORT, AND ETERNITY SURE!

[2] FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST, AND TO DIE IS GAIN.

Philippians 1:21

I like these because I think they are words that God kept in mind all the time, and because I think we should do likewise...

So when you get depressed about our loss, just remember that Dad and Marilee have really gained eternal life, and our loss will be regained before very much longer.

Pray about these things....

Love, Mike

October 15, 1966

Dear Mom,

The countryside...is really getting beautiful, as fall has arrived and all the leaves are turning...

This fall weather brings back memories of a year ago...It's probably real easy for you, as it is for me, to think back over the past few years; they are years I'm sure I'll never forget, for many reasons, but especially for the Christian manner in which you and Dad raised me up...I only hope that someday my children will have the love and happiness and kind of things that I had...

We had to give a speech the other day in my "Public Speaking Class" on our most unforgettable character in each of our lives. I gave mine on Dad, because he indeed is unforgettable to all of us who knew him. Well, what I wanted to tell you is this. I ended my speech with something like, "I only hope that I can someday grow to be the kind of Christian man and father that mine was. However, if I ever achieve this, I really won't be following my father's example as much as I will be following the example of Jesus, for that is who my father strived to pattern his life after."

Mom, I hope that my telling you this doesn't depress you, because to me Dad and Marilee are not dead, but are in the living arms of God. I miss them very much, as I know you do, but there is so much joy in knowing that we will be able to see them again. To me it would be tragic to try to forget them and what they were, for death to a Christian is not the end, but rather the beginning.

Mom, ...God could just as well of called you home as not, but through our prayers He let you live because I know He has a purpose in mind. I know I could not have made it through if God had not spared you...

Well, I guess I'd better do a little studying...I'm just so happy that you keep fighting the good battle, and I'm really proud of you, Mother!

Love, Mike



"ETERNITY, THOU PLEASING, DREADFUL THOUGHT!"

November 28, 1966
11:15 P.M.

Dearest Mom,

Well, only two weeks from this Friday, and Lord willing, I'll be home and get to see you!

You'll never know how happy I was to hear that you're going to possibly be HOME before Christmas. If you do make it, the prayers of myself, and several other guys here on my floor of the dorm will have been answered. I've always said I take after you in that I have thin hair, etc., but I just hope I'll be able to come through in the clutch like you have come through, Mom. You've really been an inspiration and source of hope and joy for me. . .

[After telling about a basketball tournament which was held near a home for homeless children, Michael wrote:]

I got to talk to one little boy, seven years old, who told me about his "Mommie" and "Daddie", and how he loved them! He talked like they were his real parents, but then later he told me his real "Mommie" had run off and left him and his five brothers and sisters. This made me stop and realize how truly fortunate I was to be raised in the kind of home I was.

I also found out that one of the other guys on the team, [a sophomore] lost his father last year with leukemia. He missed the Thanksgiving Tournament last year because his father was not expected to live through the week. Lynn [the sophomore] only has one younger sister, besides his mother, and I can imagine the great responsibility he has had to shoulder. I guess his Dad struggled for three more weeks after thanksgiving before finally dying. Knowing this doesn't make me miss Dad any less, but it helps me realize that God has not singled us out, and that He is not to blame; like I've said before, really the only thing that makes our loss bearable for me is to know that they are now far happier and know a place far greater that we'll ever know here on earth. This makes my fear of death disappear, and replaces it with an almost longing for the day I'll die on this earth, but only begin to live in the eternal life hereafter.

DON'T QUIT

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit—
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a fellow turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering man;
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup;
And he learned too late when the night came down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit!

—Author unknown

REASON FOR LIVING

Sometimes I get to thinking, as my labors I review,
That I should like a higher place, with greater tasks to do.
But I come to the conclusion, when the envying is stilled,
That the post to which God sends me is the post He wanted filled.
So I plod along with patience in the hope when day is through,
That I'm really necessary to the things God wants to do.
And there isn't any service I can give that I should scorn,
For it may be just the reason God allowed me to be born.

April 11, 1968, Thurs. morning, 9:30 a.m.

... Mom, I'm enclosing the name and address of this lady who lost her husband and son in a plane-crash back in the Fall of 1966. One of the inexpressible joys of Christian service is being able to help people and in turn being helped by them.

This lady must be about your age, Mom, or maybe a little older, and she had never been able to open up and talk about her husband or son. But because I had known a hurt very similar to hers, she could talk with me about it, and with tears in both of our eyes she did.

Besides losing her husband and son, her house burned down not very long ago, and she and her only daughter are living in a motel while it is being re-built.

With all this weighing down on her, she wrote Larry and me a check for \$40, and told us if she could help us in any way in the future, just for us to let her know. She showed me what true Christian sacrifice really is!

It was a wonderful blessing to my life. I'll never forget the way she looked at me with tears in her eyes, and said: "Mike, you'll never know how much you have helped me!"

I guess one of the greatest parts of the Lord's work is that in giving of yourself, you yourself receive the blessing!

Mar. 14, 1967

... We had an assembly in the chapel here last Tue. for presentation of trophies... When the coach presented me the "Most Valuable Player" of the tourney trophy, the kids gave me a standing ovation. I was told to give a speech.

This was really a thrill for me, and as I went to the microphone to say something, a big lump formed in my throat. I'm not sure what all I said, but I remember closing with:

"And my basketball season was made perfect and complete by getting to see my mother Sunday after the game, and for this I give thanks to coach and team, and most of all Jesus Christ".

I meant every word of it, Mom, and though words seemed to only superficially depict deep feelings, I am truly grateful to the Lord for giving me a Mother like you. . . .

- cannot afford to get
noted so deep in things of
this world, that we cannot
leave on a minutes notice

{ You have never heard of even one single
found where any comfort has ever been
received from the reading of a science book!

Way to face death

- til you settle this, you will never have
lasting peace & hope & joy

- temporary joys, but all = transient
- all = swept out & swept away &
snatched into oblivion by the grave
- in Christ, we have eternal relationships

- Sometimes I drive out to a little country
cemetery just a ~~short distance~~^{short distance} from our farm,
& I walk over to two graves side
by side!
& as I look down at them, I
speak to myself these words! I Cor. 15:55-8!



February 11, 1967

Dear Mom -

...Your constant improvement, both physically and spiritually, only helps to build up my faith in what God can do through both prayer and effort.

I'm proud of you, Mom, and what you have done and are doing with the help and grace of God.

You are first in my prayers every night, and I'm so thankful God is hearing and answering!

My prayer is for your continuing to fight the good fight of faith, for if you do, there truly will be laid up for you a crown of righteousness in heaven. May God direct you toward that end.

Love, Mike

P.S. I'm real glad you got to make it home to the farm...am also pleased to hear you have faith enough in the Lord to fly in a plane. You are quite a girl, Mother... love ya' always.

