

(FINAL DRAFT)

SURVIVING IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

The story of
a Hospice patient's
incredible
15-year battle
with advanced
ovarian cancer

By
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Edited by
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*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness
for His name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I fear no evil; for You are with me.
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

--Psalm 23--

Preface

In the Bible, Jesus says faith can move mountains. Lenora Moore of Charlotte, NC fervently believes her deep Christian faith, her determination to seek the truth about her medical condition and her persistent pursuit of good medical care have literally moved mountains in her life.

In March, 1995 Lenora was living in Wilmington, NC with her husband George and her son Derwan. That's when her doctor delivered a devastating diagnosis: at age 36, Lenora Moore was afflicted with advanced ovarian cancer.

Against all odds, more than 15 years after receiving that crushing news, Lenora is not only still alive, she appears bright-eyed, cheerful and optimistic, cooks all of her meals for herself and her son and even gets out of her house with family members to attend church or go shopping. What's more, now Lenora is fulfilling a dream -- the dream of sharing her story of surviving in the shadow of death by writing this book.

That's where I come in. I'm a volunteer with Hospice and Palliative Care, Charlotte Region (HPCCR.) In early December, 2009, I found a request in my e-mail. Might I be willing, a Hospice volunteer coordinator asked, to help a patient write a book about her exceptionally long survival with advanced ovarian cancer? My name had come to mind because of my 36-year career as a reporter, and later a morning and noon anchor with Charlotte's ABC affiliate, WSOC-TV Channel 9.

My journey to meet Lenora led me to a part of Charlotte I had not visited since my reporting days, decades ago. She lives in Charlotte's Belmont Community, a former turn-of-the-century blue-collar neighborhood of textile workers and other laborers who helped turn the Queen City into the economic powerhouse it is today. After years of decline, Belmont...which lies just north of the glittering bank and condo towers of the Center City...is fighting back from years of drug dealing, prostitution and violent crime. Now, the neighborhood is being revitalized with millions of dollars in new housing. As I neared Lenora's address, here and there I passed Victorian cottages with quaint wrap-around porches...their railings decked with the lights and wreaths of Christmas. Even so, I couldn't help but feel a sense of unease as I passed solitary men, standing on the street corners, several with

cell phones pressed to their ears. Were they, I wondered, arranging a drug deal? I drove on, and amidst Belmont's mix of the new and old, I pulled into the driveway of Lenora's modest brick and wood-shingled bungalow.

I must confess, I didn't know what or whom to expect as I pressed the crumbling plastic doorbell button, and then knocked, just in case the bell wasn't working. A moment later, a hand suddenly swept aside the window curtain, a woman peered warily out, and then opened the door, triggering her alarm system, which announced "Front door open!"

So began my first meeting with Prophet Lenora Moore, Prophet of God.

Now, don't go tossing this book aside, just because you're scared off by that "Prophet" thing. It's true, if you dial Lenora's phone and you get her voice message, you'll hear her declare "You have reached Prophet Moore, the Prophet of God. God loves you and so do I." I'll admit that I, myself, was taken aback when I first heard that message.

But, in the seven months that have passed since I first met Lenora, I've become increasingly convinced that she's blessed with many gifts – the gift of a deep and abiding faith in her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the gift of feeling his closeness and presence in her daily life, the gift of hearing God speak to her clearly and personally in her times of distress, the gift of loving and caring family and friends, the gift of an incredibly long survival with such a deadly disease, and yes...perhaps...even the gift of speaking in tongues (although I've never heard her do so,) and the gift of prophecy.

But Lenora hastens to add that she doesn't want to focus on all that. "I want to talk about my bout with cancer," she explains, "about how I've survived and why I'm still here." And that's what you're about to read in this book (*along with a vision or two of angels in her hospital room and messages she's heard, loud and clear, from her Lord, I might add.*) As often as possible, I've allowed her to tell her story in her own words, with only minor editing to enhance the clarity and flow. In view of how long Lenora has beaten back the odds, there is no doubt that her rock-ribbed faith has helped to sustain her. But there can also be no question that she has received some very skilled medical care along the way. As you will read, she is very grateful to many of her doctors, although one or two of them clearly disappointed her, either through failing to detect her cancer when she feels

they should have, or by not seeming to care enough about her to be honest with her and to keep her informed of her condition and the plan of treatment.

As precious and uncertain as the days are to Lenora at this point in her life, I wish I had been able to get her story onto paper more quickly. But, as a volunteer, with many conflicting demands on my time, all too often I regrettably found myself drawn away from the task at hand. I appreciate Lenora's unending and kind-hearted patience with me all these months.

As you read this book, I must ask for your patience as well. After many visits to Lenora's living room where I peppered her with questions, after listening to hours of her recollections which she recorded on cassette tapes, after poring through reams of her medical records (which she so diligently persevered in obtaining for me) and after repeatedly "Googling" definitions of obtuse medical terms and procedures, I came to the inescapable conclusion that she has literally journeyed to Hell and back. No offense intended, but in order for you to fully appreciate the content of her courage, the depth of her determination, the firmness of her faith, and the secret to her survival, I am convinced that you need to go through Hell with her.

So I ask you to please keep on turning the pages even if, at times, you feel you feel you are drowning in too much detail, for this is Lenora Moore's story of surviving in the shadow of death. By sharing it so publicly, Lenora hopes she can throw out a life line to some of you who may be struggling to survive as well.

*Cullen Ferguson
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Chapter One

FEAR NOT

*“T’was Grace that taught
my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
the hour I first believed.”*

--From the Negro Spiritual “Amazing Grace”--

Lenora Moore had ample reason to fear on the morning of March 10th, 1995, for that’s when, at age 36, she was first diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer.

