

Bill had been in the youth group of the La Crescenta Valley Methodist Church where our family were charter members. After graduating from high school he joined the Marines and spent his military service in Korea. When he returned he was employed for a time by Gilfillan Radio Company before going with the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena where he is still employed as an engineer.

Their wedding was a gala affair. Bishop Kennedy performed the ceremony. Marion Downs sang. The church was filled because word had gotten out that the Bishop was to be there. Marilyn and Bill have two boys: Wm. Francis, Jr. was born September 11, 1955; and Charles Edward was born October 24, 1958. Billy is interested in anything that grows. He is also an excellent cook and is good enough on the piano to give lessons. Chuck is an athlete. He plays third base on the La Canada High School team. The Peers live in La Canada.

Grandma and Grandpa are extremely proud of their five grandchildren as well as the parents.

Probably the greatest thrill of our lives came in September of 1974 when Velma and I celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary. Actually the celebration covered over a month's time. In thinking ahead about the event several months before Marilyn facetiously said "Dad and Mother are going to take us all to Hawaii with them to celebrate." Well it sounded like a good idea so we began to plan it. We first thought of going in September right at our anniversary date, but Jack couldn't arrange his schedule to get away so soon after the fall term began. So we decided to go in August. Arrangements were made for Shirley's parents to stay with their children. Billy and Chuck stayed at home alone. On the morning of August 20 Velma and I, Jack and Shirley, and Marilyn and Bill took off on a United Airlines 747 Jet for Hilo, Hawaii. It was the first flight for both Shirley and Bill.

We had made hotel reservations ahead as well as Avis reservations for a car at each airport. We were to have two days on each of the outer islands and three days in Honolulu. When we landed in Hilo we got our car and went to the Hilo Lagoon Hotel which was opened in the fall of 1971. As soon as we got our rooms we took the car and drove to Akaka Falls. The next day we took off early in the morning to drive clear around the island. We went first to Volcano House, the Kilauea volcano crater and Thurston Lava Tube. Then we went to Black Sands beach where we had a picnic lunch. We went to City of Refuge, Kailua, Kona and then on to Kamuela, Honokaa, Waipio Valley and back to Hilo.

Thursday morning we left early to go to Maui. Our hotel was the Maui Beach Hotel in Kahului. As soon as we got settled in our rooms we took off to go up to the Haleakala Crater which is over ten thousand feet high. We drove the entire distance over a winding road in fog and mist. Just before we reached the top we came out of the clouds into unbelievable blue skies and sunshine. We had purchased box lunches at Kahului so we sat on the rocks and ate Colonel Sanders chicken. When we got back to the hotel we took off again to see the Iao Needle and to get dinner. Velma and I stayed

in our room that night while the four younger ones went to Lahaina. The next morning we drove the 55 mile road to Hana. Again we had a picnic lunch. While eating we saw John and Cora Tincher. They had been serving the Hana Congregational Church during August. After lunch we went on another 12 miles to the Seven Sacred Pools. We were within a mile of Kipahulu where Colonel Charles Lindberg was to be buried on the following Monday. We didn't know it at the time, but we were within just a few hundred feet from the cottage at the Hana Hotel where Colonel Lindberg was dying. John Tincher had his service. Saturday morning we flew to Kauai. Our reservations there were at the Kauai Resort Hotel. We had made dinner reservations that night at Wailua Marina restaurant through our good friends, Rev. and Mrs. J. C. Runes. Unfortunately, the Runeses were called on an emergency to the mainland, but they had made arrangements for some beautiful carnation leis to be given to us at our table. It was a most pleasant surprise. On Sunday we again took a picnic lunch and went to Waimea Canyon. It was a thrilling trip with spectacular scenery. Monday morning we had time to drive to the end of the road on the east side of the Island at Haena. We saw the beautiful Hanalei Valley and Bay. Shortly after lunch we flew to Honolulu. There we were met in true Hawaiian fashion by Dr. and Mrs. Harry Komuro, Dr. B. Rhodes Martin, Jim Misajon and Dr. Earl Kernahan. The kids got a big thrill out of receiving leis Hawaiian style. Our hotel was the Pacific Beach Hotel on Waikiki Beach. It was a new Japanese Hotel. We were on the 17th floor with a veranda for each room and a spectacular view up the coast to Honolulu.