WE MUST DECIDE BY INDUCTION WHETHER
OR NOT THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD, BUT
WE CAN NEVER DECIDE BY PHILOSOPHICAL
INDUCTION IF IT IS TRUE OR NOT.

IF THE BIBLE IS FROM GOD, THE BIBLE
MUST NOT BE MADE TO CONFORM TO THE
HUMAN MIND, BUT RATHER THE MIND
MUST BE MADE TO CONFORM TO THE
BIBLE! THAT IS CONVERSION!

WHERE GOD SPEAKS THERE IS NO
ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

YOU CANNOT ACCEPT THE LORD OF THE
WORD AND REJECT THE WORD OF THE
LORD.

SOME PARTS OF THE BIBLE ARE BETTER
PRACTICED THAN PONDERED.

IT'S NOT HOW MUCH SCRIPTURE YOU
HOLD, IT'S HOW MUCH THE SCRIPTURES
HOLD YOU.

FAITH IS TAKING THE LORD AT HIS
WORD. HE CAN BE TRUSTED WHERE HE
CANNOT BE TESTED.

More than a year and a half after the accident which killed his father and sister it was still very much upon his mind. It was not a morbid and bitter memory, however, but something which tinted and shaped him spiritually to be more like Christ.

Consider excerpts from this letter dated February 8, 1968:

...I've been praying quite a bit lately, mom, that the Lord will give me a tender, sensitive heart. A heart that will be able to let me cry real tears, and I can feel this prayer being answered. For quite a while it seemed like I couldn't really feel any emotion about anything, and found it difficult to get very happy or very sad over anything. But lately I've been able to experience deeper and more emotional feelings about almost everything. Especially I seem to experience this when I think back about how our life was with Dad and Marilee! There is a warm glow and inner tranquility in my memory of them now, which wouldn't seem to come for a pretty long time! I also feel an increasing compassion for lost souls, and this is good! I think this aspect of growth has come about largely from the prayer and devotional life of my new roommate, David Looney, and I have been sharing together! We pray at times with such depth and sincerity that I can actually feel the Holy Spirit permeating our room, and filling our hearts and lives!

...A large part of my heart will always be with my family and our farm and the wonderful home God gave me to be raised in, and especially, Mom, for wonderful Christian parents, who thought more of me than of themselves. I've got a tremendously warm insight into the joys a Christian family can share together, and I only pray that God may someday let me be the kind of parent to my children that you and Dad were to me! I really mean that, Mom, for I know of no home that shared each other as our family did, and we'll always have these memories to help warm our hearts till that day God sees fit to re-unite our family for eternity in heaven...

Well, Mother, it is now after 1:00 in the morning...and I'd better go to bed. I'm in a dorm room in Manhattan, Kansas, and I've been sitting at a little desk all by myself, so I've been able to write you from my heart! I just hope you can share with me the joy and love I have attempted to express, and that we may constantly live for our Saviour!

Love always,

Mike

I'm learning to appreciate the
children that ~~parents~~ must have for us
of parent that He gave to be the seed
rainy as I was young up, & that I still
have in my wonderful mother, I & the Lord see
fit to let me have a family of my own, it is my
prayer that I may be the seed of father to
my children that I had was to me! ~~My~~ Mary
I have even more love for you, had, than I
have for my Dad which you gave me to be my
father here on earth; had, may that be a rich
& full love!

LETTERS FROM AFRICA

*Sunday
June 16, 1968*

Mom,

I will keep putting the Bulawayo address as my return address, so if by chance one of my letters is returned & does not reach the United States, I can pick it up at Bulawayo when I return there July 14, 15, or 16.

The 1st poem I read on June 2 was as follows:

A Child of Mine

I'll lend you for a little time A Child of Mine, He said...
For you to love the while he lives, and mourn for when he's dead.

It may be six, or sixteen years, or twenty-two, or twenty-three;
But will you, till I call him back, Take care of him for me?

He'll bring his charm to gladden you, and should his stay be brief...
You'll have his loving memories, as solace for your grief.

I cannot promise he will stay, since all from earth return.
But there are lessons taught down there, I want this child to learn.

I've looked this wide-world over, in my search for teachers true...
And from the throngs that crowd life's way, I have selected you.

Now will you give him all your love, nor think the labor vain?...
Nor hate me when I come to call, to take him back again?

I fancied that I heard you say, "Dear Lord, Thy will be done"—
For all the joy Thy child shall bring, the risk of grief you'll run.

I hear you say, "I'll shelter him, I'll love him while I may...
And for the happiness I've known, Forever grateful stay."

"But should the angels call for him, sooner than we planned...
I'll brave the bitter grief that comes, and try to understand!"

-Author Unknown-

**"BEWARE OF SOCIALLY ELEVATING PEOPLE
SO THEY MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM
PEOPLE WITHOUT MONEY TO
PEOPLE WITHOUT
MEANING."**



*Greetings from: Hippo Valley,
and your little boy, Mike.
July 10, 1968*

*For: July 13, which is my
Mommie's birthday!!*

Dearest Mother,

Since this is your birthday card, I shall make it short, sweet, and simple. In fact, I believe I can say what I want to say in just 3 words. They are: I Love You.

P.S. I did not forget your birthday, but July 6-9 was a Rhodesian holiday, and no mail services could be had.

This is sealed with my warm thoughts & love & prayers, though, so I hope you will forgive me for getting it to you late! Be good, & hope you had a really nice birthday.

P.S.S. If you are a real good little girl, I might give you a birthday present from down here in Africa! You'd better be good! [ha]


THE WEAVER

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow,
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the underside.

Not 'till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.

The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

A photograph of a crucifix in a rural landscape. The crucifix is the central focus, showing a figure on the cross. It is set against a bright sky with palm tree fronds in the foreground. The background features a vineyard and a line of trees under a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**"DON'T GIVE PEOPLE THINGS,
GIVE THEM YOURSELF."**

July 16, 1968

Dear Mom,

Today is Tuesday, July 16, 1968. I do not know where or when this letter will catch up with you. I am writing this in Bulawayo, the city where we started our evangelistic meetings. We held a one-night meeting here last night, and today we begin a 3-day "vacation", as we have no more meetings 'till this coming Friday, July 19. I believe we are going to get to do a little sight-seeing during these next 3 days, & might get to see Victoria Falls! [largest waterfall in the world!] Mom, these past 2 weeks have been tremendous. There were 13 decisions in Gutu, 137 in Mashoko, & 315 last week in Chiredzi [Hippo Valley!]. This made a total of some 465 souls that have accepted Christ in just the last 2 weeks. The missionaries are just as thrilled as we are, & they seem confident that these many souls can be cultivated and conserved. Let us pray that this is what will happen.

I hope your plans to fly to California work out smoothly, and I'm sure you will have a wonderful trip. Tell Fran and Jr., and Frankie and Grandpa Frank all hello for me!

