

John Moore
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Glide Memorial Church

What a difference—Chico and San Francisco! We left a small, quiet, college town for life in the city and a church in the Tenderloin. In our new home I heard the foghorns moan and sirens whine throughout that first night. A mile from the beach on 32nd Avenue in the Richmond, we could just see the ocean from the second floor back window. We exchanged the heat of Chico for cold, damp San Francisco, with sand fleas thrown in extra. Barbara would soon discover that she had to dress warmly, gloves and all, any time she worked in the yard. On beautiful, warm days people dropped their usual tasks to be in their yards or Golden Gate Park, just two blocks south of us. We were introduced to the city on our first Sunday when, driving through the Fillmore to church, we saw a bloody man, who presumably had been in a fight, lying on the sidewalk.

Glide Memorial Methodist Church, in the heart of San Francisco, struck me as a small-town church. Some years earlier a seminary classmate told me that when he had worshipped at Glide during World War II, he felt as though he was in the South. His perception of Glide Church was accurate. Until 1939 it had been the Fitzgerald Methodist Episcopal Church South, with Dr. Julian McPheeters as pastor.

In the late '20s, six or seven of the strongest Methodist Churches in San Francisco united to form Temple Methodist Church. The economy was booming when these churches went into debt to build a hotel, with a large sanctuary within, on McAllister Street, a block up from Market. The Great Depression that soon followed wiped out the church. The Navy took over the building during World War II, and later it was used by the IRS.

Ironically, the Depression, which crushed the nine churches that had become Temple Methodist Church, was a boon to the only Methodist Episcopal Church South in the city. Lizzie Glide built the Glide Memorial Evangelistic Center on Taylor and Ellis. The Fitzgerald Methodist Episcopal Church South, with 70 members, changed its name to Glide Memorial Methodist Church and moved in and dedicated the building in 1930. Several years later, in the depth of the Depression, a bank asked the Glide Foundation to take over the ownership and mortgage of the Hotel California, one block up the hill on Taylor Street. The hotel formed the bulk of the Foundation's assets until it was sold in the late '70s or '80s.

Toward the end of World War II, Dr. McPheeters left Glide to become president of Asbury Theological Seminary, the only fundamentalist holiness school in Methodism. Glide Church requested the appointment of a particular man to succeed Dr. McPheeters, only to discover later that the cowboy boots and hat preacher that the bishop appointed had the same name but was not the man they had had in mind. John Kenney, a former

M.E. South preacher, served Glide in the '50s, followed by Norm Conard, another district superintendent. Like most of our inner city churches, attendance and membership continued to decline. I hoped, as I'm sure my two predecessors had hoped, to pull the church out of the doldrums.

When we arrived, a couple of hundred people gathered for worship in a sanctuary that seated 500, considerably fewer than worshiped in Chico. We had a Sunday School of 15 or 20 children, no youth group, but an active group of working young adults. Ten or 15 couples gathered socially each month in homes. A strong group of seniors met every Thursday for a lecture by a USF professor on current events, followed by a luncheon. Dick Judd, an excellent organist, directed our small but good choir, which included four professional soloists.

Glide Church was much weaker than Chico Trinity Church. Glide's attendance was less, and Sunday School was small. Glide was weaker in every respect except the choir. Moreover, only a handful of able people held the church together: Art and Phyllis Moran, Gentry Johnstone, a young man who owned a service station but soon moved, and a few others made the decisions and did the work. It would not be easy.

The morning after our first night, we took Becky and Annie to a nearby school only to discover that we were in the Lafayette Elementary district three or four blocks from home. The schools told the children to get under their desks in the event of a bombing attack or other emergency. In such an event, parents were to expect their children to stay at school. The girls quickly learned to carry house keys on chains around their necks. The good news was Ben Adam, Becky's teacher. Becky's friendship with Ben has continued through the years. The bad news was Annie's teacher. Presidio Jr. High was integrated when Becky attended, but there were no Black students in her class. Barbara had a frustrating time as she tried to get the PTA to deal with inter-racial issues.

