

Beautiful Ironies

by Bob Broadbooks



Summerville at Carrollwood



Bob and Carol Broadbooks
Nashville, Tennessee

I haven't heard my 87-year-old mother say my name for several years now. Alzheimer's disease has slowly closed off her mind to most of what she has loved and given herself to. Recently, I sang Mother's 10 favorite hymns, copied them on a CD, and sent it to my sister who is my mother's care giver. Anita played the recording for Mom. She stopped her fidgeting and pacing and for 45 minutes, she sat and listened intently.

Ironically, even though Mom cannot write her name anymore or tell what time it is, she was able to sing along with the songs. Somehow, "I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses" got through. Mom has always sung just a little flat. Amazingly, now she sings all the words and all the tunes right on pitch. Tunes she had trouble carrying, now carry her.

When I was a little boy, growing up in Nebraska, every Sunday morning we would leave our house an hour before Sunday School and drive across town. Dad would pull up in front of a ramshackle little home. He and I would wait in the car. Mom walked down the long sidewalk and knocked on the front door of the Summerville home. She wouldn't wait for them to answer the door. She just walked right in. I always assumed she had permis-

sion to do so although I never asked. I guess she knew that Mr. and Mrs. Summerville were sleeping off their late night partying.

Mom knew where the four kids slept. She would wake them up, wash them up and get them dressed up. Then like the Pied Piper, she would lead them out to the car. And every Sunday morning, I shared the back seat with the Summerville's. It seemed like an annoyance to me at the time, but for my mother, it was an anointed ministry. She felt responsible for those kids hearing about Jesus. She felt responsible for helping them get to heaven someday. Week after week. Mom gave away her money, her energy, and her Jesus at the Summerville house.

After many years, it finally became impossible for Anita to continue caring for Mom at her home, so she searched all over Tampa, Florida for the right Alzheimer's Care Unit. She found a perfect place. There mom has her own room and she is surrounded by patient, loving people. It is only a mile from Anita's home. It is the perfect place because the name of the home is "Summerville."

Mom gave herself in ministry at the Summerville home in Nebraska and now the Summerville home in Florida is returning the favor. The faith that Mother kept all these years, now keeps her

Beautiful ironies—wouldn't you agree?

Dr. Broadbooks is Superintendent of the Tennessee District, Church of the Nazarene

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