This summer has gone very fast for me, Mother, as have these past 2 years. It is kind of paradoxical, though, for even though these past 2 years have gone by so quickly, there has been so much happen in them that it seems like just yesterday that all 5 of our family would sit down together at the table for dinner. Yet in another way it seems much longer than that. It seems like I have traveled many miles down the road of life since July 23 of 1966. I know that I have learned to place more dependence on the Lord and less on myself these past 2 years, and I know that this is true with you, also. I know that you have at times been lonely over these past 2 years, as I have been lonely at times, also. We must live in faith and hope, knowing that with Jesus we have a friend to the end, and that in Him our lives will some day blossom into life everlasting, and our love will bloom and grow to full and perfect love. As we live in that blessed hope, let us constantly press on toward maturity in serving Jesus. I wish I could be with you at this time, but I'm happy that we have the assurance that nothing can ever really separate us, as long as we share in the love of our Savior. [Rom. 8:35, 37-39]. Well, I'd better bring this to a close. Thank-you for writing to me so faithfully and consistently.

With my love and my prayers,
Mike



*Greetings from: Sinoia, Rhodesia
Tuesday Nite- July 23, 1968*

Dearest Mom,

Received your letter dated July 14 on July 22 [yesterday], which you had sent from Mason City. Since you are leaving for California on July 26, this may not get to you 'till you get back to Iowa.

The Lord has continued to bless our efforts here in Rhodesia, and as of now over 770 souls have accepted Christ through our evangelism. I do not know the total number of people we have won before, but I'm pretty sure it would be in the 10,000's.

Hope your flight is a good one, and that the trip will be an enjoyable one. I'll be praying for you & the Schmitz's!

Two years ago today was July 23, 1966. These past two years have been a time of testing and challenge for us, but also I feel that they have been a time of great growth in our Lord! The place in my heart for Dad and Marilee is very great, and I know that nothing on earth is ever going to fill this place. However, it is the great joy of knowing that we are going to see them again that keeps me going, and helps me to constantly "press on" in service to our Savior. You have fought a difficult up-hill battle these past 2 years, Mom, but I know that you have "fought a good fight," & have "kept the faith." I know that we are both much closer to the Lord today than we were those two years ago!

Thank you, Mom, for being an example of faith and courage to me, and a source of love and strength. You have come a long, long way these past 2 years, and let us serve Jesus together to the end, and give Him our all, even as He has given us His all! May God watch over you, and direct you, as you live for Him!

With my love, Mike.

Two years ago today was the plane crash! I wish I could be with Mom & leave for a few home hours. It is difficult for me to comprehend that I am some 10,000 miles away from them! I look at my life today, and wonder where I would be right now if Dad and Maude had not been killed! I also wonder where I would be if it had been me as the 3rd passenger of the plane instead of Mom! I guess there are many things that I could 'wonder' about, but I know that I am where I am, and that life goes on, and that people are living without Jesus all around me, & that my only real responsibility is to struggle to carry out Matt. 28:19,20. May God help me to give my strength and energy to this end! Went calling in African location most of the day, & many people gave me their decisions for Christ, & said they would walk forward at the invitation, but every one of them failed to show up. It makes me wonder about the integrity & sincerity of the African people here in Kinshasa. I must give my life in getting the message out, & then leave it up to each individual soul and to God as to what the response is!

HANDWRITTEN NOTES FROM MICHAEL'S AFRICAN JOURNAL OF JULY 23, 1968 AND JULY 27, 1968, TWO YEARS AFTER HIS FATHER & SISTER WERE KILLED IN THE PLANE CRASH . . . AND SIX YEARS BEFORE MICHAEL'S OWN DEATH IN THE SAME WAY.

Yesterday was Steve's birthday, and 2 years ago today was the funeral of Dad and Maude. Time rolls on and on, as the gates of eternity draw closer and closer. Dear God, as I press on into the future, may I be optimistic, but prepared! I was almost 1:30 a.m. before I finally got packed last night, & in just 4 short hours (at 5:30 a.m.) we were up again, to start the trip to Chidempoy. It has been a challenging week here in Kinshasa, and I have enjoyed working with Bro. Dde Munde. The Lord has blessed our efforts here with 46 decisions made for the Christ.

*Greetings from: Africa,
from your lil' boy Mike*

*July 28, 1968
Sunday Nite*

Dear Mom,

Tomorrow we leave Rhodesia for a 3-week crusade in Zambia. We have spent a truly fantastic 7 weeks here in Rhodesia. The Lord has continued to bless our efforts, and our Rhodesian campaign closes with 846 decisions being made for Christ. All but about 20 of these were for baptism into Christ!

I'm really looking forward, though, to getting to work with LeRoy & the other Zambian missionaries! Continue to pray that many more souls will be brought to Christ during our short stay in Zambia.

Got about 15 rolls of film processed, & most of the pictures turned out pretty good. A few rolls looked like they had been somewhat bleached by the heat, however! I haven't yet seen them with a projector, but the ones of Victoria Falls & the game reserves look quite good!

Found out some real good news, at least for Larry's & my sake; this "good news" is that we will be able to leave for home a week early, as the Kenya-campaign has been cancelled, due to some unexpected complications in its preparation! This means that I should be able to spend 5 or 6 days in the Holy Land, & still make it back home in time for school to start. I believe classes start August 27, so I would like to make it back to Whiting August 24 or 25, if possible. We'll just have to wait & see what kind of a flight schedule can be worked out!

If your plans came along as you were planning in your last letter, you are spending tonite in San Diego! We're going to have a lot of experiences to share with each other when we both get home, won't we!

It's difficult to believe that 2 years ago yesterday Dad and Marilee were buried. You've come a very long way these past 2 years, Mom, and I say thank-you once again for the example of faith and courage that you have been to me! Let us continue to pray for each other, & hope to see you in less than a month!

*With my love,
Mike*



Marilee Pratt

Jan. 22, 1955 — July 23, 1966

April 7, 1969
Monday evening

Dearest Mom. . .

I wish to thank you for being a really wonderful mother to me. I have learned some important lessons from you, and I hope they will stick. Thank you especially for your unselfish attitude which you always show forth to me. I'm thankful that you have disciplined yourself with that kind of 'inner tranquility' that will permit you to simply stay at home and enjoy the kittens and [our dog] Fritz, and the farm with a genuine contentment. My heart was really warmed when I got back from Omaha that night of your wedding anniversary, and found you in good spirits and even in a state of gratitude. You have come far, and I'm truly grateful that you do not take time to indulge in the luxury of self-pity, for I am sure that many people would if they were in your position. I'm thrilled that you can seek out the good that has come these past 2 years and 9 months, and that you do not dwell on the hardships and heart-aches. I truly believe with all my heart that we as Christians should 'live up to our privileges', and keep looking up regardless of the darkness of the surrounding circumstances.

Thank you for loving me and for wanting the best for me, and for overlooking my many faults.

I'll be praying that you can continue in your Christian influence and witness, and that somehow you can provide the light that can penetrate the darkness that many are lost in.