We missed Carolyn, who was completing her senior year at Chico High, but there were gains. Becky took flute lessons and Annie piano at the Conservatory. After a time, Annie switched to a teacher across the street and enjoyed the piano more. The girls took art classes at the DeYoung Museum. Becky rode the bus to CORE (Congress of Racial Equality) youth meetings in the heart of the Fillmore, a journey which a 12-year-old Anglo girl would hardly make even a few years later. Becky and Barbara and I called on one of Becky's friends, whose father, Dow Wilson, executive of the Painters Union, had been assassinated in front of his office [1964?]. The girls saw and met all kinds of human beings at Glide and in the Tenderloin. After the Hilton was built, they would ride the elevators up and down.

It was apparent from the first that in addition to the kinds of people you see in any church, Glide attracted schizophrenic, euphoric, depressed, and hallucinating people. Barbara became so frustrated in trying to work with some of the people that I suggested that whenever she went to Glide to imagine that she was wearing a white coat. It helped. One

young woman, whose father was a high-ranking officer in the Navy, had a master's degree, but her employed, retarded husband was the only one in the family with common sense. I noticed one Sunday that an usher was wearing a hearing aid. I didn't know that he was hard of hearing. He wasn't. After the service I discovered that he had been listening to the World Series. Most Sundays, someone in the congregation was hallucinating during the service. We thought that we had everything bolted down in our street-level chapel, which we left open for the public, until we discovered a radiator partially disconnected from the wall. During Advent we came upon one of our street visitors trying to persuade Joseph (a mannequin in a crèche) to have a drink with him. Soon after our arrival in Davis we saw a familiar face on the front page of the *Chronicle*. Reading the story, we discovered that a 75-year-old friend and member of Glide had been arrested for trying to rob a bank. When I was pastor, she begged me to buy her expensive IBM typewriter for \$50. She just couldn't adjust to living on her Social Security retirement income, which meant giving up I. Magnin suits and dresses.

A young adult from Hawaii who thought she was in love with me wanted to become my mistress. It wasn't long before I had to take her to San Francisco General Hospital. I called her father, who came immediately and took her home. She corresponded with us for a number of years and visited us with her family years later in Reno. At Davis, it was a teenager who wanted to have an affair with Barbara. Earlier, he confessed to sexual fantasies about me. We laughed that the only people who made passes at us needed psychiatric help.

When we arrived in San Francisco, the unions were picketing the auto dealers on Van Ness. When organizing efforts spread to the Palace Hotel, I preached on "Pickets in the Palace." In those days I reached for catchy sermon topics, thinking they might make a difference in attendance. When "toplessness" became the thing in the bars in North Beach and elsewhere, I chose my worst title: "Gownless Evening Straps." The sermon was no match for the title, although it dealt seriously with sexual mores and the gospel. It didn't take long to discover that sermon titles made no difference. Later I came to believe that it would be better if preachers entitled their sermons as composers do—Opus 132 and Opus 230. I rarely could give a good title to a sermon until after it was written, and then it was too late for the bulletin board and publicity. I never persuaded Barbara, however, for every once in a while she would slip me a list of "Nifty Jiffy Sermon Titles." They were good, but to create a sermon to go with them was tough.

The summer following our arrival in San Francisco, the whole family drove to Cedar City, Utah. Amos Cambric and I participated in a Bethel-Maine workshop, where we first learned of "T" groups. Amos, a Black pastor, had just come to the city to serve our church in impoverished Hunters Point. We were unusual, Amos and the four of us, traveling through Nevada (the Mississippi of the West), but we were never refused service at restaurants or motels. Nevertheless, that possibility was always in my consciousness, and I'm sure in Amos'.

I came to understand something more of myself and of group work in the 10-day workshop, but the most interesting experience came when it was announced that on the weekend the Hopis would be doing their Rain Dance. All of us who wanted to see the dance climbed into several cars and drove until late Friday night, when we stopped at a small Mormon mission to sleep a few hours. We set out early Saturday morning, not knowing the location of the dance. Following our leader, who knew where to inquire, we stopped first at an Indian village on a mesa, where some were preparing for a Butterfly Dance. By early afternoon we arrived at the village of the famous dance. We sat in a small inner court with our backs to the walls of the surrounding dwellings. When the rain began to fall, we covered ourselves with plastic to keep as dry as possible until the dancers appeared. Soon the men arose out of the earth through trap doors, one carrying a woven basket. Each man in turn took a rattlesnake from the basket, and the dance began. The dance ended as the men ran to the four corners of earth, where they set the snakes free.

