

leaned on that promise! The Lord brought comfort to me as I began to realize that this was all part of His perfect plan.

In addition to helping with the children's needs, He also gave me the comfort I needed to be strong. I had always been frightened to stay home alone. I would read late into the night until I was exhausted, hoping to fall asleep. One night as I was praying, I begged the Lord to remove that fear. I recall seeing our house in my mind's eye with a great white sheet dropping over it. The promise came to me, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." The Lord made it so real and comforting to me that I never had to fight those fears again.

The Lord helped us in other ways too. For example, I wanted to give the children piano lessons so they could participate in the music at church, but I couldn't afford a piano. I prayed about it, and although I did not talk to anyone about my desire, within a week someone called and asked if I had room to store a piano in our house. We stored it until the children were grown!

My needs weren't all child-related. I was young, lonely, and trying to adjust in my own way. As a wife, much of my prayer life had revolved around my desire to be a supportive companion for Naim. As a widow, that was no longer an issue. I had to ask God to help me find out who I was supposed to be. Some-

times, after the children went to bed, the flood gates would open and the tears would flow. During those times, the Lord became my special Friend. He gently led me and helped me over the hard spots.

God provided me with a good job and made it possible for me to go to college at very little expense. Through my job, I had many opportunities to share with others what the Lord had done for me.

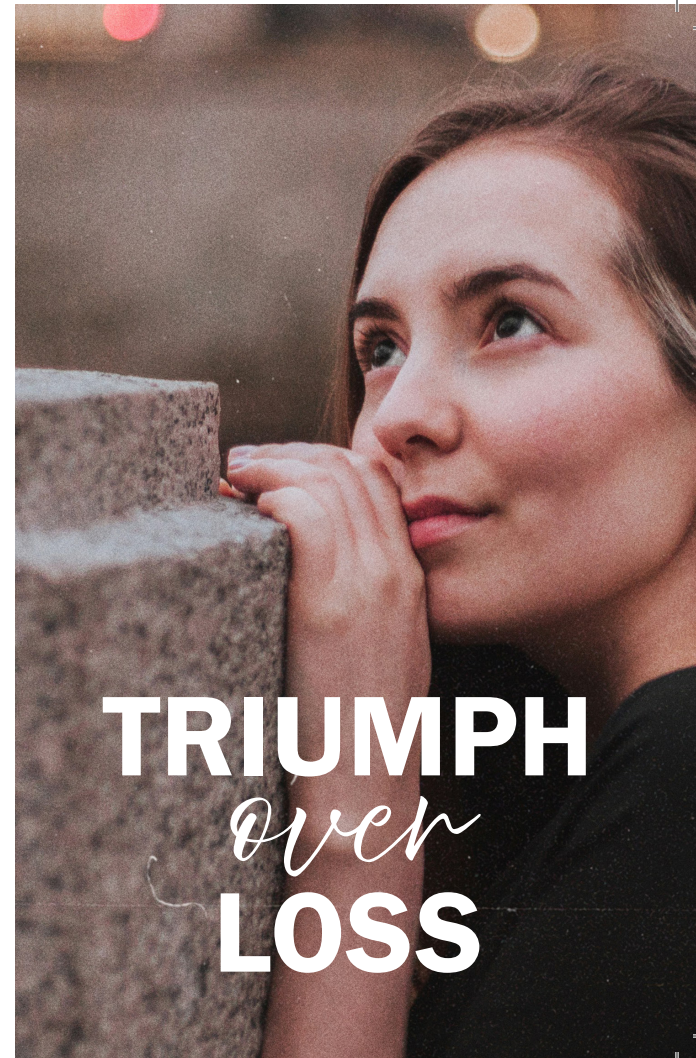
A new chapter of my life began one day as I was reaching out to an acquaintance at work whose wife had just passed away. God provided him with the same comfort He had given me during my difficult times. Neal became a Christian, and after a year of courtship, we were married. God is center of our life together, and He is very precious to us both. I love the Lord with all my heart and am so thankful to have Him by my side each day.

*Claudia Hanson served the Lord faithfully until her passing in 2018.*

### **APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH**

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**T**he Lord has done something very special for me. I was brought up by wonderful parents, and God used the love I felt in our home to draw me to Him. That isn't to say life was easy for us. My eldest brother had tuberculosis, I had rheumatic fever, and my father was crippled with a rare form of arthritis that prevented him from driving a car or even dressing himself. Yet, I knew my parents trusted the Lord for strength and guidance in each decision they had to make. I knew that when the time came for me to establish a home of my own, I wanted it to be a Christian home.

As a young child I had given my heart to the Lord. When I was in the ninth grade, however, I felt the need to recommit my life to God. I needed guidance in making future school and career decisions, and I wanted to make the right choices by placing Christ at the center of my life. God came down and saved my soul, sanctified me, and blessed me with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. As I was making deep consecrations to the Lord, I had no idea what the future held. I felt sure, though, that if my hand was in His, all would be well.

That has proven so true. He has helped me in every situation. When I was eighteen years old, I married Naim, a young Lebanese student. He had been saved while going to school in the United States, and we established a Christian

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home together. My husband wanted to return to Lebanon to tell his family of the change the Lord had made in his life. When our son was six months old, we left for a year-long stay in Beirut.

While we were in Lebanon, my husband preached his first sermon, and he continued assisting in the ministry when we relocated to Hawaii a year later. Our family grew to include a little girl, and then we returned to Portland, Oregon. We felt that we had finally arrived home where we could settle down and get on with our lives.

I had experienced the trials of learning to cook, of discovering what it meant to be a wife and mother, of learning a foreign language, and

of adapting to a different culture. Yet, however difficult some of these problems had seemed at the time, they were nothing compared with what was soon to come upon me.

One morning, I waved goodbye to Naim as he left on a business trip. While going through what seemed like another normal day, I received a phone call that drastically changed my world. A policeman informed me that my husband had been in an automobile accident and was not expected to live.

There is no way to describe what I felt when I hung up the phone. Confusion, disbelief, and fear cascaded into my life in one moment. I found it impossible to grasp the reality of what was taking place. As we raced to the hospital, the word “widow” kept coming to my mind. I was trying to deal with what that word would mean to me.

Naim did die. During the first days after the funeral, I remember watching my four-year-old son and eleven-month-old daughter go to the kitchen door each night, waiting for a father who would never come home again. At times like that, I cried out to God and asked Him to ease the emptiness and to help us all adjust.

Sometimes I wondered how I would ever be able to create the security my children needed. It was during one of those times that God dropped the promise into my heart that He would be “a father of the fatherless.” How I