Always let us remember II Cor. 4:8,9 and I Cor. 15:58.

*Love in our Savior,
Mike*

**"WHEN A MAN FEELS SOMETHING STRONG ENOUGH,
HE FINDS A WAY TO EXPRESS HIMSELF"**



*Januray 19, 1969
Sunday afternoon
2:15 P.M.*

... 'I've thought often about how the Lord has blessed us, and especially how He has blessed me in so many wonderful ways. Mom, I really do love you, and I hope you know that the home you and Dad have given me will always fill a big, warm spot in my heart. I know that you have given me an example of love and unselfishness which I will never forget, but words will never be able to give adequate expression for my gratitude. We don't know about tomorrow, but praise God we do know who holds tomorrow! ...I hope you won't let the up's and down's and problems and trials that often press down on you there at home get the best of you. Remember that we're headed for a better country and a better city, whose founder and maker is God...The devil's favorite game is trying to get us to take our eyes off the promises of God, and focus them on all the problems and trials of this life. Let's set our minds on surrendering our hearts to Christ, and let the devil try his luck against Christ, instead of ourselves...

I've been learning the words to a song entitled, 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. I'd like to close this letter with the words to this song:

*"When you walk through a storm hold your head up high,
And don't be afraid of the dark,
At the end of the storm is a golden sky,
And the sweet, silver song of a lark.
Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain,
Though your dreams be tossed and blown,
Walk on, walk on, with hope in your heart,
And you'll never walk alone, you'll never walk alone."*

*With my love,
Mike*

May 12, 1969

Dear Mother,

Another school year is rapidly nearing its conclusion!...

It's truly great to be alive and to know Jesus Christ in these days! A future that would be dark and confusing and frustrating is transformed into an exciting and meaningful adventure when we walk with Him.

I thought about you quite a bit yesterday [Mother's Day 1969] and spent time in prayer thanking my heavenly Father for giving me you and Dad and Steve and Marilee! So many times I get all wrapped up in my own selfish little world, but lately I've been experiencing the joy that only comes through living in our Lord.

I want you to have the words to this little description of what I will always remember as describing your loving attitude toward us kids.

"I AM TIED DOWN"

"I am tied down, by ... clothes lines on which I hang small blue and yellow rompers— by strings ... just common-place white thread-with which I sew on buttons, mend wee pockets, patch faded, thread-bare little suits. Ropes tie me down ... red jumping ropes, and those that pull small wooden animals about.

Young, bleeding, grimy thumbs there are to kiss-and bind with lengths of clean white gauze.

And baby arms around my neck ... Oh, yes ... I am tied down- Thank God that I am tied down."

Thank you for being so willing to stay at home, and simply be a mother to each of us.

As we turn our energies into the future, I know that God has a rich and full life of service and joy lined up for you, if you will let Him lead, and be ready to follow!

It's really a comfort to know who holds the morrow, for with God in us "What can man do to me?" [Heb. 13:6] May our prayer-life grow and expand as we seek to better know Him!

*Love always,
Mike*

September 13, 1969
Saturday afternoon
2:35 P.M.

Dear Mom,

It was really good to talk to you! I feel that the Holy Spirit must have had a part in my calling you, for it seemed to do us both a lot of good! It is truly great to have the steadying influence of the Rock of Ages to guide us through all the up's and down's of this ol' life.

...I'm really glad to hear that you are spending time studying the Word and absorbing spiritual food from Bro. Wilson's lectures! I am persuaded that true inner peace can only come from saturating our hearts and minds with God's Word, and by spending much time in meaningful prayer. The thought that "we need to pray, and then continually strive to live so close to God that we are confident that our prayers are being heard" has taken on new meaning for me! We're taught in the New Testament to place our confidence in faith in God, not in our [human] feelings, and then by faith we can claim the promises of Matt. 7:7 and John 14:13, 14, and I John 5:14, 15, and Matt. 21:22.

...Well, time continues to tick away, and I've got a lot of studying to dig into! I hope that we can learn to share an abiding love grounded in our Lord in greater ways as we spend more time in His Word and in prayer with Him!

*With my love always,
Mike*

The mind cannot ~~be~~ ^{absorb} more
than the bottom can endure!



Monday evening

September 1, 1969

6:15P.M.

Dear Mom,

I'm sending you the little "Today" meditation which you had on the ice-box. I just pray, Mom, that we can let God mold us into the kind of clay that he can really find useful in His kingdom all the rest of our days! I've got a long way to go! Please pray for me!

Love always, Mike

A Meditation for Our Times

JUST FOR TODAY I will try to live through this day only, not to tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do things for 24 hours that would appall me if I had to keep them up for a life time.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be happy. This assumes what Abraham Lincoln said is true, that "Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be." Happiness is from within; it is not a matter of externals.

JUST FOR TODAY I will try to adapt myself to the present, and not attempt to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my family, my business, and my licks as they come and fit myself to them.

JUST FOR TODAY I will take care of my body. I will exercise it, care for it, nourish it, not abuse it nor neglect it, so that it will be a perfect machine for my bidding.

JUST FOR TODAY I will try to strengthen my mind. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer; I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

JUST FOR TODAY I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will help somebody by a good turn and not get found out; I will do at least two things I don't want to do, as William James suggest "just for exercise."

JUST FOR TODAY I will be agreeable. I will appear as well as I can, dress as becomingly as possible, talk low, act courteously, be liberal with praise, criticize not at all, nor find fault with anything and not try to regulate nor improve anyone.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a program. I will write down what I expect to do. I may not follow it exactly but I will have it. It will eliminate two pests - hurry and indecision.

JUST FOR TODAY I will be unafraid, especially I will not be afraid to be happy, to enjoy what is beautiful, to love, and to believe that those I love, love me.

JUST FOR TODAY I will have a quiet half hour all by myself. In this half hour I will give thanks to Almighty God for the abundance that is mine.

This is the age of the half-read page
And the quick hash and the mad dash
The bright night with the nerves tight
The plane hop with the brief stop
The lamp tan in a short span
The big shot in a good spot
And the brain strain and the heart pain
And the cat naps till the spring snaps
And the fun's done.

—Saturday Evening Post



Thought
(4-10-70)

Up at 5:00 a.m. this morning. Fell asleep last night praying about this summer. Life seems so often to be a race between two seemingly good things. Dear God, if I should go home to the farm this summer, help me to have strength to be disciplined and consistent. Help me to get up a little earlier, go to bed a little earlier, watch a little less television. Help me to rise early, at sunrise, and tell to you, and confound your Word. Help me to do things around home and for Mrs. Holmes, little things that are not absolutely necessary, but things that are helpful. Help me to walk around and think, and to be alone with you. To think about you, and the crops, and the machinery, and the possibility of a wife, and children, and a cow or two, a lamb, a goat, a pig, a few Bantam hens, a duck and some geese, and perhaps a pony. Help me to be willing to pull that extra weed, both at home and at Mrs. Holmes', and help me to take time to talk with Dick and Melba and the folks who live up in Mrs. Holmes' tenant house and with Mrs. Holmes. Help me to be willing to listen, and to care and to share. Help me to take time to feast upon a fading sunset, and listen to a singing lark. Dear God, help me to know you, and to follow your leading.

