

Myrna Beach

Becomers Mystery Person of the week - January 7, 2007

Myrna Beach calls herself "independent." When you hear what she went through as a youngster you can see why. And the Kansas "dust bowl" fueled her unsettled condition.

In an effort to stay employed, her father moved the family back and forth between the family farm in Kansas and work in Los Angeles. Myrna was born on one of these trips in Los Angeles on January 18, 1920, and the family returned to Kansas for the harvest when she was approximately six months old.

During another trip to California, when Myrna was about three, she remembers being lost and waiting in a police station until her family could be located and picked her up.

When Myrna was ten, her twenty-year-old sister died in a car-train accident. Within three years, both other parents had died as well. Her mom, devastated by her daughter's death, took her own life, and soon after, her dad died of a heart attack. Myrna and her four brothers were suddenly on their own. She felt so abandoned, missing her parents and sister and wondering why her mom would leave them as she did. With five children remaining, Myrna agonized, "Were we not good enough?"

Myrna lived with an aunt in Hiawatha, Kansas, for two years when she was in high school and attended church. Her senior year, she moved back to Burbank to live with her brothers. They all settled in Southern California, where the younger children finished school while the older boys worked off and on at Warner Bros. Studio in Burbank. Myrna says, "I don't remember being unhappy or feeling poor. I guess everyone was poor. But I knew I was different with no parents."

At age 16 and a senior in high school (she'd skipped the 2nd grade); Myrna caught the eye of her physics teacher. Rex Beach. He liked her and on certain class outings, they became acquainted. After graduation, they went on their first date to a movie in L.A., and eventually married. Together, they began a family that would eventually include a daughter and two sons. After Rex's three years with the Navy Air Corps, where he served as a navigation instructor, they moved to the Orange County flatlands, Placentia and Anaheim, with Rex settling into a teaching job at Valencia High School.

Though her birth family was Christian, they seldom went to church. Now and then Myrna had accompanied an aunt to church. At a revival service, Myrna accepted Christ. Though Jesus was now her "Savior," God still seem distant to her. Years later, she had a powerful spiritual experience. "God touched me," Myrna says, "and gave me the promise that I was okay, a good person and in need of nothing to earn His approval." Myrna pinpoints that event as bringing God in close, setting her free and spurring her growth as a person. It enabled her to forgive her mother and "all my own shortcomings were lifted".

As a married couple, Myrna and Rex became regular churchgoers. Myrna grew a lot in her faith during these early years of marriage, but church life changed when, from the pulpit they were told how to vote in an upcoming election. So, they found a new church where, by coincidence, the pastor said on their first visit, "This is a church - no politics here." They were hooked. Within weeks, Myrna was recruited and began a nearly 40-year career as a Crystal Cathedral Sunday school teacher.

When Rex died too young, Myrna says, "I had to learn to trust God with my future." It was then, Myrna recalls, "I realized I was not responsible for making anyone happy. Happiness has to come from inside."

One of her new ventures was finishing college (Cal State Fullerton) and becoming certified as a public school teacher and she graduated in 1972. Even while teaching school, she enthusiastically volunteered at the Crystal Cathedral as a Sunday school teacher (at every level), greeter, tour

guide. New Hope volunteer, ministering elder, and more. During this time of great spiritual growth, her favorite books included Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, A Person Reborn by Paul Toumier, and three of John Powell's - all high on her list of life-stretching influences.

In the late 1970s, when Dr. Schuller asked people to sponsor windows for the "all-glass church," Myrna's life received another boost. On her window, it said, "Lord, make my life a window for your light to shine through and mirror to reflect your love to all I meet. Amen." This has been Myrna's daily prayer ever since. We all agree she lives up to it.

Reprint from Crystal Cathedral Today publication:

Myrna Beach: Reflecting God's Love

By Dr. Jim Kok, Pastor of Care Ministries

Myrna Beach calls herself "independent." When you hear what she went through as a youngster you can see why. And the Kansas "dust bowl," which she and her family experienced, fueled her unsettled condition.

In an effort to stay employed, her father moved the family back and forth between the family farm in Kansas and work in Los Angeles. When Myrna was ten, her twenty-year-old sister died in a car-train accident. Within three years, both of her parents had died, as well.

Her mom, devastated by her daughter's death, took her own life, and Myrna Beach soon after her dad died of a heart attack. Myrna and her four brothers were suddenly on their own. She felt so abandoned, missing



her parents and sister and wondering why her mom would leave them as she did. With five children remaining, Myrna agonized, "Were we not good enough?"

It wasn't long until the five siblings moved permanently from Kansas to settle in Southern California, where the younger children finished school while the older boys worked off and on at Warner Bros. Studio in Burbank.

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