About three months earlier, just before Christmas of 1994, Lenora had visited her long-time family doctor in Burgaw, NC, hoping to learn why she’d been suffering for nearly a year with fatigue, bloating, gas, abdominal swelling and lower back pain. She says she told him her menstrual cycles had recently been occurring a couple of weeks later than normal and had involved less burning and less bleeding. And although she remembers seeing a certain look in her doctor’s eyes after he completed his examination -- a look which seemed to belie that something was wrong -- she recalls him assuring her she had nothing to worry about, that everything was normal for her age.

Lenora remembers him reminding her that some menstrual cycles can be worse than others. She’d been taking over-the-counter products like Gas-X for the bloating and 3 to 4 tablets of Advil at a time for the pain, but they had not helped. Lenora says her doctor prescribed her Premarin and Midol to relieve her menstrual discomfort and advised her to wait a few weeks to see if they would help.

Although she heeded her doctor’s instructions, the ensuing weeks were fraught with continued discomfort, along with worry and concern about what might be going wrong with her body. She remembers she was seated in a pew at her husband George’s storefront church, the Miracle Church of Christ, housed in the old bus station in Whiteville, NC one Sunday morning

in February, 1995 when she heard Christ speak directly to her heart in a clear and urgent voice: “Lenora. You are dying. You need medical help.”

So, on the morning of February 21, 1995, after sharing in a brief prayer and bible study with her husband, Lenora and George got into their car and headed toward the emergency room at Wilmington’s New Hanover Regional Medical Center. They were hoping to find a doctor who could tell her what her Lord already knew.

Now, when Lenora tells you that the Lord speaks to her clearly and often, she means it, for they had scarcely left home before she felt God directing them, not to the ER, but to a Medac Urgent Care Center she had visited before on Wilmington’s Shipyard Boulevard. “They get to you quicker than the ER.” Lenora explains. Of course, her Lord knew that too.

Upon arriving at Medac, Lenora asked if a female doctor was on duty. As luck (or she believes Divine Guidance) would have it, one was. Just 5 or 10 minutes after filling out the obligatory medical forms, Lenora says she was called into an examining room where she told the doctor about her prolonged stomach problems, the bloating, the gas, stomach swelling and pain that had been plaguing her for more than a year.

In a calm and reassuring manner, the doctor began her pelvic examination of Lenora, explaining all the while what she was doing. Tears of gratitude and relief streamed down Lenora’s face as she lay on the examining table. At last, she could talk, woman-to-woman, about her illness. At last, the female physician was telling her she would help! It was like a heavy weight had been lifted from her chest.

Within minutes the doctor detected a mass and began questioning Lenora about her most recent exam, which had been conducted by her life-long family doctor just a month or so earlier. “How could he not have felt it?”, the Medac doctor asked, incredulously. Lenora didn’t know. She only remembers, that for some reason, the doctor she’d been seeing off and on since she was a young girl didn’t look her in the eye when he finished his exam. She recalls he just washed up and told her everything seemed to be fine for a woman her age.

But on this day, the urgent care physician felt things were anything *but* fine with Lenora. She immediately sent her on to Delaney Radiologists

in Wilmington for an ultrasound exam. Soon after arriving at the office on Delaney Road, Lenora was summoned back to the change room, where she undressed and donned a gown for the exam. Next, two women led her to a back room and instructed her to lie face-up on the examination table.

The first part of the procedure, the transabdominal exam, was relatively painless. The technician used a roller to apply a clear, water-based gel across Lenora's lower abdomen, then began firmly pressing a hand-held device called a transducer against her skin. The sensation was chilly, but not unpleasant, as the tech slowly moved the transducer, first one way and then another, across her abdomen. As Lenora lay there, the transducer was silently sending small pulses of high-frequency sound waves reflecting painlessly off her pelvic organs, fluids and tissues. All the while, a sensitive microphone in the transducer was picking up minute changes in the pitch and direction of the reflected sound and relaying them to a computer. The computer then began instantly measuring those signature waves and displaying a real-time picture of Lenora's insides on a monitor nearby. Through it all, with one hand on the transducer and the other clicking keys on the computer keyboard, the ultrasound tech was staring intently at the monitor, silently capturing still images of what was wrong inside Lenora's body.

Far from being painless like the first exam, the second procedure, the transvaginal exam, brought tears to Lenora's eyes. This one entailed inserting a different transducer into the vagina. Although smaller than the standard speculum used when performing a Pap test, and even though it was shielded with a protective cover lubricated with gel, Lenora says as the tech maneuvered the device, searching for the best views of her uterus and ovaries, she began to bleed, and then, she began to cry. Lenora remembers the tech and her assistant were crying too, as they tried their best to reassure and comfort her. But, as anyone who has ever been through such an exam knows, even though the ultrasound tech undoubtedly knows what he or she has just seen on the monitor, they are prohibited from telling you a thing. To learn if the news is good or bad, you must await the radiologist's report.

Lenora did not have to wait long. Delaney Radiologists instructed her to return to the Medac Clinic at 4 o'clock that afternoon to receive the results of her exam. To pass the time, she and her husband George went to a nearby Wendy's for a late lunch. As they sat there, she told George she felt the Medac doctor already had some idea of what was wrong with her health.

Lenora remembers George taking her hands in his and beginning to pray. George prayed that Christ would give them both the strength to deal with all the things she would have to face that day. Before long, it was time to return to Medac and get the news.

You might think Lenora would have been filled with dread as she and George got back in their car, but she says that, quite the contrary, for months she had been waiting for this moment to come, determined to learn what was going wrong with her body. And so, strange as it might seem, as they pulled into the Medac parking lot on Wilmington's Shipyard Boulevard, Lenora was feeling a sense of relief. The answer to what was wrong with her lay just inside the door.