Monday night we had the Komuros, Misajons and Martins as our guests at the Willows restaurant. Anyone who hasn't had dinner at the Willows hasn't seen all of Hawaii. It was a most enjoyable experience in a setting of real Hawaiian atmosphere. Tuesday we drove around the Island of Oahu. That evening Harry and Yuki had a party in our honor in their home. They had a beautiful 50th Anniversary cake. Yuki and her daughter, Beth, sang the Hawaiian wedding song for us. There were about twenty-five of our friends there to help us celebrate. Wednesday we loafed. The women took a bus to see the Ala Moana Shopping Center.

Thursday it all came to an end. We left at 9:30 a.m. for home. It was the first trip to Hawaii for Jack, Shirley and Bill. Marilyn had been over in 1954. Velma had been there on five previous occasions. For me it was my twenty-seventh trip. No matter how many times I get to go to Hawaii each trip is as thrilling as the past ones.

We were all glad to get home but the nine days together were without any problem of any kind. The weather was perfect. We couldn't have had a nicer celebration than this trip turned out to be.

The actual date of our anniversary was Friday, September 20th. Our children and grandchildren had planned a reception for us on Saturday, the 21st. We were alone on the 20th so we went over to Lawrence Welk's restaurant near Escondido for lunch.

The reception Saturday was in the La Crescenta Valley United Methodist Church from 2 to 5. About 125 friends, relatives and former neighbors

honored us with their presence. Marilyn and Bill had worked out a surprise program. Rev. Bobs Watson, their pastor, had written a script based upon information they had gathered from Velma's bride's book and other sources. He had 64 slides made to go with the narration which he had put on tape. It was cleverly done and, in addition to being a surprise, it was almost a shock. The crowd thoroughly enjoyed it. Son-in-law, Bill, put the narration on a cassette tape for us and Bobs gave us the original script and the 64 slides. We have showed them several times.

After the reception some 25 relatives went up to Marilyn's for a buffet dinner in the evening. To be able to celebrate 50 years of wedded bliss together is something, but to have it celebrated for over a month as we did was certainly wonderful.

We wrote a letter to each family after it was all over thanking them for all they had done for us and telling them that even more than the reception we were grateful for them and what they meant to us. 1974 truly was a memorable year for us.



J. Wesley and Velma Hole on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

## Chapter 28

## MY RETIREMENT

My original plan for retirement was that I would do it in 1972. I had an agreement with Bishop Kennedy that I would stay on as long as he was in Los Angeles. Because of the 12 year limit on tenure in an area that was adopted in 1960, he would have to move in 1972. As far as age is concerned he could continue until 1976. When he began talking about retiring in 1972, I decided it would not be a good idea for me to retire the same year. I knew the Conference would want to go all out in its recognition of him and his service when he retired. I did not want any retirement recognition for me to detract from what would be done for him, nor did I want it to appear I was going out "on his coat tail" so to speak. I therefore came to the conclusion that it would be better all around if I retired a year earlier. I talked it over with the Bishop and he saw my point. Consequently, I announced shortly after the 1970 Annual Conference that I would retire at the Conference session in 1971. I had no idea there would be so many affairs to recognize my retirement. Altogether there were eleven different events across the Conference.

The first one was the Annual Meeting of the Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society on October 21, 1970. I was asked to reminisce about my memory of the bygone days. I dug up a lot of memories about Los Angeles in my youth and young manhood days some of which seemed to delight the crowd. Dr. Irwin Trotter presented me with a couple of gadgets to occupy my spare time after I retired and then gave me a beautiful desk lamp which now adorns my desk at home.

The Annual District Conference in Hawaii was scheduled for February 19-21, 1971. I wanted very much to attend it because it would be my last chance. One day late in the fall Bishop Kennedy asked me if I would do him a favor. I said for him to name it and I would do it. He said "I want you to deliver the address at the Annual District Meeting banquet in Honolulu." I tried to wiggle out of my promise on the basis that the people in Hawaii wanted to hear him-not me. He insisted and I finally agreed to do it. Velma and I decided we would go early enough to have some time to tour all of the islands. We left on February 11th and flew to Hilo. From there we went to Maui, then Kauai and finally back to Honolulu. We had a rented car on each island for two days and we really had an enjoyable trip-with no meetings to attend.

