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A Faith Worth Sharing

A Lifetime of Conversations
About Christ

C. JOHN MILLER


P U B L I S H I N G
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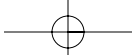
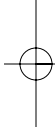
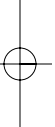
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To our son, Paul.

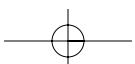
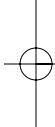
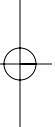
*It was Paul's idea that his father write
this book in the last weeks of his life.
He wanted Jack to write down some of
his stories of how he shared the gospel of
grace with friends, relatives, and strangers.
Jack and Paul worked together on many
different projects. Jack wanted to dedicate
this final collaboration to Paul.*

Rose Marie Miller



Contents

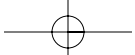
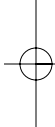
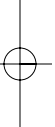
Acknowledgments	9
A Word from the Editors	11
1 Sharing a New Faith	15
2 Faith up Close	27
3 Faith and Two Kinds of Truth	35
4 Sharing My Faith with the “Virtuous”	47
5 Facing the Skeptics	59
6 Faith Looks for Prepared Hearts	73
7 Living Water for the Thirsty	85
8 A Faith for Fathers, Sons, and Orphans	101
9 Faith Learns to Love Strangers	117
10 Epilogue by Rose Marie Miller	131
Appendix A: “A New Life” Booklet	143
Appendix B: New Life Presbyterian Church and World Harvest Mission	151



Acknowledgments

Because Jack died after he had finished only a rough draft of this book, many people, both family and friends, had a significant part in bringing it to publication. In particular, I want to thank two of my daughters, Roseann and Barbara, who worked many hours organizing and editing this book. I also want to thank Sue Lutz, who did the final editing on the book. Sue has edited all of Jack's books, and it was a special gift from a busy lady when she worked on this final project.

ROSE MARIE MILLER



A Word from the Editors

Dad had a remarkable way of engaging people with the gospel. Some of these engagements took place in predictable ways and places: pastoring churches, writing books, and speaking at conferences.

But there were plenty of unpredictable encounters as well. Dad always felt responsible for the person he found himself next to—whether he was cooking breakfast in a boarding house, having a snack in a Paris café, or collecting trash in Uganda. Over the years we (his children) were the captive audience for Dad's stories about his efforts to share his faith. It became predictable that he would get himself into unpredictable predicaments . . . and regale us with the stories.

This is a book of some of the stories. In the last years of his life, Dad worked hard at writing a book for skeptics. As he weakened physically, it became an increasingly frustrating effort. It was in the real life, person to person encounters

A FAITH WORTH SHARING

that he came to life. Watching Dad's frustration with his current writing project, Paul (our brother), suggested to him that he write down the many different ways he shared his faith. Dad took up the challenge and began to record these stories in the last six weeks before he died.

These are the stories that Dad wanted to leave his family and friends. They are stories of faith begun and faith renewed, stories of how God changed people as they heard the gospel from Dad, stories of his failures and God's successes. As we read this book, we see that it is about the power of the gospel to change anybody—men in a boarding house, college students, drug-addicted hitchhikers, successful businessmen, and even Dad and his own family.

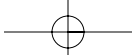
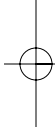
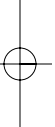
The structure that Dad used to share these encounters is the story of his own life. He weaves together the story of his faith journey with the stories of the many different people he met along the way. But he was not able to complete the book before he died. When we opened chapter 10, we found just two paragraphs. Because Dad left us in the middle of the book, we asked our mother to write an epilogue. It incorporates some of what he wanted to include in the final chapter.

Dad's faith was contagious. To be near him was to get a fresh infusion of faith—and to believe again that God is in the business of chang-

A WORD FROM THE EDITORS

ing people. Editing this book was a way for us to be near Dad again. We laughed and cried as we read the stories. It comforted us and changed us. Now it is his (and our) gift to you.

BARBARA MILLER JULIANI
ROSEANN MILLER TROTT
EASTER 1999



Sharing a New Faith

CHAPTER ONE

San Francisco, 1948

“I’ll take it.”

The boarding house on Eddy Street was dilapidated on the outside, and worse on the inside. But it offered a job and a place to live, and I needed both while I was at college. So I said to Bill, who owned the place, “I’ll take it.” With those words I accepted the job of breakfast cook for over a dozen single men.

It wasn’t much of a job, and I wasn’t much of a cook.

But Bill promised to train me. Early the next morning, under his watchful eye, I burned toast, overcooked eggs, and charred bacon. After an hour and a half, he limped away, grumbling, leaving the smoky battle station to me. Bill was elderly and shaky in health—watching me torch his kitchen had exhausted him.

From now on it would be up to me to master

A FAITH WORTH SHARING

the art of cooking breakfast for my blue-collar roommates.

After about a week I still burned the toast, but the eggs and bacon were no longer semi-incinerated. Most of the men had a good sense of humor, and some of them even made helpful suggestions about how to time my preparations. Cooking breakfast may sound simple, but doing it for that many men took coordination. It wasn't easy to have the eggs, bacon, toast, and pancakes all done at the same time.

Gus, a fellow student at San Francisco State, helped with the preparation of the evening meal for his room and board. On the basis of his experience, he gave me friendly encouragement every morning. At least as much as I could understand. He was Panamanian, and his knowledge of English was still limited.

Here on Eddy Street I had my first experiences with sharing my faith. I had become a Christian only two months before, while working as a flagman and laborer on a highway maintenance crew in southwest Oregon. Before that I had been a college student in San Francisco. But I had dropped out. I had too many questions that college wasn't answering.

I also think that a difficult childhood had caught up with me. My father had died when I was two years old. My mother remarried and my stepfather made life hard for all of us. I left home at sixteen and went to live with my sister in San