They entered the waiting room and within minutes Lenora was seated in the doctor's office. Once again, she says, the Medac physician questioned her about her family doctor's recent examination, just over two months before. "How," she asked, "could your doctor not have seen this?" Lenora says the physician exclaimed that in a vaginal exam there was just no way a doctor could not feel the mass, no way that he could not have known. She said Lenora's abdomen was swollen as much as if she were three months pregnant. "Why hadn't Lenora's doctor referred her to a specialist?" the Medac doctor asked. All Lenora could say in reply was that her doctor had taken a Pap smear that day, and when he later told her that everything was OK, she had taken him at his word, even though she remained certain that something was *very* wrong.

Then, the Medac doctor gave Lenora the news. Something definitely *was* wrong. Delaney Radiologists had faxed over their findings: the ultrasound test had detected about five masses, but they couldn't tell if they were just fibroid tumors or if they were malignant. The report indicated other smaller masses were also present, so the doctor told her she was a very fortunate woman for having come in for the exam.

Lenora then shared with the Medac physician her conviction that it was the Lord who had led her there. First, she related her experience of hearing Him speak to her in church, warning her that she was dying and needed to get help. Next, she shared her sense of confusion and despair over how to find *some* doctor, other than her family physician, to refer her to a specialist. Finally, she related how she'd decided that very morning, to just go to the ER, only to have the Lord steer her, instead, to Medac's door.

In a reassuring tone, the Medac doctor told her not to worry, that she would take care of lining up specialists and scheduling the appointments. Lenora's first appointment would be to return to Delaney Radiologists for an abdominal ultrasound on March 1st. Two days later, she would see Dr. Cyrus Kotwall the Director of the Zimmer Cancer Center at Wilmington's New Hanover Regional Medical Center (NHRMC.)

As Lenora and George headed home from her day-long ordeal of doctor's visits and tests, she remembers that an overwhelming sense of peace and calm swept over her. At last, she felt, someone *really* cared enough about her to go out of their way to help. Her prayers had finally been answered!

In the ensuing days, as she awaited her medical appointments, Lenora tried to focus her attention back on helping George, who had a thriving house painting business during the week, in addition to his preaching duties on Sundays. As always, there were jobs for her to schedule and other details to attend to. Before she knew it, it was time for the ultrasound test, and next, her visit with Dr. Kotwall.

Just past noon on Friday, the 3rd of March, Lenora and George sat in a room at the hospital, awaiting Dr. Kotwall's arrival. The moment he came through the door, Lenora sensed he was not bringing good news. After introducing himself and shaking their hands, Dr. Kotwall began to explain the information on the card he was holding in his hand. "Mrs. Moore," she recalls him telling her, "you have advanced ovarian cancer." He went on to explain that he wouldn't be able to know the class and staging of her disease until after surgery, which he had scheduled for March 10th. The operation would reveal the size of her tumors, whether they had grown into other tissues, whether the lymph nodes were involved and whether the cancer had spread to other parts of her body.

Lenora was just 36 years old. As the gravity of her medical condition and the ordeal she was facing began to settle in, she remembers feeling no fear; only a sense of peace and relief that finally the cause of all her suffering was known, and at long last, she was getting help! Instead of sadness, she remembers feeling very glad that the Lord had heard her cry.

Chapter Two

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

*“Precious Lord, take my hand.
Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night,
Lead me on to the light.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.”*
--Gospel Song lyrics by Rev. Thomas Dorsey--

In Lenora’s own words, “The truth is that I never believed I was going to die from the life-stealing disease called cancer. I knew that I would have to fight back with faith and just trust that the Lord would deliver me from cancer.

“I keep a Bible by my bedside and sleep with another one under my pillow for comfort. I put Bible verses on my refrigerator and paste notes with Bible verses on my computer.

“I was laying out my battle plan. I needed a time of confession to purify my soul. It was time for me to seek forgiveness, for if there was some unrepented sin in my life, it was time to confess and seek God’s grace.”

As Lenora contemplated the powerful storm and the dark night that loomed before her, as she prayed for the Lord to take her hand, and lead her on to the light, she dissolved into tears. She says “I was telling Jesus Christ how much I loved him and was just giving him thanks for keeping me safe until I could get the help I needed. I was so grateful for all the doctors and nurses who had come into my life to help me get well. I prayed for them, that the grace of God would be with us all. I gave Christ the thanks and glory for the help I had been receiving from my family and friends at this challenging time in my life. I was thanking him, too, for the late-night calls from my sister Kathleen, offering to pray with me and just to talk. I did most of my praying late at night, when the house got real quiet and the angels were waiting to carry my prayers back to God.”

Lenora didn't realize it at the time, but now she knows she truly loved being a disciple of Christ: "for I was going to need the strength and confidence to get me through the hard times that were about to come. I knew that the Lord would not put any more on me than I could bear!"

That day, Lenora phoned her son Derwan and asked him to come see her. She couldn't bear to share her news with him over the phone. She needed to share with him, face-to-face, the facts of her potentially deadly diagnosis and her impending surgery. She and Derwan had always had a close relationship. She knew she could talk to him about anything. So, when he came in the door around dinner time, she quickly took him in her arms and gave him her doctor's news: she had stage III-c ovarian adenocarcinoma and she was due to be operated on in just a week. (*Adenocarcinoma is a cancer that originates in glandular tissue and then spreads to epithelial tissues, including the skin, glands and other tissues that line the organs and cavities of the body.*) As mother and son stood there, in a strong embrace, they simultaneously burst into tears. Lenora tried her best to reassure Derwan that, with the help of the Lord, everything was going to be ok. But, she adds, "It is *so* hard to talk to a child about the possibility of dying."

Derwan assured her that he would be there for her through it all, and that he would come to visit her at home as she awaited her operation. His mother immediately sensed the depth of his worry and unease. So, she just stood there and let his tears flow.