The banquet on Friday night was in one of the new banquet halls in the Princess Kaiulani Hotel in Waikiki Beach. Several hundred people were present. Dr. Frank Butterworth presided in his usual smooth fashion. It had been prearranged that each church was to bring two leis-one for Velma and one for me. After I had delivered my address, we were asked to stand and a parade of men and women up to the platform began. In nearly every case a man presented a lei to Velma and a lady presented one to me. When it was all over we counted seventy-four leis plus three beautiful table

bouquets of anthurium which were given to us. When I awakened the next morning with all those beautiful and fragrant flowers, I had the feeling I was in a mortuary! A beautiful Calabash was also presented to us reciting the fact that I had been "Architect" of District status. It was a memorable night!

The annual meeting of the Phoenix District Conference was held in First Church, Phoenix on Sunday, March 21st. I was invited to deliver the address at the closing session in the sanctuary that night. A beautiful plaque mounted on a walnut background which was the shape of the State of Arizona was presented to me. It reads "To J. Wesley Hole - Treasurer Southern California-Arizona Conference The United Methodist Church, Dedicated Christian, Loyal Churchman, Friend of the Cause of Christ, Servant to all who serve the Master, In Recognition and Appreciation of 37 Years of Distinguished Service To The Churches of Arizona - Phoenix District Conference March 21, 1971."

A beautiful and authentic Sun Kachina doll was also presented.

April 19th was a busy day. An annual luncheon for retired ministers and widows was held at First Church, Pasadena. I was asked to speak. A beautiful plaque was presented to me reading: "Presented by Retired Methodist Ministers, wives and widows living in and near Pasadena to Dr. J. Wesley Hole. With great gratitude for his 37 years of dedicated and skillful service in the Southern California-Arizona Conference, and for his concern and success in providing adequate pension funds for the retired ministers and their families."

That evening the Riverside District had its annual meeting in the University Church, Redlands and I again was invited to speak. Two tokens of appreciation were presented. One was a loving cup on which was inscribed "World's Greatest." The other was a ceramic figure which was weeping and on the base is inscribed "Sorry to see you go."

One day when I was supposed to be away from the office I came back unexpectedly and found the Executive Committee of the Commission on World Service and Finance using my office. When I showed up they "clammed up." I was supposed to be the executive officer of that group and I couldn't understand why they would be meeting without my knowledge of it. They simply told me it was none of my business. Then I began receiving letters that George Williams would intercept and tell me they should have gone elsewhere. I soon found out a dinner was being planned in my honor at the Newporter Inn in Newport Beach for May 27th. What an evening it turned out to be. A surprisingly large crowd was present.

Mr. Lester Wahrenbrock of La Mesa, a long time friend, was Master of Ceremonies. Dr. William Hobbs gave the invocation. Dr. J. Otis Young, Associate Publishing Agent represented the General Church. Dr. and Mrs. John King, President of Houston-Tillotson College, Austin, Texas were present and Dr. King presented me with a poem he had written and had framed which was titled "A Tribute to Dr. J. Wesley Hole." Mrs. Mildred Hutchinson

represented the women. Dr. Will Hildebrand represented the ministers. Lester Wahrenbrock represented the laymen. Bishop Kennedy spoke. Dr. A. Clark Robbins presented me with 15 pounds of letters beautifully bound in three loose-leaf books inscribed "Presented to Dr. J. Wesley Hole May 27, 1971." Incidentally, I later had to get two additional binders to hold all the letters, greetings, etc. I had received. Altogether over 500 such messages came. I knew then why George had been intercepting letters that should have been sent to Clark. One great thrill of the evening was a presentation in narration and song prepared and given by Mrs. Dorothy Fuller of Aldersgate Church, Tustin. Dorothy was a teenager thirty-five years before and was in my Sunday School class at the Washington Street Church in Pasadena. She had prepared a review of many incidents in my life which had taken a tremendous amount of research. She interspersed the narrative with solos-and she has a marvelous voice. Frank and True Webber and Lucy McGiffin were there from Northern California. It was truly a memorable occasion.

One very humorous incident occurred. A committee headed by Vivian Jordan was to decorate the tables. They were told a floral piece was being provided for the speaker's table so they were to provide flowers only for the round tables throughout the hall. They did their decorating in the afternoon. Just as they had finished the dining room crew brought in three more tables. They had already stretched what flowers they had about as far as possible, but they were able finally to come up with enough for two of the three additional tables. They left to go home to dress and planned to bring more flowers from home for the last table when they returned. Just before people began arriving they discovered no flowers had arrived for the speaker's table. They looked up Jack deVries, vice-chairman of the Commission, who had ordered the flowers. It was by now already past six o'clock and the flower shop was closed. They even called a mortuary in the next block hoping to get some flowers but there was no answer. Let Vivian's letter to us later tell the rest of the story.