What would you do if God made you live on ten times what you put in the offering today?

A man's true wealth lies in what he gives away.

There's going to be:
no sex in heaven,
no food in heaven,
no money in heaven.
How many want to go?

There's no pocket in a shroud.

First 50 years of health to get wealth,
Last 10 years, spend wealth to get health.

A wise man carries his possessions within. Death means leaving behind all you HAVE and taking with you all you ARE!

It's not what you'd do with a million,
If riches should e'er be your lot,
But it's what you're doing right now
With the dollar and a quarter you've got.

It is always more important to have something to live FOR than something to live ON.

The ones who seek to fill their lives
by buying cars and clothes and rings,
don't seem to know that empty lives
are just as empty filled with things.

Not he who has much is rich, but he who gives much.

I cannot afford to have anything or anyone that I cannot afford to do without (except Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages).

rather than "appear to be
successful," strive
to be
surrendered!



Michael praying in Gethsemane

Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

Life is a mixture of sunshine and rain,
Good things and bad things, pleasure and pain...
We can't have all sunshine, but it's certainly true,
There is never a cloud the sun doesn't shine through,
So always remember that whatever betide you,
The power of God is always beside you...
And if friends disappoint you & plans go astray,
And nothing works out in just the right way...
And you feel you have failed in achieving your goal,
And that life wrongly placed you in an unfitting role...
Take heart and stand tall, and think who you are,
For God is your Father and no one can bar,
Or keep you from reaching your desired success,
Or withhold the joy that is yours to possess...
For with God on your side it matters not who
Is working to keep life's good things from you...
For you need nothing more than God's guidance & love,
To insure you the things that you're most worthy of...
So trust in His wisdom & follow His ways,
And be not concerned with the world's empty praise...
But seek first His kingdom, and you will possess,
The world's greatest treasure, which is true happiness.

Well, Mother dear, it is time for me to get ready for a church service to be held at 3:00 this afternoon, so I'll bring this to a close. Thank-you for being my Mom, and for loving me in spite of all my faults and weaknesses.

Love, Mike

10-18-70

Lord, help me to be honest with people! Help me to operate from the right motives. Help me feel relaxed around people, & accept them as they are, & expect them to accept me for what I am. Deliver me, Oh God, from a pretense! Give a refreshing, relaxing naturalness that flows from the reassuring confidence of knowing you! God, give me a sensitivity & a flexibility, and at the same time an abiding stability from being grounded in you. Isaiah 30:15 b

10-19-70

Father, Help me to enjoy the good, simple things of your creation! Help me to feel natural and relaxed and at home with you and your people and your creation. Help me to enjoy the ~~best~~ beautiful simplicity of migrating birds singing, of a quiet sunset, of a soft meadow, of trees bursting out in the colorful tones of autumn.

Many preachers would make good martyr material . . . as dry and dead as they are.

When I was in high school, I developed the ability to look at a preacher right in the eye while he was speaking and have my mind many, many miles away!

I Cor. 14:40 does not say, "Let all things be done traditionally and in boredom."

If not mad, sad, or glad, then sermon = bad.

Too many hypocrites in the church; why, come on in, brother, there's always room for one more.

The church is like the ark — if it were not for the storm without, the stench within would be unbearable.

It is to be regretted that many song leaders act like cheer-leaders on a losing team.

When the sermon begins, it is not time to turn off, but to turn on and tune in.

The only song, it seems, that we can sing with honesty is the song, "I Shall Not Be Moved."

The fastest growing religious movement in America is man's worship of himself.

The church faces an impossible task when it attempts to make a group of unconverted people appear to be a successful church.

If we have our eyes on the Son, the shadows fall behind us! . . . It is only a short distance from Mount Carmel to the valley of despair. . . . It's extremely difficult for the Devil to penetrate a thankful heart.

The Lord came not only to comfort the afflicted, but to afflict the comfortable.

Self pity is a short cut to insanity.

To a Christian, even the valleys are higher ground. . . . Strength is gained by overcoming adversity, not by giving in to it. . . . Good sailors are not produced on calm seas.

A joy shared is doubled, a sorrow shared is cut in half.

O God, give us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed — the courage to change what should be changed — and wisdom to distinguish one from the other.

Blessed is the person so flat on his back that the only way he can look is up.

Thought and comment, 10/10/70 — Governor Robert Docking, of Kansas, after plane crash of Wichita State University's football team, killing thirty persons in all, said this: "I find this prayer running constantly through my mind, 'Dear Lord, help me! The sea is so large, and my boat is so small'".

Discourage = dis "courage"

Most of us are afraid to expose our real needs.

We're not condemned for falling down, but for failing to get up again.

Thought

(4-22-70)

"Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained."



I would rather have one man who knows how to pray than ten men who can preach. —Bounds, in "Power through Prayer"

A wise person makes more opportunities than he finds.
— Francis Bacon

Be bold! It might even be contagious.

A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

There is no argument against love!

If we know Him we will naturally want to make Him known.

Some people can give more reasons why they can't witness, than they can name reasons why they believe in God.

If living men knew what dead men know, the world would be saved in less than one hour.

The Great COmission has become the Great Omission.

What folly! A man will go down into the mud and mire to pick up a quarter, but he will not come up out of the mud and mire to receive the gift of life eternal.

Prospects do not have to be discovered, just recognized.

We sit and debate the price of admission while people are dying in the street.

I wish I could say things with the impact of a thousand-pound sledge hammer.

Majoring in minors -- the command to "Go into all the world" is much clearer than the command "do not dance." We need to be aware of the positive commands more than the negative ones.

Be careful that you do not win the argument and lose the person.

Communists operate under the principle that might makes right; Christianity operates on a diametrically opposed principle, "right makes might!"

Desire will find a way, indifference will find an excuse.

Attitudes are contagious!

Knowledge without zeal is perhaps worse than zeal without knowledge.

The most tragic mistake a person could possibly make is to gamble eternity and lose.

A little light destroys a lot of darkness.

We are saved by faith, not by feeling. If you want to feel right, get right.

The world watches America . . . while America watches TV.

"If you live like you should, the preacher can tell the truth at your funeral!"

⊛ → Eternity -- how pleasing, dreadful thought!
- somebody explain to me "eternity"?

Thought

(11-22-70)

1- cannot feel at home in this world

⊛ { there's going to be:
no sex in heaven
no food in heaven
no money in heaven
How many want to go??
- some people eat to live, but others live to eat!

Thought

⊛ (7-25-71)

I cannot afford to have anything (anyone) that I cannot afford to do without!