Lenora knew that her son would be needing a lot of prayer and that she would need to reassure him throughout her perilous journey. The impact of her grave illness and of her impending hospitalization were finally hitting home. Derwan and his father were both worried about how their very livelihoods with the family painting business could survive without her. After all, Lenora had not only been writing up all their contracts, she had scheduled their work and had even done a lot of the final trimming. On top of that, she loved interior design, the process of making peoples' homes beautiful and giving everything a new look. Lenora, herself, agonized over how her illness was going to impact her family's future.

Then, it came to her: "Just have faith in Christ Jesus our Lord, for he has everything in his hands!" Lenora remembered a fundamental fact of her

Christian faith: “In life, tests and trials will come to make us all wiser and stronger.”

At that moment, she decided to engage in a practice that dates back to both Old and New Testament days. She would fast—stop eating—in order to focus on her prayer and fellowship with God. In her own words, she says she was seeking “to get more grace and power in the Holy Spirit, to know when to make the right decision whenever the time came and also, to live and fight the good fight of faith.”

You’ll remember, from my preface to Lenora’s story, that she counts among her many God-given gifts, the gift of speaking in tongues. So it is, that at this crucial moment in her life, Lenora says she began to pray in tongues and to pour out her soul to the Lord for hours, travailing in prayer as she never had before. She says she continued until her soul felt light and free and her mind was clear, and she could sense the glory of God filling the room. “I could have stayed in that state for the rest of my life” she declares.

“I could hear the voice of the Lord saying ‘have no fear, my child. Go in peace, for I will be with you. Always fear not, for you have found favor in the Lord’s sight.’” From that moment on, Lenora knew that everything would be working for her good.

As the time drew ever nearer for her surgery, Lenora had a host of worries on her mind. In addition to their painting business and George’s ministry, they had been operating a small booth at the flea market in Whiteville, NC. They had started it to help raise the money they needed to cover the cost of her health insurance and the taxes for their painting business. Now, she realized, because of her declining health, they might have to give that up. Even more worrisome, George’s church in Whiteville was a 49-mile drive each way from their Wilmington home. Lenora agonized, would they have to close that too? Then, the reassuring words of a gospel hymn began calming her anxious thoughts:

*There is a place of comfort sweet,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where we our Saviour meet,
Near to the heart of God.*
--Cleland B. McAfee, 1903--

Lenora recalls that at that very moment she knew she would have to begin focusing all of her energy on living near to the heart of God. She had to learn how “to move totally with the Holy Spirit in all things. I have done all I know to prepare my family and myself spiritually and mentally,” she wrote.

Now, Lenora knew, she needed to focus on familiar passages of Scripture that would help her along the highway to healing: Scriptures that she could return to on a daily basis. Matthew 8:16-17 came to mind: *“When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying Himself took our iniquities, and bare our sicknesses.”* She took comfort too from the passage in First Peter 2:24: *“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.”*

And so, Lenora prayed, “Lord, I submit myself to every ordinance of man for Your name’s sake. Use me and get the glory out of my life. I submit my will to your will for my life, now and from this time forth. I believe I am ready now to get this disease taken out of my body, so the healing can begin. Bless the Lord, oh my soul.”

Chapter Three

Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me

“Who knew?” Lenora asks, “that my childhood was preparing me for my life’s journey? I was a ten-month-old baby when I came to the small township of Rocky Point, NC in 1959 to live with my grandmother. My parents had moved North from Wilmington in search of good jobs.

“I loved my grandmother. She had a small farm and livestock there. While staying with her, I learned about hard work and the value of a dollar. I also learned about the importance of family and church. I learned about sharing and caring, and to value the small things in life.

“I remember my grandmother always telling me to look to the Lord for help and her advice to always pray before you do anything or go anywhere.

“I spent the first 8 years and two months with my grandmother. She taught me some valuable things, including how to survive and how to serve the Lord. She always taught me about the Lord and she had me in church from the time I was a baby. Just watching her *live* the Bible taught me more than anyone else *talking* about the Bible.

“For some reason, I was a very sickly child. I was born with very weak legs and it took a long time for me to learn to walk. I was always holding on to her or something else. I can remember her rubbing my legs down with oils and praying as she did so.

“Looking back, I knew how to say the Lord’s name before I learned to say or write my own name. I knew the story of Jonah and the whale long before I started school, and many other biblical stories -- too many to tell.

“It seems that I have always lived in the shadow of death, starting from the time when I was attacked by a dog as a child. At the age of seven in 1965 I became ill from eating an unripe apple and got Tortuous Toxemia poisoning. It left me in a weakened state and I was hospitalized and given a 50/50 chance to live or die.

“I was living with my father’s mother and my other sisters and brother lived with our mother’s mother. We all belonged to the same school and church. The open fields and the woods were our playgrounds, and up and down the train tracks and the dirt roads we ran. We picked blueberries, cut wildflowers and picked beans. Oh, what a way to live!

Lenora recalls that she’s had a special closeness to God ever since she was a child. She says she’s looked for the presence of God in nature her entire life. “Why,” she once exclaimed to me with an earnest smile and eyes as big as pie plates, “when I was a young girl, I even saw fish and frogs coming out of the sky!” What, I wondered to myself silently, was I supposed to make of such a bizarre and fantastic tale?

When I got back home, I “Googled” the subject and found, to my surprise, that reports of fish and frogs falling from the sky go as far back as Exodus 8:2 in the Bible. We’ve all sung this verse from the old Negro spiritual: “Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt La-a-and. Tell old Pharaoh, let my people go! Well, it turns out that that stanza was based on Exodus 5:1. In Exodus 8:2, you’ll read that God told Pharaoh: “If you don’t let my people go, I will smite your whole territory with frogs.” Today, meteorologists confirm that a waterspout or a tornado can, in fact, lift fish, frogs and other living and non-living things high into the thunderclouds and fling them down to earth many miles away. Lenora -- living as close to the Atlantic Ocean and other bodies of water as she did in her childhood – *really* may have seen fish and frogs falling from the sky!