"By this time Dorothy Fuller had gotten in on the discussion and she kept saying "We've got to get some flowers from some place. Aren't there any flowers some place we can fix?" I said "in what" and "at this hour?" But we finally asked the Newporter manager if there were any flowers we could pick. He said "Sure, take anything you can find." So we pulled Loy (Cutshall) away from the table, told her to grab her clippers (which I knew were in her basket) and come on. Picture, if you will, Dorothy, Loy and me out on the center strip of the entrance driveway of the Newporter at 6:30 p.m. frantically cutting daisies-the only thing in sight. Then follow us into the serving kitchen to discover three milk shake glasses which Jack and the manager had rounded up for us. Loy said "We can't use those!" Aren't there some baskets some place?" The manager grabbed three gold bread baskets-I grabbed some oasis already soaked and left over from the other table centerpieces and the three of us began sticking daisies into the oasis. All of a sudden we heard "Who counted the bread baskets? We are 3 short." Dorothy said "Don't say a word" and we kept poking in daisies as nonchalantly as possible, waltzed out and plunked our masterpiece in front of you and the Kennedys as you were being seated. Frankly, I could

have crawled through a crack in the floor if there had been one. Then when they did bring in the real arrangement at 8:50 p.m. or so and put those lovely pink and red carnations in place of the middle basket of daisies and left the other two on the table, we all could have died. The only end of the story I know is that the flowers had really been delivered at 5:00 p.m. and somehow the Newporter folk "lost" them. Oh well-it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience and I thought you might enjoy it." I am sure the ladies on the committee suffered a great deal of embarrassment but we really didn't think much about it. Everything about the affair was as near perfect as it could have been. I was particularly glad that both Jack's and Marilyn's families were able to be present.

Just before the Conference session we had the final round of pre-Conference laymen's orientation meetings. On June 10th we held one in the Orangethorpe Church, Fullerton. I was about to adjourn the meeting when Dr. William Hobbs, District Superintendent, said he had something he wanted to say. He then presented me with a beautifully hand printed scroll which had been framed and which said "Committed Service Award. We hereby affirm to all people that J. Wesley Hole is awarded the most sincere respect and appreciation of the Laity, Santa Ana District, United Methodist Church, for many years of unselfish service, worthy example and faithful concern." It is signed June 10, 1971 by "The Laity."

The next night our meeting was in First Church, San Diego. When the meeting was over the group was invited into the next room for a reception honoring Velma and me. A cake about 18" x 24" was beautifully decorated and referred to my thirty-seven years of service. It was a lovely and thoughtful affair.

When the programs for the Conference session June 14-18, 1971 came out, in addition to the usual picture of the Bishop and a page about him, there was a full page picture of me and a full page write-up. Then on Wednesday afternoon following the report of the Commission on World Service and Finance an entire hour was set aside as "The J. Wesley Hole Hour." Reserved seats in the front row of the Chapel had been set aside for Velma and me and for Marilyn, who was a lay member from the La Canada Church, my brother, Les, who was a lay member from Inglewood, and for Velma's three sisters, Gertrude, Florence and Eleanor, and her brother-in-law, Earl Paul, all from Hemet. Marion Walker, as chairman of the Commission, made the first speech setting the stage for the program to follow. He asked George Williams to escort Velma and me to the platform. When we turned around to be seated I saw that every seat in the Chapel was taken and people were standing all around the walls. The entire crowd was on its feet giving us a thunderous greeting. A. Clark Robbins presented us with a Sony tape recorder. He demonstrated by turning it on into the microphone. It played a tape telling that while we were at Conference a Fisher stereo combination AM and FM radio, record player and cassette recorder and player had been installed in our home. Also a check for \$400 was presented which later was used to install bookcases in my study. Will Hildebrand, Harry Komuro and Bishop Kennedy spoke. I was then introduced to speak and again everyone in the Chapel stood and cheered. I could

hardly get started. Fortunately, I had written my speech. Otherwise I am sure I would never have made it. When I got to the end and said "And now Hail and Farewell" the crowd again rose and applauded as I never had seen a Conference do before. Charles Kendall, who was seated near the console of the great organ began playing "Bless Be The Tie That Binds." After the Bishop had pronounced the benediction many, many of our friends came up on the platform to greet us - and there were many tears.