It was a fascinating experience, which opened my eyes to understanding a drama that I had considered as mere superstition. The rain changed my understanding of the ritual. Rather than interpreting the dance as beseeching the Great Spirit for rain, I saw it as an expression of gratitude for the gift of life and all the powers that sustain life. My perception was confirmed years later when I learned of some of the rituals of the Paiutes.

I think that when Julian McPheeters left Glide, he became president of Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. For 10 years, most income from the Glide endowment went to the seminary. In 1949 the Annual Conference elected a new Glide Foundation board of trustees with Bishop Tippet as chairperson. About the same time, the IRS informed the foundation that it could not use interest from the fund simply to build up the corpus but had to use it for the purposes of the foundation. Consequently, the new foundation board offered a school of evangelism for pastors each fall. The foundation picked up the expenses of all pastors who attended. It was three days in San Francisco with time for adventures, in addition to speakers and lectures on evangelism. Tragically, one year, as the bookkeeper was bringing cash from the bank to reimburse those attending, he was shot and killed.

In November 1963, the Glide Foundation held its annual Evangelism Conference with the Dean of UCLA Extension as principal speaker. Dr. Kaplan, a Jew, had studied with Reinhold Niebuhr and other scholars at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Dr. Kaplan responded to some of the things I had said in my brief devotionals, especially a reference to Robert McAfee Brown's humorous likening of the cocktail party to communion. He and his wife had lived, like many Jews, without ever going to the synagogue or observing holy days with the family. He told me of the time he and his wife joined others to remember a friend who had died, a secular "shiva." It struck him that what they were doing was what synagogue and church had been doing for centuries, except that they had cut themselves off from the richness of their heritage. From that day on, he and his wife determined that their daughter would experience the gifts of their synagogue and heritage that could give to the depth and breadth of life.

In the middle of conference, Dick Walsh ran in and shouted, “Kennedy has been assassinated.” There was no way we could continue as planned, for our psyches were fixed on the same events as all Americans. I discarded what I had planned and we closed with a memorial service. Of course, sermon and music and prayers were changed for Sunday’s service as well.

With a new board and new personnel, the foundation program began moving in a new direction. In 1962 the board employed Lew Durham, an imaginative and creative person, to become director. He chose Ted McIlvena to work with young adults, Don Kuhn for publications, and Cecil Williams for another assignment. The relationship between the foundation and the church changed through the years. When Dr. McPheeters was pastor, church and foundation had one captain. After he left, tension prevailed with the church pastors regarding the use of foundation funds. Relations deteriorated to the point that a white line was painted down the middle of the second floor hallway separating the responsibilities of foundation custodian and church custodian. The tension had ceased by the time I became pastor. The foundation provided a major portion of the church’s income, and church and pastor had nothing to say about foundation funds or activities. The church had interns whom the pastor directed, and the foundation had its interns. We worked well together, but I did feel resentful when the foundation board rejected the church’s recommendation for office furniture as too expensive and later approved the same office furniture for the foundation offices. Before I left, I recommended that foundation and church become integrated. I didn’t anticipate that the relationship would one day resemble what it had been in Julian McPheeter’s time. Power has a way of pyramiding.

The tumult of the strikes in the city was followed by boycotts, demonstrations, and marches. In the fall of 1962 or winter of 1963, I was on a picket line in front of Schenley’s Distillers across Market Street from the Financial District. The farmworkers were calling for a boycott of all of Schenley’s products. I was surprised to see my new insurance broker carrying his clubs on his way to the golf course. I wondered what he thought of the new pastor.

I returned from a peaceful protest of the Vietnam War in front of the Pentagon a week or two before the Selma March in 1965. Neale Secor, an intern working with us, joined the other San Franciscans making that historic journey. A week later, our family joined with thousands of others in the Civil Rights march down Market Street. About the same time, Joe Glazer, executive of an association of reformed rabbis, Father Eugene Boyle for the archdiocese, Julian Bartlett, dean of Grace Cathedral, and several of us Protestants organized the Commission on Religion and Race. While the civil rights issue was foremost in our minds, some of us organized the Commission on Religion and Peace, an effort in which the Buddhists joined. Our principal contribution was an excellent one-day workshop.