“At age nine,” Lenora recalls, “I moved to Newark, New Jersey to live with my father and stepmother. A year later, in 1968, we learned that I had a weak left kidney that, and infection left me weak and in a lot of pain. School became hard for me, because of all the days that I missed because of my poor health. This problem continued for years to come.

“Then we moved to Boston, Massachusetts in search of a better life and better schools. I lived there for a number of years and then moved back with my father in New Jersey. By now I was in high school, but I was still having kidney problems. I attended East Orange High School for a short time, due to illness. I then changed to St James, an intermediary school, where I finished my high school education. After school, I trained for a year to get job placement with the Prudential Insurance Company. My first job was as a secretary in the planning department.

Chapter Four

Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”*

--Psalm 23--

March 10, 1995 – The clock on the admitting room wall at New Hanover Regional Medical Center said 7 AM as George and Lenora Moore and their son Derwan entered, signed her in, and took their seats in the waiting area.

As they waited for her name to be called, they began talking about the impending operation and how long she might be in the hospital and out of work. Lenora was the heart of the family’s painting business, “Moore’s Custom Painting,” and all three of them were worried about how the company could keep on running without her there to line up the work, schedule the jobs and keep track of the payments.

Soon, in an effort to quell their growing anxiety, they realized it was time for family prayer. Lenora remembers joining hands as her husband raised a plea for help that heaven surely *had* to have heard! As tears streamed down all of their faces, she felt an overwhelming sense of calm. Everything was going to be ok.

Shortly after their prayer came to an end, a nurse led them to pre-op, where Lenora changed into a hospital gown and was hooked to an IV bag in preparation for surgery. Then, the anesthesiologist arrived to explain the general anesthesia he would administer to put her to sleep and he assured them he’d be taking good care of her throughout the procedure. Next came the last, and most important, members of the pre-operative parade: the team of doctors who’d soon be cutting open her body and going inside after the cancer that was killing her.

Lenora had never had surgery of any kind in her life. So, as the surgeons described what they would be doing, they were peppered with questions from George and Derwan. Both were deeply anxious, not just about whether she would ever be able to return to work, but also about how long she would be under the knife, and most of all, whether she could survive the ordeal. The lead surgeon, Oncologist Dr. John Powell, informed them she would be on the operating table for four to six hours, depending on what they found.

Just a few days earlier, Lenora had signed the usual “consent to operate” forms, acknowledging that her doctor had fully explained the procedures she would undergo, including the long list of risks...including the risk of death.

Now the time was at hand, and as tears began welling in Derwan’s eyes, his mother struggled to pull herself together. The realization of how serious her operation would be was finally settling in. Lenora was not ready to leave her family behind. So, she focused on fighting back her fears by dwelling on the *one* thing that she knew with absolute certainty: her Lord Jesus Christ was watching over her, and in this anxious moment, He let her know, once again, that He was with her and that everything was going to turn out fine!

Then the anesthesiologist re-entered the room to give Lenora an injection that would put her under, and for her, at least, the waiting and the worrying came to an end.

She groggily bade her family good-bye. Then an aide wheeled her into the operating room, where the surgical team was waiting to perform an alphabet soup of procedures with tongue-twisting names neither she nor I had ever heard of before. The operation went on for 3 hours and 9 minutes. By the time it was over, here’s what the surgeons had removed from her body: the built-up fluids that had swollen Lenora’s abdomen; her uterus, including a large fibroid tumor that had made her appear to be three months pregnant; her ovaries, both of which had tumors at least 11 centimeters in diameter; her fallopian tubes; her cervix; the lymph nodes from both sides of her pelvis and from her aorta; her omentum (part of the thin tissue surrounding her abdominal organs); her appendix; a large tumor from the lining of her colon; adhesions between her liver and her diaphragm; a needle

biopsy from a nodule on her liver; and a tumor from the lining of her stomach.

When she was discharged from the hospital 9 days after her operation, Lenora was malnourished, anemic and suffering from diminished lung function. But, she was alive! Her battle with ovarian cancer had only just begun. Little did she know then how many years her Lord would grant her to continue enjoying the love of her husband, her son and her family!

Chapter Five

Angels Watching Over Me

*“All night, all day,
Angels watching over me, my Lord.
All night, all day,
Angels watching over me.”*

--From a Negro Spiritual Believed Written in Slavery Days—

Lenora had lain on the operating table for more than three hours, deeply sedated, blissfully and painlessly unaware as the surgeons carved open her body and took out much of the evil cancer that had been growing within her.

Now, with the surgery over, she was slowly regaining consciousness on a bed in the recovery room. As her eyelids first began to twitch and flutter, she heard someone assuring her through her fog, “We are here. Open your eyes.”

It was over!! Her Lord had protected and saved her!! She had survived!!

And what a welcoming committee was on hand to greet her! Even through the flood of tears that was blurring her vision, she could see her husband George, who had been sitting in a chair by her bedside, waiting for her to awaken. Lenora looked at her beloved and smiled. Then, as her eyes gradually focused on the other fuzzy figures around the room, she recognized her sisters Kathleen and Cassandra, a brother-in-law and a niece and nephew, all of whom had driven five hours from Charlotte to see her. Prophet Loftin from her church was there too, and summoned her entire family to join in prayer. They reassured Lenora that they would all be at a church service that night, and that the entire congregation would be praying for her.

“Shout the victory for my life!” Lenora replied. “And stomp the Devil’s head for me!” Kathleen then reassured Lenora she’d be staying with her through the night. After that, George and the others left, to give her a chance to rest.

