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“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is.” Romans 12:2 (NLT)

The closer January 10th came, the more reluctant I felt to leave Mother. Many of you were praying with me for God’s clear direction as I considered canceling my planned trip to Kenya for the consultant training seminar. I worried that I might not know what God wanted me to do, but He made it perfectly clear, and His will truly is good and pleasing and perfect.

Mother woke me the night of Dec. 23rd saying it was very hard to breathe. I phoned 911. The emergency responders put her on oxygen and took her to the emergency room, where she was admitted with a diagnosis of congestive heart failure. The night of Dec. 26th her heart rate increased dramatically and the hospital staff was frantically trying to get it down – with tests, medication, and restrictions on her movement. She said to me, “I want to go home.”

The next morning I asked the doctor if there was any way she could go home. By early afternoon, all concerned reached agreement that she should be released with hospice care and me as her care-giver. My sister Peggy stayed with her while I came home to receive the oxygen tank and prepare the evening meal. We celebrated her home-coming, and over the next several days she seemed to be gaining strength. I cancelled my trip to Kenya. I expected Mother to be with us for several more months and began looking forward to taking her out to breakfast (one of her favorite activities) and welcoming guests to visit her.

Starting Monday, Jan. 7th, Mother grew steadily weaker. The Lord graciously took her home about 10:30 on Saturday morning, Jan. 12th. It hurts so much to let her go, and yet I can see that God has planned and perfectly timed every detail. I am so grateful for the privilege of being with her for the last years and days and minutes of her life on earth. I will always treasure the special relationship we had and I rejoice that she is with Jesus, free of pain, tears wiped away, sorrows forgotten.

Several people have asked if I will return to Ethiopia. I expect so, but not right away. I need time to grieve. I need time to work through all the details that have to be taken care of when a loved one dies. I want to find some spiritual refreshment. I want to think (and talk with SIM leadership) about where I will retire and what I will do with my earthly possessions in the meantime. Lest I become a burden to my colleagues, it is important that I heal emotionally before I join them again on the field.

Meanwhile I plan to continue writing introductions in Amharic (the national language) for the New Testament books, which Getu, Ayke and Alemayehu will translate into the Banna language. When they and Donna send me revised drafts of the Scriptures they are working on, I will interact with them by email concerning those. I may attend a training course in Dallas that relates to Bible translation.

The first priority now, though, is to give God time to heal my emotions, to seek His direction and walk in His will. I count on your prayers. I thank God for each one of you and for your continued partnership.

Letting God transform me,

Carolyn Ford

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