- except Jesus Christ, the Rock of all Ages!

Psalm 51 = total sin
Psalm 32 = total forgiveness

Forgiveness is remembering without resentment.

Galatians 6:2 = bear, not bare, one another's burdens.

A man's true character is described as what he would really do if he knew no one would find out, or what he thinks about when he is all alone, by himself, in quiet moments away from the crowd.

The way of transgressors is hard — the yoke of Jesus is easy. (Matthew 11:28-30)

You have to plow up the weeds before you can get a good crop.

If God does not chastise America, He ought to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Blessed is the person that becomes so sick with self that self cries out, "I must die!"

Every selection involves a rejection! Every choosing must, of necessity, involve a refusing.

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too often, familiar with her face . . .
We first abhor, then pity, then embrace.
— Alexander Pope

Jesus came, not only to keep people out of hell, but also to keep hell out of people.

To live in the presence of eternal truths and permanent ideals, this is what keeps a man patient when the world ignores him, and calm and unspoiled when the world praises him.

You are no better because people praise you, you are no worse because people condemn you; what you are, you are.

Concentrate upon principles, circumstances will take care of themselves.

An opinion is something you hold; a conviction is something that holds you.

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he is marching to the beat of a different drum. Let him step to the music which he hears, no matter how measured or far away.

— Thoreau

There is nothing so powerful in all the world as an idea whose time has come.

Stand still and look, until you really see.

Only begin and the mind will grow heated; only begin and the task will be completed.

— Goethe

Yesterday is a memory; today is an opportunity; tomorrow is a mystery; after that is eternity. Make the best of your memories, the most of your opportunities, and prepare for eternity. Then tomorrow will take care of itself.

I'm concerned about the future; I expect to spend the rest of my life in it.

There is no pillow so soft as a pure conscience.

Nobody has a good enough memory to really be a successful liar.

Rivers are crooked because they always take the path of least resistance — people get crooked in the same way.

A parent telling a child “be careful” has the same effect as the child telling the parent “don’t worry.”

If God had intended for us to talk more than we listen, He would have given us two mouths, and only one ear.

Keep your mind on your work, not your work on your mind.

Try to do what is right, not what is easy, popular, or convenient.

If you do not stand for something, you are apt to fall for anything.

Be careful who your heroes are!

I’ve never found a real substitute for honesty.

It is sometimes difficult to assess the present accurately, because it is so close to us

Nothing delays progress like an ample deadline.

A wise man will want to ever be with him who is better than himself.

It is better to be in chains with friends than in a garden with strangers.

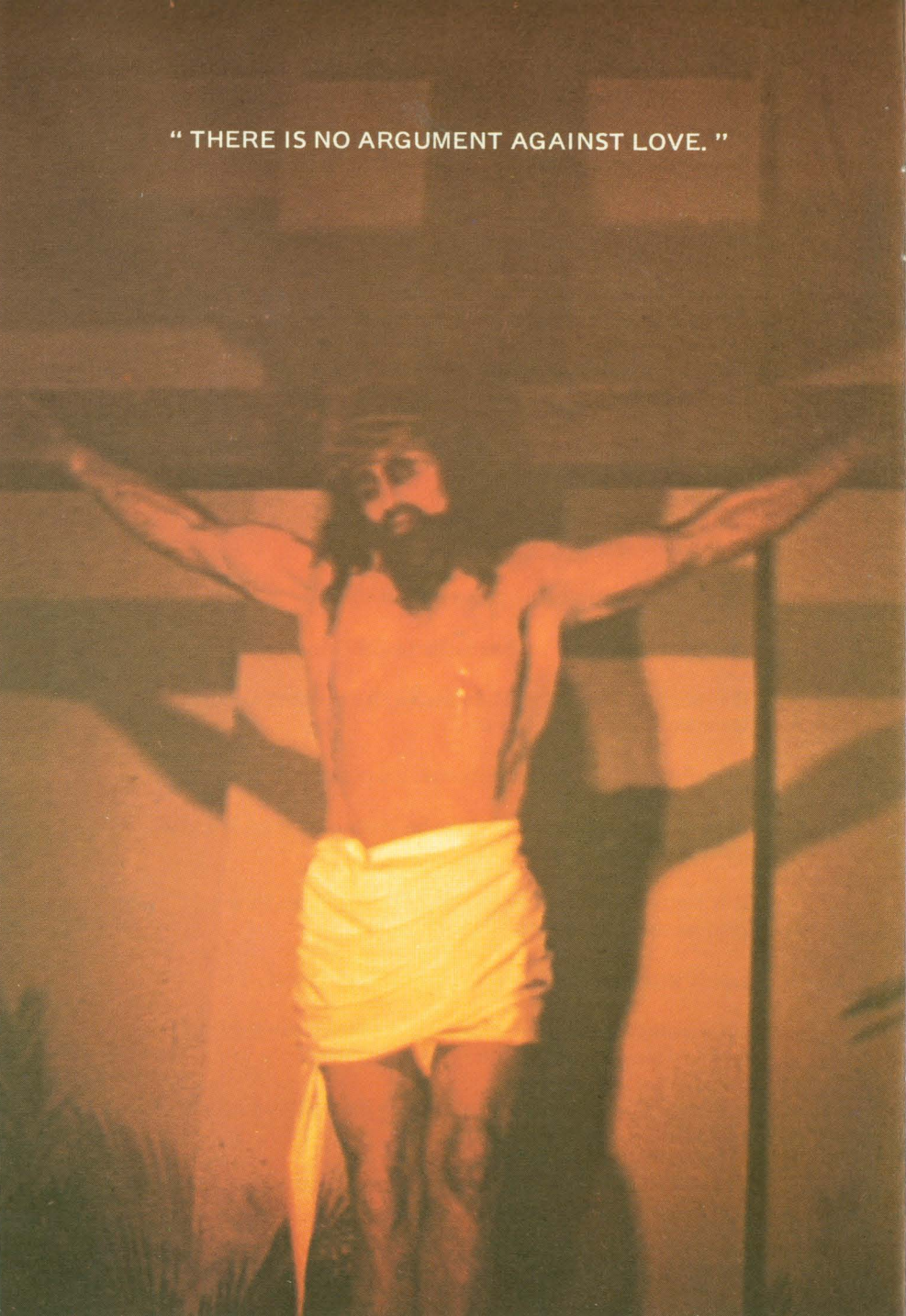
Don’t give people things; give them yourself.

The average American’s obituary can be summed up in three short words: hurry, worry, bury.

It doesn’t take a very brave dog to bark at the bones of a dead lion.

Happiness comes not from doing what you like, but from liking what you do.

" THERE IS NO ARGUMENT AGAINST LOVE. "



Father took son to a high mountain, so he could look out in all directions. He said, "Son, God's love is as big as all this!" The boy replied, "Then we must be right in the middle of it!"

Blind Bartimaeus wasn't loved by very many people, but one person loved him and that's what made the difference.