Pope John XXIII was a miracle. The Second Ecumenical Council was old “Nicodemus” being born again. Archbishop McCuken invited several hundred Protestant clergy to dinner at Old St. Mary’s, near Chinatown. I should say “banquet,” for we feasted. This dry Methodist learned how the other half lived—with bottles of various kinds of wine on every table. Flaming baked Alaska topped off the dinner. I thought how different this was from my luncheon with Father Dwyer and Catholic laymen in the Sacramento Cathedral when I hit hard on the presidential appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican. Later I realized that my hosts had been more gracious than I. As I went into campus ministry in 1966, the spirit of ecumenism was enlivening and empowering.

Carolyn came home after graduation from Chico High but soon was off to work at the White Sulfur Springs campground. In the fall we took her, and her bike, to the University of California at Davis, helped carry her belongings to her dorm room, said good-bye, and drove home. The following summer she lived with us and operated an elevator in the Telephone building. In August of her junior year, 1963, the family drove to the Los Angeles airport where she joined other students who were headed for University of California Abroad programs. In New York they took a ship to France and then she traveled with her group to Bordeaux, where they would study for a year.

We lived through two pregnancies while in San Francisco. A friend from Hayward days called to tell us that her daughter was pregnant. We invited Cheryl, who was just out of high school, to come and live with us until the baby was born. It turned into a wonderful experience for her and our family. She and Becky and Annie got along famously. Barbara took her to her ob/gyn specialist, who cared for her, arranged for the adoption, and delivered the baby. Of course the painful part of the experience came when the family took the baby immediately after birth. Cheryl did see the baby 20 years later, when he visited her and the family.

Barbara became pregnant for the sixth time. All seemed to go well until near the due date. The only unusual circumstance was a call from the doctor to tell Barbara to stop taking a drug [methadrine?] prescribed to alleviate morning sickness, for it had been banned. I think it was some kind of amphetamine. Barbara says that it made her so high that she whipped through the housecleaning in no time and was ready to run for the office of mayor. In the sixth month, she began to bloat and put on weight. An amniocentesis indicated serious problems, so bad that the doctor induced labor immediately. One doctor used the phrase “pseudo-toxicity,” which I understood to mean that the RH-negative factor was not only affecting the fetus but Barbara as well. Following delivery, Barbara was given digitalis and another diuretic to rid her system of pounds of fluid.

A physician, perhaps a pediatrician, who had assisted in the delivery, came out to tell me that the boy had lived only briefly. Then he added the cryptic words, “If I were to do it over again, I might become a dermatologist.” I interpreted his comment to mean that the skin of the baby was horribly damaged. Barbara’s doctor told her that the remains could be used for research. The physician who spoke with me said that they could dispose of the

remains, offering them first for research. Remembering our painful experience with Barbara Alice, the stillborn, I authorized them to proceed.

Again we all wept, feeling the pain of another separation and hopes for another child crushed. I knew that all of our offspring were loved before they were conceived. I also know that, tragically, this is not true of all babies. For me, our experience has been an affirmation of what Paul was saying about God's grace. It is a gift of love which can neither be earned nor achieved, nor is it deserved. Paul declared that we know—God loves us before we are!

How can I say what was most important during our Glide years—the death of our baby, Becky's and Annie's experiences in the city, and our separation from Carolyn that first year, my realization that my preaching would not revitalize the church? Certainly our relationship with gays and lesbians and insight into their lives and their world must be listed as one of the most important experiences for me. January 1949, I went to Asbury Methodist Church with my job description clearly in mind—building a church—only to discover that God gave me young people to work with. When I said yes to the invitation to serve Glide, my hopes and dreams were clear, but again, God's job description differed from mine. Some years after we left San Francisco, Bob Moon said, "John, you went to Glide to help all of us come to a new understanding of homosexuality." However that may be, we were in the time and place where the issues of lesbians and gays would erupt.

Lew Durham had invited Ted McIlvena to become the foundation's young adult director, a position partially funded by the national woman's division of the Methodist Church. Everyone was concerned about the church's failure to relate to young adults in urban areas. Ted's first task was to explore the city to find young adults: who they were, where they lived, what they did. Ted, who doesn't have a timid bone in his body, sallied forth and discovered the world of gays and lesbians. He learned of their hopes and fears, frustrations and anger, of their bars and clubs. Our young adult group invited the president of SIR (Society for Individual Rights) to speak. That was a mind-blowing experience, for he was filled with rage, especially toward the church.