The final recognition of my retirement came on June 24th when those I had worked with throughout the years had a dinner for Velma and me at the Tick Tock restaurant in Hollywood. It was an intimate affair among my closest friends and colleagues. Ray Meyers was the Master of Ceremonies. He, Tom Farley and Francis La Point all spoke and I responded. Another plaque was presented reading "J. Wesley Hole In Appreciation of His Years of Faithful Service as an Employee of The United Methodist Center of Southern California-Arizona Annual Conference 1934-1971." I was particularly happy that Elizabeth Hiatt and Hazel Trotter could be present.

One other event took place a year later. It was the result of a young man from First Church, Whittier having been a youth observer at the 1971 session and attending the J. Wesley Hole Hour. The youth of First Church wanted to fix up a room for their own use and asked the Trustees to allow them to have an old storage room in the basement of the Wesley Building. This room had become known as the hole. The idea came to Brent Criswell, the youth who had been at Conference in 1971, to name their new room "The Wesley Hole." They cleaned the room, painted it, tiled the floor, and furnished it. On June 23, 1972 it was to be dedicated. Velma and I were invited to the dedication and I spoke. It was a lovely and clever idea and we not only enjoyed it - we appreciated it.

In all the responses I made to the wonderful things that were said I tried to express the hope that while my career had reached a climax, it would not end there. I quoted from Hal Luccock's book a few years ago about the high and daring hours of Methodist history. He called the book "Endless Line of Splendor." He said in the preface, "it is a moving story that reaches a climax but does not end." If that could be the description of my 37 years of service on behalf of the Church I love, then all my efforts have had abundant compensation.

## Chapter 29

## CONCLUSION

"The Hole Story" must come to an end sometime. No one knows what the future may hold for us, but for both of us the past has been full and rewarding. No one knows better than I do that what little has been accomplished in my career could never have been done without the help and support of many people. I have tried to include all who have played a significant role in the Story. If I have overlooked anyone, it is an error of my mind and not my heart. Before I conclude I want to say again how fortunate I have been and how grateful I am for the cooperation and help of an understanding and sympathetic companion of over 50 years. No one knows better than I do that behind every successful servant of the Church there is one who has waited patiently and sympathetically and many times lonely while her loved one has been away attending endless meetings and giving of his very life to the responsibilities he has accepted. Many times I got to go on trips and she had to stay home. Many other times she got to stay home and I had to go. There is a great difference, believe me.

When I was a young boy an evangelist told a story one night that I have always remembered. It was about a young man whose memory had slipped away and a loving wife who did all that was humanly possible to find a cure for his ailment. After every effort had failed and the wife was about to give up, someone suggested that a trip to the scene of their childhood might spark a memory that would start the restoration process. So the trip was arranged and together they roamed the hills where they had lived as children and had gone to school together. Suddenly one morning as the sun began to stream through the window, the young man cried out: "Mary, Mary where have I been?" She answered "My dear, you have been on a long, long journey." Then he asked "And where have you been?" Her answer was "I have been by your side all the way." I know the full significance of that answer. Velma has been by my side all the way.

Someone asked me when I was retiring what scenes in the drama of my life I would do differently if I had it to do over again. Not very much would be done differently. Obviously, I have made many mistakes which I would like to remove from the record but I know that cannot be done.

When I was in high school almost sixty years ago there was a columnist writing for a Los Angeles daily paper under the name of K.C.B. I clipped an article he wrote one day and just recently I ran across it.

"Once upon a time there was a father and a little boy. The father was a good man and thoughtful. He always tried never to hurt by an unkind word or deed. The little boy was thoughtless and as boys will in their selfishness, he never stopped to ask himself if what he said or what he

did would grieve someone. The father tried in many ways to teach his boy unselfishness and thoughtfulness. One day he took the boy to an old shed door and got a hammer and some nails. He told the boy that every time he was thoughtless or unkind to drive a nail into the door. The days went by and there were many nails in the door. Then the father told the boy when he performed some kindly deed he might go out and draw a nail. More days went by and thoughtless things drove in more nails and kindly deeds drew out more nails. Finally one happy day a proud small boy led daddy out and every nail had been removed. And then it was the father showed unto his boy the scar that every nail had left."

My one regret is the scars my mistakes may have made.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity I have had to invest my life in His service. I am also grateful for those, especially my family, who have made it possible for me to render whatever service I have been able to render. It has been a busy but rewarding experience.

And that has been the Hole Story!

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