People are easy to love when they are lovely, but they need love the most when they are unlovely.

Love spawned of desire is lust,
It can soon be fulfilled and passes away.
Love spawned of need is selfishness,
This, too, is met and dies.
Love spawned of God is eternal,
It changes people and perpetually brings fulfillment.

It's not how much you know, it's how much you love.
. . . Love is what opens the door to lonely, empty people desperately in need of the Great Physician. . . .
God uses us in direct proportion to our preparation and our compassion. . . . We've done it for the most of these, the biggest of these, but how much have we done for the least of these?

Loneliness is one of the worst things in life.

Exposure reduces sensitivity. . . . Jesus valued people and used things; too often we value things and use people. . . . At least he who loves only himself has very little competition.

Care is what bridges the generation gap.

How can I serve Jesus this summer? Go find someone unlovely to love! (Matt. 25; I Cor. 13)

Christians should be the kindest, lovingest people on earth.

5-8-72

Every now & then, it is good to stop & ask yourself, "Why ~~am~~ am I really here, upon the face of this earth?" "What am I doing, & where am I going, & who am I?"

Life = more than just the satisfaction of fleshly desires!
Cultivate a fellowship & relationship with God that grows sweeter with each passing day! Outwardly we grieve, but not so inwardly! 2 Co. 4:16-18

A starter going out on 3000 John Deere, or some holding off planting til May 9 or later, are no longer the things that matter in the life of my dad! I must keep the earthly circumstances in their proper focus & perspective, realizing that I'm constantly moving forward in my sojourn toward a better city!

On God coming!

One thing to remember - perhaps today! ~~And~~ Perhaps this very day Jesus Christ will come back to earth, & say "Gentlemen, it's closing time!" And all the helter-skelter scheme of men will come to one strategic conclusion, & all the machinery of this earth will come to a grinding halt! The fact is that Jesus Christ is coming back again!

If God could use Balaam's ass, maybe there's hope for me.

How can we move the world with a message that has not moved us?

There's a difference between having to say something and having something to say.

Let the word of God drive men to preach, not let preaching drive men to the word of God.

If you don't have the life you don't have the language.

Jesus, the world's greatest teacher, was a story teller. He was the master of one-syllable words, reducing profound truths to an understandable simplicity.

You learn something by direct contact with men that text books never seem to get across.

Design your sermons so that the women and children can understand them all . . . that way the men will get about half.

We must conduct ourselves in such a way that we are not remembered for our cleverness, but Jesus for His greatness.

Beware lest you become more concerned with filling the pews than filling the people.

I would rather try to restrain a fanatic than to resurrect a corpse.

I don't have a sermon, I have ideas to share; ideas are usually more helpful in a dialogue than in a monologue.

Too many of us are long on profession but short on production.

Jesus said, "make disciples"; we "establish churches."

Dr. Livingstone said: "Sirs, I have it on the word of a gentleman of the highest honor that He will be with me."

When it becomes impossible for us, it only becomes natural for God.

O that a man might arise in me, that the man I am might cease to be!

In every avenue of life, Jesus sufficiently satisfies.

Don't get strung out or hung up or tied down or up tight, but hang loose and let Jesus put it all together.

I must remember that desire can sometimes accomplish a whole lot more than ability, and that God can help produce both. Philippians 2:13.

We want Jesus to come back and take us home, but not before our noon meal. (II Timothy 4:8, we must love His appearing.)

There is a difference between the wife who wants to appear to be the perfect wife, and one who desires to simply please her husband.

The many options we face in what we call leisure time: income taxes, reading a good Christian book, attending a B.B. game, watching TV; it takes discipline to turn down the good things for the best.

If the shoe fits wear it; if the dress doesn't fit, go get one that does.

Can you think of ANYTHING good for you that you cannot do as a Christian?

Do you enjoy or endure your relationship with God?

God is not lacking in power but permission. . . . We've been inoculated with so many small doses of Christianity that we've become immune to the real thing. . . . It takes Christ within, not rules without. . . . There are two kinds of people in the world: those who control their fleshly appetites and those who are controlled by their fleshly appetites. . . . He who has put faith out of his heart almost always has first put obedience out of his life. . . . Hebrews 12:4, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin . . ." Most of us have not even resisted unto sweat!

If someone has to suffer in your life, don't let it be Jesus, for He has suffered enough already. . . . Nobody ever improves without changing. . . . So many people want to serve God — but only in an advisory capacity. . . . I would rather walk with Him by faith, than to walk alone by sight. . . . The real question for the Christian is not, "Do you have Jesus?" but rather, "Does Jesus have you?" . . . Don't be a compromiser, but don't be an isolationist either. . . .

We need a ministry of tears.

Are you fun to live with? . . . John 10:10 comes as I give myself away to others. . . . Discipline is not easy! It is never easy to walk an unused path. . . . What we need is to get down on our knees and ask God to purify us! I cannot do that for you, but I must do that for myself. . . . May God do something for me, THAT I may do something for others.

Promises are no good unless they are claimed!

True Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried. . . . Wise men still fall at His feet and worship Him! . . . If faith is a bucket lowered down into the well to draw up the water of life, obedience is the bottom of the bucket. . . . Lord, help me to remember not only WHO I am but WHOSE I am.

It is better to have prayer without words than words without prayer. . . . The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.

There will always be those born in the objective case and the kickative mood.

General Douglas MacArthur — four requisites for victory:

1. A will to win.
2. Strength.
3. Adequate source of supply.
4. Knowledge of the enemy.

Everyone has a longing for belonging. . . . The church is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. . . . Impression without expression creates depression. . . . Church buildings are filling stations, not rest homes. . . . We fall out of church for the same reason we fall out of bed — by staying too close to where we got in.

Cross bearing does not mean enduring sermons. . . . The church must identify with the community in which it exists. . . . Appreciation leads to participation.

We spend so much of our emphasis on the GATHERING of the saints that we've forgotten the SCATTERING of the saints in a ministry of penetration and reconciliation. Men who would really involve themselves in the ministry of reconciliation are given the task of passing the offering plates or ushering at the door.

Many people say: "why should we have a revival; it never lasts!" A bath doesn't last either, but you need one often; you may think you don't, but those around you will know you do.

Michael Pratt — age 3



SEND THEM TO BED WITH A KISS

O mothers, so weary, discouraged,
Worn out with the cares of the day,
You often grow cross and impatient,
Complain of the noise and the play:
For the day brings so many vexations,
So many things going amiss;
But, mothers, whatever may vex you,
Send the children to bed with a kiss!

The dear little feet wander often,
Perhaps, from the pathway of right,
The dear little hands find new mischief
To try you from morning 'till night;
But think of the desolate mothers
Who'd give all the world for your bliss,
And, as thanks for your infinite blessing,
Send the children to bed with a kiss!