In the spring of 1964, Ted and Lew, Phyllis Lyons and Del Martin of Daughters of Bilitis, several men from SIR, and some others planned a workshop to address concerns of gays and lesbians and their relationships with churches. In the fall, an equal number of gays and lesbians and straight men and women got together for a weekend. Several clergy and I participated, but only because the gays and lesbians insisted that parish pastors be involved in the workshop. For the first time, I came to know lesbians and gays who were out of the closet. I had counseled with a few lesbians and gays, but that workshop broke through my stereotypes as I listened and talked with human beings and began to sense their pain and hopes and love.

Following the meeting, we created the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, an awkward title, which the lesbians tolerated. A visiting United Church of Christ executive of

an inner city ministry in Chicago could not help but laugh at the situation of gays and lesbians meeting in Glide, a church that did not permit smoking in the building. The Council organized weekend “urban plunges,” or workshops, in the city to raise the consciousness of Christians about life in the city, including the lives of gays and lesbians.

The Council lent its support to the Annual Gay-Lesbian Ball in late December 1964 or early in January. About 9 o’clock Saturday evening, I received a call from Lew urging me to put on my clericals and come to the dance hall to increase the clergy presence. When I arrived, the street was crowded with police. Floodlights illuminated the entrance of the building where police photographers were taking pictures of all who came and went. A couple of hours later, when the police tried to break up the event, Herb Donaldson and another attorney confronted the police, asserting that the dance was a legal event. The two were arrested and taken to jail. When they appeared in court, the judge dismissed all charges. The Council soon organized Citizen Alert to deal with police harassment of African Americans and gays and lesbians. Cecil Williams and others in the group met with police officials to discuss grievances. Citizen Alert organized groups of individuals to monitor police conduct. Long after we left San Francisco, Herb became a municipal court judge.

Because of my experience in the fall workshop, I decided to preach about homosexuality. At first, some colleagues couldn’t believe it. I prepared a series of three sermons on the gospel and human sexuality and informed the newspapers of the series. The *Call Bulletin* interviewed me preceding the series, and the *Chronicle* covered each sermon. The story about the first appeared on the front page. (Copies of the articles and letters, etc. are in our photo albums and files, our conference archives, The California Gay-Lesbian Historical Society in San Francisco, with originals in the official Methodist Archives at Drew University, New Jersey.)

It was easy to decide to preach about homosexuality and the gospel, but it was a struggle to think through what I believed about the matter. I read material about sexual orientation and studied the biblical passages referring to sexual acts. What was new in my thinking was my recent encounter with gay and lesbian human beings. I could not ignore the power of my own experience. Preaching that sermon was an act of faith, for I did not know whether I was right or wrong, wise or foolish. What I did know was that the way our society related to gays and lesbians was contrary to the way of Jesus. I knew, too, that if my judgment was wrong, I could learn and change, but if we are wrong in spirit we are lost.

Some years later, when looking back upon my experience in preparing and preaching that sermon, it dawned upon me that what I believed and was saying was counter to the teachings of my culture, my family, and traditional biblical interpretations. I knew that none of my peers had said what I would be saying, and that some would approve and others would condemn. For me, that experience was a kairos moment when I stood over against all authorities except for the authority of the leading of the Spirit. Some would say that it was the spirit of error, not truth. They may be right, and this is why I say what I did was an

act of faith. My family and church and the Bible gave me something else—the strength and encouragement to be faithful to the Spirit even when it means standing over against them all.

Of course, the members of the church were apprehensive about the coming sermon. They wished that their pastor would remain silent about the matter. Tension within the staff erupted when a staff member overheard a phone conversation of another staff member. I brought the concerned persons together to get the matter in the open. I agreed that it was unethical to eavesdrop, and then others expressed their feelings. The breach created a rift which did not heal until all of us had left Glide.