As Lenora drifted in and out of sleep, she could hear Kathleen singing and praying aloud. What a comforting feeling it was to have her near! “As I lay there,” Lenora says, “I was praying and giving Christ the thanks for bringing me through the surgery.” She didn’t know what lay ahead, but there was one thing she *did* know: her Lord Jesus would help her make it through.

Before long her son Derwan came into her room. He’d been deeply shaken by his mother’s illness and Lenora awoke to see him standing by her bed, calling to her, “Ma-Ma, Ma-Ma!” “Hey son!” Lenora responded, “Good to see you!” With tears in his eyes and sadness in his voice, Derwan urged her to go back to sleep, assuring her that he would be near. Lenora realized that the sight of all the drainage and feeding tubes coming from her body must have unnerved him. She had, indeed, journeyed through the valley of the shadow of death.

The next day, Lenora’s doctors arrived to tell her that she would probably be recovering in the hospital for two to three weeks. A couple of nights after her surgery, her breathing became labored, so a chest X-ray was ordered. The exam, on March 13th, revealed a collapsed lung, so they started her on breathing treatments to correct the problem.

As she slowly regained her strength following the operation, Lenora was thankful for the many angels in human form who had been visiting, praying and holding devotionals with her, and all the others who’d been sending flowers and cards. She began looking forward to the day when she could go home. For her dear husband, George, the routine of visiting her in the hospital each night, after painting houses all day and leading Wednesday night Bible studies at his church, was beginning to take its toll. She remembers he’d walk in with a broad smile, carrying something to eat, they’d talk awhile, and then she’d glance over to see that he’d nodded off. After he’d dozed for a time, she’d call to him, and tell him to go on home. He’d get up, smile, kiss her on the forehead, and then he’d be gone.

Lenora remembers she was prayed over, and did a lot of praying herself, during her recovery and she read her Bible like never before. She knew she needed all the rest she could get, plus time to think things through before she could be ready to endure the course of chemotherapy that lay ahead.

Then one night, as her hospital stay was drawing to a close, Lenora says a touch on her shoulder awakened her from her slumber. She remembers squinting as the room filled with a brilliant light. As her eyes adjusted to the searing brightness, she says she saw two angels hovering above her bedside. Lenora recalls that one angel bent over, raised her up, and placed its hand on the middle of her back. At that instant, she says, it felt like fire and electricity were coursing through her body! She was frozen in place, unable to move, as the angel spoke to her: “You have found favor in my sight. Be thou made whole!”

At that moment, Lenora says she felt in her heart she had heard the very voice of her Lord. It was 2 o’clock in the morning. As she lay there, crying and thanking her savior for bringing her through her perilous journey, she soon found the strength to get up from her bed. She says she unplugged the medical pole holding her heart monitor and the IV equipment, put on a nightgown, grabbed hold of the pole, and slowly ventured out the door and down the hallway. With each cautious step, she says she felt the power flowing through her body.

As she inched her way down the hall, Lenora remembers hearing a woman’s cries as she was passing the door of a nearby room. So she knocked lightly on the door, then went inside and found a young woman lying in bed, holding her stomach and crying. Lenora says she asked her what was wrong, and the woman replied that she’d had bladder surgery and was feeling intense pain. Lenora asked if she could pray for her and the woman responded, “Yes, please.”

Lenora says she then lightly placed her hands on the woman’s stomach and prayed for healing. She says as she called on Christ Jesus she could feel the power flowing from her hands into the woman’s stomach and, by the time she stopped praying, Lenora says, the young woman was fast asleep. She then eased back out of the room and returned to her own bed. As she crawled back in, she began thinking about what the Lord had just used her to do. Not only had God used her in a miracle that night, he had performed a miracle for her, as well. Says Lenora, “I don’t think I will ever be the same again.”

Chapter Six

Hair Today, Gone Tomorrow

*"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."
Job 1:20*

March 21, 1995 – Just eleven days after having all of her pelvic organs removed, Lenora knew that she must begin to prepare herself for her next major battle against the cancer that was still invading her body. A surgeon at New Hanover Regional Medical Center implanted a portacath beneath the skin on the right side of her chest and then inserted the catheter into the superior vena cava vessel at the entrance to the right atrium in her heart. This device would be the entry point for the highly toxic chemotherapy drugs that would soon be coursing through her veins in search of their malignant targets. In the process, Lenora had heard, the chemo would make her violently sick and would take away all of her hair.

That night, as spasms of pain and swelling wracked the left side of her neck, a nurse gave her an ice pack and Tylox (a combination of oxycodone and acetaminophen) to ease her suffering. The next morning, an X-ray of her chest and neck confirmed that the portacath had been properly placed and Lenora was sent home with more Tylox for the pain and an appointment to begin her chemotherapy.

Lenora's doctors would be attacking her cancer with three powerful chemotherapy drugs: six cycles of Adriamycin 80mg, Cytoxan 800mg and Cisplatinium 80mg. After each treatment she would stay overnight in the hospital and be discharged the following morning, that is, if she could drink fluids and her nausea and vomiting were controlled.

As her body recoiled from its first assault of chemo, Lenora was convinced that nothing could have prepared her, or anyone else for that matter, for the nausea and weakness she was feeling. After just one treatment, with five more still ahead of her, she doubted that she could ever feel well again.

But, as miserable as they were for her to endure, the nausea and weakness were mere nuisances when compared to a third, life-threatening side effect of her chemotherapy: an immunosuppressed condition called neutropenia, which can lead to potentially fatal infections. Many powerful chemo drugs, including the ones Lenora was taking, suppress a certain kind of white blood cells called neutrophils, which are essential in fighting infections.