For someday their noise will not vex you,
The silence will hurt you far more;
You will long for their sweet childish voices,
For a sweet childish face at the door;
And to press a child's face to your bosom—
You'd give all the world for just this!
For the comfort 'twill bring you in sorrow,
Send the children to bed with a kiss!

MICHAEL MEETS THE MASTER

It is great to be home for the holidays. . . to sit by the fire and dream of all the happy times from days gone by. We savor these emotional moments with the same mouth watering anticipation that makes us long for mother's cooking and all the special foods of Christmas. This treasure chest of memories is so closely associated with home that it is wound inseparably about the heartstrings of our mothers.

Thus it was that on Christmas Eve Michael Craig Pratt and two companions climbed into a private airplane and started home. Just a few short hours from their destination a storm of ice descended on them from the winter sky. The stress upon their little craft was so severe that a wing came off in flight. With hardly a moment's notice these three young men went out into eternity. It was Dec. 24, 1974.

Michael's mother was again beset by sorrow. Nine years before, her husband and daughter had died in a plane crash. . . and now her son was to perish in the same way.

You will be encouraged to know that Michael's mother has remained resolute and firm throughout these storms of life. Jesus Christ is a Gibraltar that never fails. Her treasure chest of letters from Michael was enriched by the discovery of a spiritual journal which he began on June 16, 1967. This journal chronicled his beautiful and biblical philosophy of life as well as his preparation for eternity.

Michael once wrote: "We cannot afford to get our roots so deeply in the things of this world that we would not be ready to leave it in a moment's notice."

We have every confidence that Michael Pratt is with his Master, and that ultimately this beautiful family circle will never be broken.

If living men knew what
dead men know, the world
would be saved in less
than 1 hour.



WHERE MIKE PRATT AND TWO COMPANIONS DIED, DECEMBER 24, 1974.

Thought
(5-16-70)

The verses in a graveyard say this:
"The ones who living come today
to read the stones and go away
tomorrow dead will come to stay."
- Robert Frost,



Wait . . .

Please read this final page.

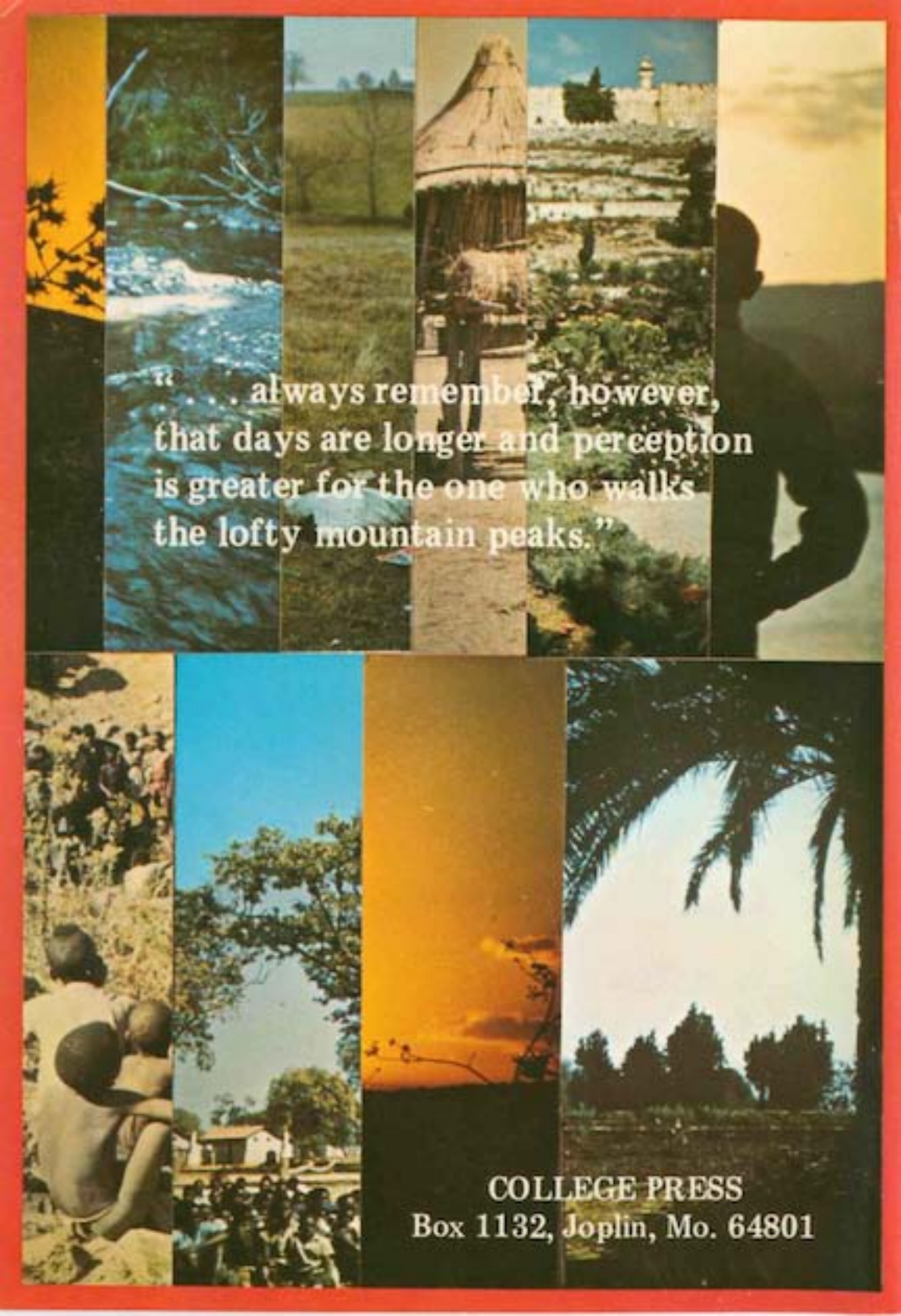
Perhaps it is the most important of all because it deals specifically with you. For the enrichment of your life will add a new dimension to the life and death of Michael Pratt.

The many references to death and eternity were not intended to be offensive. Mike simply wrote from the crucible of his own personal experience. He correctly concluded that preparation for death is one of life's top priorities.

Mike died on Christmas Eve. He did not intend it to be that way. He was on his way to a happy reunion with loved ones and friends. Yet death did not catch him unawares, for he determined years before to so arrange his life that he would always be prepared to leave with only a moment's notice.

The summation of his philosophy is probably best expressed by this advice which he once gave a group of graduates:

Be selective in what you **think and do!** Our many experiences are as **strokes of the artist's brush**, shaping and tinting **each of our characters** in sometimes very **subtle ways. . . .** Always remember that **Jesus Christ, our Lord, Master, Savior,** teaches **us the true beauty of unselfish giving. Let us strive to pattern our lives after the One who has opened the door to life, and life more abundant. Jesus Christ the Way of Fulfillment.**



"... always remember, however,
that days are longer and perception
is greater for the one who walks
the lofty mountain peaks."

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