Sunday came, and the church was packed. In addition to newspaper coverage, word of the event—for in 1965, it was an event—had spread throughout the gay and lesbian community. Cecil Williams has packed Glide Church for years, but that was the only occasion during my pastorate when we had standing room only. Following the sermon, I responded to questions and comments from the worshipers. Ten years later, a Pacific School of Religion student told me that he had just read my sermon and couldn't understand what all the fuss was about. I said, "Yes, it certainly does not sound radical today." On the other hand, the fact that a preacher had preached on homosexuality and had advocated deleting laws from the books that made sexual activity between competent consenting adults in private illegal was reported across the country and the Pacific by wire services. I received letters from the Midwest and South, towns in California, and from Australia and New Zealand, which enclosed brief articles from newspapers. I am convinced that there was something more important for gays and lesbians in San Francisco than anything I said. It was that I had the courage to wrestle with and publicly address the issue, and that I spoke of them and to them with respect, affirming our common humanness.

I knew that I had made the right decision when the letters came in following the sermon. There were two kinds, those which condemned me and demanded that I be thrown out of the church, and letters of appreciation from men and women who had suffered ostracism, public and self-condemnation. In the weeks that followed, more people came to me seeking help with their sexuality than had come in all of my ministry. Feeling damned by the church, and for many, damned by God, they wanted to talk about their relationship with God and the church as much as about their sexual orientation.

I did not stop thinking about the matter of sexual orientation after preaching that sermon. My understanding and my attitude were just beginning to change. I've already said that I change slowly; I must chew and digest new ideas before I can integrate them in whole or in part into my thinking. I was uncomfortable with my perception of how quickly some of my colleagues changed, and with some of their interpretations of scripture. I was convinced that scriptural passages refer to sexual acts, not to sexual orientation, because the idea of sexual orientation is a recent notion. My position was more radical than theirs in that I had come to disagree with views about the matter attributed to the biblical writers, whether

those interpretations were right or not. I also differed from these colleagues who talked about “life styles.” I have never liked that phrase, for style suggests fashions or fads that come and go. Furthermore, my affirmation of gays and lesbians was neither indifference to, nor endorsement of, all life styles. The faith is concerned with character and behavior, not styles. In the years that followed, I have seen no reason to forsake my focus on sexual orientation in contrast with life styles or sexual preferences.

Because of that sermon, I was asked to speak in the educational programs of the Council, and to moderate a series of radio programs. Once, when I was speaking to a small group about the gospel and homosexuality, I said that married life was the *summum bonum*. Whereas gay and lesbian relationships could be good, they were still inferior to marriage. When I said this, I was looking at my friends Jim and Herb. Instantly, I knew that what I had just said was not true for them. Both had been married. They and their spouses had tried to make their marriages work, but their marriages were hell for everyone. Their intimate, committed, caring relationship was infinitely superior to the marriages they had known. In the fall after leaving Glide, I spoke at a workshop sponsored by the National Council of Churches. People in other parts of the country were beginning to talk about sexual orientation.

In a way, as preacher at Glide, I was the right person in the right place at the right time to speak and act as I did. It would have been impossible to have found any man more straight than I. Barbara became terribly upset when Laird Sutton, my associate, told her that many in the gay community were saying “John must be a closet gay. Why else would he take this position publicly?” I wasn’t bothered by the allegation, because I knew who I was.

Involvement in the homosexual issue came out of the Glide Youth Adult Ministry with Ted McIlvena. The foundation staff explored and developed ministries. Don Kuhn, whose portfolio was publications, engaged in researching the power structure of San Francisco. Pastors and laypeople in the city organized MUM, Methodists United in Ministry. It was this group that started the ball rolling for Dr. Carol Glass, professor of embryology or anatomy at the University of California, San Francisco, to become a successful candidate for the school board. Foundation money and leadership was instrumental in organizing Intersection, a Center for Religion and the Arts, an organization which I chaired for a time, and Huckleberry House for runaway teenagers. In an effort to relate to the “hippie” and Haight-Ashbury scene in the fall of 1964, the foundation and church proposed “Be-In” at Glide Church patterned after a “Be-In” in Golden Gate Park. The decision was disastrous, for it turned into an orgy at Glide. Some trashed the church. I was told that reporters quashed the story because of their appreciation for the good things the foundation was doing.

I worked with good associates during these years. Bob Shartz, who was on the staff when I arrived, worked well with the seniors and the young adults. Prior to coming to Glide, I was frequently present at youth and young adults meetings. When I discovered that Bob wondered whether my presence indicated an intention to take over his responsibility with

the young adult group, I backed off and tried to make clear my support of him. Everett Swedenburg was indefatigable in his care of our older members and was loved by them. He was uncomfortable with the way in which I dealt with the homosexual issue, but we were both faithful to our calling.