On April 11, 1995, shortly after undergoing her first round of chemo, Lenora was readmitted to New Hanover Regional Medical Center with a periodontal abscess of the upper gum. The cause: neutropenia. Lenora's gynecological oncologist found that her level of neutropenia was Grade IV...the most severe. As a result, he started her on magic mouthwash (*yes, that's a genuine medical term,*) and antibiotics. For her next round of chemo he ordered her dosage cut by 25% and began administering Neupogen, a man-made form of protein that stimulates the production of white blood cells.

After her second dose of chemo, Lenora says her memory was shrouded in fog and she just didn't feel like herself any more. By the third dose, all of her hair had fallen out and she had lost a lot of weight.

So her next step was to have George drive her to a wig shop. Once there, she was quickly overwhelmed by all the different styles and colors. *Who* did she want to look like? There were *so many* choices! After considering all of her options, Lenora settled on a wig that was the same color as her own hair had been...reddish-brown, with a little length for styling. George approved, and so that's the wig she took home with her that day.

Love is blind, so they say. Maybe that's why Lenora's family kept assuring her that she still looked good, even without her hair. To her surprise, four months after beginning her chemotherapy, while she was still receiving treatments, her own hair began to grow back, curly and a lighter color than it had been. As it grew, she found she could wear the wig less and less and she began wearing a small cap around the house.

But with each succeeding treatment, she felt worse and worse. In addition to the chemo sessions, Lenora was in and out of the hospital

repeatedly, feeling terribly sick. Before she knew it, her body had wasted from a starting weight of 121 pounds down to a skeleton-like 98! She could hardly recognize herself in the mirror any more, she looked so ill.

As a pastor's wife, she felt she needed to take care of her appearance and to dress well. Self-image was important to her. So she and George did a lot of praying together, and even though she was terribly weak, George took her along on his painting jobs. Over time, Lenora says, that was the best thing she could have done for her health. She prepared the estimates for his contracts and accompanied him to most of the job sites.

When she was feeling really bad, Lenora says George would just help her into the car, roll the windows down and drive, letting the cold air blow across her face. Sometimes, she recalls, they'd drive to the beach where George let her sit in the sun or stick her toes in the surf. Little things like that, she remembers, were a real blessing. "When you are ill," Lenora says, "there is something about sitting in the sun that just makes you feel so good."

At night she'd been sleeping with lots of pillows piled up at the head of her bed, so she would not be lying flat. On learning about that, two of Lenora's closest friends, John and Kathy, brought over a recliner chair for her to sleep in. She was *so* glad to see them, as she'd been feeling low. They had even driven her to the park that day, to get her out into the sunlight and to take pictures. "Thank God," Lenora says, "for friends!"

Not long after that, Lenora's sister Cassandra and her husband, Prophet Loftin of Jesus Christ Holy Ghost and Fire Baptized Ministry in Charlotte, drove over to Wilmington for a visit, bringing their children with them. Prophet Loftin told Lenora that he could see the mark of Jesus Christ on her body and the glory of the Lord upon her face. She remembers they all joined in prayer, giving thanks and glory to the Lord for his love, power and grace that were abounding in her life.

That evening, Lenora recalls, they all went out to dinner together at the Mai Tai Chinese Restaurant on Oleander Drive in Wilmington. "It was the best Chinese buffet in town," she exclaims. "We laughed and talked and had a lot of fun," Lenora says, "even though I could not eat the food. But I had iced tea and mashed potatoes. All the sickness I was facing just seemed to melt away that night. I felt so happy watching them all eat and talk. They

were all helping me get through chemo without even knowing it. I just sat there, trying to hide my tears!”

Because she kept being re-admitted to the hospital with various illnesses and infections (at least six or seven times, as she recalls,) it took nearly a year for Lenora to complete her chemotherapy.

By the time her first round of chemo treatments was over, Lenora says she was experiencing numbness in her fingers and toes, she was still having nausea and vomiting, she felt sick and weak and her memory was so impaired sometimes she couldn't even remember her own name, or how to drive the car. She says she would go places and not know why she was there.

As frustrating as all of these symptoms were, when she began telling her doctor what she was experiencing, she says he didn't seem to have any answers for her. After her final treatment she says he came out to tell her “You are healed, you are healed.” Lenora recalls “I didn't know what to say. So I just said okay. It was so strange the way he said it to me,” she continues. “Here I have been sick almost to death and not a reply (*about all of my problems*), and now at the end of it all, this is all I get. I felt used, I really did, seeing as this was the first time he had talked to me since I had started chemo!”

Chapter Seven

Lenora's Mortal Enemy

It is 1996 now. A full year has passed since Lenora's doctors identified the enemy that was threatening to steal her life: Stage III-C ovarian adenocarcinoma...ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer results from the rapid and uncontrolled growth and division of cells within one or both of the ovaries, the reproductive glands where the ova, or eggs, and the female sex hormones are formed. Instead of the normal cell growth that reproduces to maintain healthy tissue, in the presence of ovarian cancer, the ovarian cells divide too quickly and a cellular mass, or tumor, forms. If the tumor is restricted to a few layers of cells and doesn't invade adjoining tissues or organs, it is considered to be benign.

However, if the tumor invades adjoining tissues or organs, it is classified as malignant, that is to say, cancerous. When the cancer cells separate from the original tumor and travel through the blood or lymph system and begin to grow in other parts of the body, as they had inside Lenora, it is said that they have metastasized.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) says ovarian cancer is the ninth most common form of cancer among women in the U.S. and it's the most fatal of all types of gynecologic cancer. The Society estimated that about 21,550 new cases of ovarian cancer would be diagnosed in the U.S. in 2009, with approximately 14,600 dying from the disease. It says this cancer develops primarily in older women, with almost half of the victims being 65 or older. The ACS says it rarely occurs in women under age 40, and it adds that the disease is more common among white women than African-Americans. Lenora -- an African-American who was diagnosed with the disease at age 36 -- was an unfortunate exception to the norm.