Neale and Chris Secor, and their children, Wendy and Jon Jon, who had driven from Union Seminary in New York City, arrived in San Francisco in the summer of 1995 without any cash. Although he was to be a church intern, Lew Durham had made all of the arrangements. I don't know what preceded our first meeting, but Neale felt let down. I quickly arranged for essential funds to tide them over. Assigned to work with young adults, Neale moved easily in the gay and lesbian community and was asked to conduct the memorial service for a prominent gay citizen. He made the Selma March, and upon his return spoke from the pulpit. Ed Hansen, of the Southern California School of Theology in Claremont, built upon Neale's work in the gay and lesbian community. Both were pioneers.

In 1964-65, I served a circuit as pastor in charge of both Glide and First Methodist Church at Larkin and Clay. Laird Sutton, associate pastor, and his family lived in the First Church building. Laird did not fit the stereotype of pastors. He was an artist. Before his first Sunday, he placed one of his statues in the narthex of First Church. The style reminded me of Giacometti, except that his stick figure family was stark white. Laird was saying to the congregation, "This is who I am," and they didn't like it. I did not tell Laird to remove it, but I did suggest that the members looked at the space where he put the statue as their own home. I suspect that he came to feel that his "statement" was costing more than it was worth. After a year, Laird joined the foundation staff, where he worked with Ted McIlvena on the production of sex education films and later with the light show in the Glide "celebration," formerly "worship," services.

The cabinet asked if I'd work with another pastor who was difficult to appoint, so Vaughn Smith succeeded Laird as resident pastor at First Church. Vaughn was a gentleman, and bright, but he had a prickly personality, which after a year or two irritated just about everyone. Vaughn's health was a problem, too. Some years later, Bob Moon told me that Vaughn had given an excellent lecture in his church on drug abuse. He placed 30 or 40 bottles of pills on a table, described which each did, and at the end said, "These are the prescribed drugs of one person." Afterward, he told Bob that he was the one who took all of those drugs.

Elsie McNee, a woman with a buoyant personality, served as church secretary and art teacher for the seniors. Soon after I bought Elsie's Ford, a rumor began spreading through the church that John and Elsie were having an affair. The woman who started it had seen me driving Elsie's car and concluded that something was suspicious. Elsie was upset, but my irritation was tempered by the humor of it all. Elise later married a former associate at Glide after his wife died and enjoyed many years with Stan.

Barbara and I felt the toll of my ministry at Glide. The church had not grown. By confronting the issue of homosexuality as I had, I had alienated many members. In the winter of 1966, I knew that I needed R & R. In fact, I became obsessed with the fact that I had done my best but that all of the church statistics had gone downhill, and I wrote a letter to the Cabinet to that effect. I made up my mind to leave. When I asked Cliff Crummey, my district superintendent, about the Burlingame church, he said that the appointment had been made. George Atkinson, of Guy Atkinson Co., wanted Don Fado, a bright young pastor and one of the most popular preachers in the Conference. Furthermore, I had made no friends in the "Conference establishment" when, on the floor of the annual conference, I pointed out how difficult it would be to raise funds for the University of the Pacific when most Methodist youth could never afford to attend. I suspect that what I had done at Glide did not earn me any points with George or other committee members at Burlingame. I had already decided upon a sabbatical and had applied for the graduate program in political science at UCD when I was asked to go to the Cambrian Park Church in San Jose. I declined but inquired whether the Davis Church might be open.

When Phil Walker, Davis Methodist pastor, heard of my inquiry, he called to ask if I might be interested in the ecumenical campus ministry position in Davis. When I said yes, he went to work. In spite of the fact that the Cal Aggie Christian Association board had already decided on a candidate from Illinois and was ready to telegraph the invitation, Phil asked the board to hold up everything to consider me. Our good friend Paul Castelfranco was chairing the board at the time. The telegram was not sent. After interviewing me, the board invited me to come as director of C.A. Barbara and I looked forward to living in Davis. The years in Davis would be like a sabbatical, just what I needed.

With my decision, the bishop was free to move aggressively in selecting a successor. I had recommended to the foundation board that church and foundation leadership be merged. I don't know all who were considered, but Ted McIlvena and Cecil Williams were considered. Proposition 13, which would nullify the Rumford Fair Housing Act, prompted Cecil and me to take the stump in Union Square. To dramatize systemic racism, Cecil lay down and I put my foot on his neck while I said something to the effect of "Come, let us talk about this as reasonable persons..." Looking back, I am surprised that even then I dared to dramatize the power relationship between the races in that way. Later, I expressed my opinion to Cliff Crummey that now was the time for the bishop to appoint a Black pastor to Glide. I had no influence in the decision, but apparently others and the bishop agreed with my judgment. In those days Cecil was as straight as they come, dark suit, white shirt, tie, and all. The change in Cecil came in the summer of 1967 or '68, when he gave Dick Judd, the organist, and the choir a vacation and brought in Meridian West, a contemporary musical group. Dick and the choir never returned.

In May 1966, the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley awarded me the degree of doctor of divinity. Professor Bob Leslie read a statement commending my pastoral leadership through the years and specifically citing my involvement in the issue of sexual orientation. I

think that it was Cliff Droke who commented, “Someone noticed.” Barbara looked upon it as a consolation prize or “purple heart” in that battle.

There was so much animosity in the church toward me that we assumed that there would be no farewell for us, so Barbara planned our farewell as an open house at the parsonage. We had underestimated the young adults, who had remained supportive through it all, for they gave a farewell at the church following my last service as preacher at Glide. Through the years we have heard from and seen some of the old “Glider” young adults.

We left San Francisco following the last Sunday in June 1966. Carolyn had not yet returned from Europe. Barbara, Becky, and Annie went to Chico, where they stayed in the Conrad’s parsonage, our old home, until we could move to Davis in August. I spent a month at Pacific School of Religion taking courses from theologian Schubert Ogden of Southern Methodist University, Bishop Pike, and Professors Von Rohr, Wulner, and Jack Finegan of PSR. Bishop Pike did not like my critique of situation ethics and gave me a C. It was obvious that Pike was being swept off his feet that week by Diane Kennedy, whom he later married. I especially enjoyed Ogden’s course on Bultmann and Von Rohr’s class on Luther’s commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans. As I remember, the brilliant Schubert Ogden defined Christian theology as dealing with the questions “Are the affirmations of the church true?” and “Are they meaningful?”

During the summer session, PSR offered several evening lectures open to the public. It was interesting to see the chapel overflowing to hear Schubert Ogden, but only partially filled to hear Bishop Gerald Kennedy, one of the most popular preachers of the day. The times had changed. Throngs went to hear Martin Luther King, Jr., and Elie Wiesel, but preachers in the tradition of Fosdick, Buttrick, and Sockman no longer drew large crowds. Pope John not only opened the windows of the Catholic Church, but Catholics had become eager to hear Protestant theologians such as Ogden. Soon the televangelists would create a new image of the faith, the church, and preaching.

I wrote a paper for Professor Von Rohr on Luther’s understanding of justification by faith. I did not grasp then as I do now Paul’s and Luther’s prior concern with the justification of God. I understood the problem of theodicy (Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous often suffer? And given the goodness of God, why evil?). I had not connected this with Paul’s justification of God. Although he gave me an A on the paper, he criticized my simple view that grace or love can be accepted or appropriated only by *trust*, which leaves out an element that has been central in Christian theology. It made unnecessary faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. Like the parable of the Prodigal Son, my view leaves out a mediator. It’s not that sacrifice is unimportant, for it comes from the depths of the human psyche. The sacrificial and courtroom metaphors were familiar to his readers. Both the prophetic and priestly traditions were a part of their heritage. I would expect Paul to interpret Jesus’ death using both the sacrificial and courtroom metaphors. It’s just that I believe that Jeremiah and Isaiah and Jesus went to the heart of the matter in ways different from the priestly tradition. I interpreted the atonement in light of the suffering servant

passage in Isaiah 52-53. Christ is always being crucified and always being raised from the dead—wherever human beings give and lose their lives bearing one another's burdens for the wholeness of all. The death and resurrection of Jesus illumine our experiences.

Summer session was just what I needed! Then it was off to Chico until we moved into our home on Anderson Road in Davis. In moving to San Francisco, we had given Carolyn up a year before she left for college. In moving to Davis, we would have her nearer.

(Kathleen Lawrence was the copy editor for this essay)