But maybe Lenora Moore is one of those people for whom the odds just don't seem to apply. Tragically, for most women, ovarian cancer delivers a fairly swift death sentence. The ACS says about a fourth of women with ovarian cancer die within a year of receiving their diagnosis. More than half (about 53%) are gone within five years. Just over 10 percent of women with stage IIC (Lenora's stage) manage to live 10 years. At this

writing, Lenora has lived with ovarian cancer for 15-1/2 years, and she's still defying the odds, surrounded and sustained by the love of her Lord, her family and friends and her Hospice team. Now, she feels God has called her to share her story of survival with others who, like she, are battling cancer or some other deadly disease. It's her prayer that, within these pages, they will find the hope, the strength and the will to fight on.

"A time comes in one's life," Lenora says, "when you must fight off fear with faith." As the Bible says in I John 4:18, "...fear has torment and he that fears has not been made perfect in love."

"What all human beings need," she says, "is just to know the truth, and that their doctors are listening to them." One of the biggest challenges in her battle against ovarian cancer, she recalls, was finding out the truth about what was going wrong with her body and then learning all she could about her treatment. "The more you understand about your care," she says, "the better your treatment goes. Learning about your plan of care is of the utmost importance in achieving recovery. Once my plan was in place," Lenora says, "I found all the other things became easier to bear. Once chemotherapy or radiation begins," Lenora advises, "you very quickly learn that you need to muster all the strength you can just to survive from day to day."

In her own experience, Lenora found from the very outset that getting at the truth of what was causing her physical ailments was dauntingly difficult. She says in December, 1994, when her family doctor told her that everything was normal for a woman her age -- even though she knew it was not -- she was reticent and confused about where she could go to get a second opinion. Then, when she endured the ordeal of her first surgery, she felt as if her surgeon was more interested in gathering his own information than in keeping *her* informed about her condition, her treatment and what she could expect. "I didn't really feel cared for," she says.

Despite those frustrations, Lenora declares "I believe in fighting the good fight of faith and letting the Holy Spirit lead me in victory. The word of the Lord prepared me to win all the battles I would face."

Chapter Eight

Lenora's Next Battle Begins

Four years after her initial surgery for ovarian cancer, Lenora found herself struggling with a new round of health problems. The room would start spinning around whenever I stood up," she recalls. "And I started getting bad headaches, having black-out spells and feeling very light-headed at times.

"My memory was getting worse and worse. Sometimes I would go to the store and forget why I was there. One day I had a doctor's appointment and got in the car and, for the life of me, I could not get it started! I tried for about 15 minutes to start the car, but I couldn't, so I had to end up asking my husband to take me to the doctor's office.

"My doctor ordered an MRI of my brain and later a CT scan. The MRI showed that there was a growth in my pituitary gland, but nothing that would be causing black-outs. So he started treating me for depression and dementia, and I was given medication to treat it. One drug he prescribed for me was Prozac for depression, the other was Zoloft for dementia. I surely disagreed with the doctor's diagnosis later on because I did not feel depressed at all!

"Over the past 2-1/2 years my condition had been worsening by the month. One evening, after my husband came home from a painting job, I was out in the back yard, helping him to clean up the pans and brushes. Then I came back in the house and went into the bathroom to clean myself up. All at once, the bathroom became as light as a thousand suns and I could hear the Lord speaking to my heart. He was telling me that my life was in danger; to get dressed and go to the emergency room. So, immediately, I stopped what I was doing to go tell my husband what had just happened. I found him on the back porch, taking off his shoes. We both then rushed to get ourselves together and left right away for the E.R. On the way, we decided to change course and head for the Medac Clinic instead, because the physicians there had helped me in the past and I would be seen more quickly there.

"When we arrived, I told the desk clerk that I was feeling light-headed and needed to see a doctor right away. I also shared with her what the Lord had told me. She then asked me to fill out a form and said that someone would be with me as soon as possible. After a short while, I was called to

the back and explained to the doctor that I had been feeling light-headed and felt I needed some oxygen. I also shared with him that the Lord had warned me my life was in danger.

“He then asked ‘how long I had been having shortness of breath?’ I told him it had been going on for quite some time, but that lately it seemed to be getting worse. Then he began listening to my heart and asked me to get up and walk back and forth. Next, he said he was going to order an X-ray of my chest and that he would be right back. Then, as he was leaving, he happened to glance back at me and, suddenly, he stopped and came back into the room.

“Then he began looking at my neck and asked how long my right jugular vein had been bulging out. I told him it had been that way for about two days. After hearing that, he told me he believed he knew what was wrong. He instructed me to stay calm and be real still while he called for an ambulance to take me to the emergency room. Next, he had the nurse bring my husband into the room and he explained to him what was going on. My husband decided that, rather than wait on the ambulance, he would drive me to the E.R. himself.

“When I arrived, they were waiting for me in the E.R. and they worked quickly to insert an IV and take X-rays and other tests. After about 20 minutes or so, the doctor came in and told my husband and me that they had found I had an internal and external thrombosis (*blood clot*) in my right jugular vein and that they would be giving me a blood thinner called Lovenox by IV and would be watching me for the next three days. Very little blood was making its way to my brain and they were worried that I could have a stroke or something worse.

“By now my husband was doing some hard praying and I could tell that he was worried. We had already been through so much together! I could see on his face that he was getting tired, but I knew that he was praying for more strength and faith to get us beyond this latest crisis. He came over and sat in a chair, took my hand, told me he loved me, and urged me to keep my eyes on Jesus Christ and to keep my hands in Christ’s hands, for He would bring me out of this crisis! I looked up at him and told him that I loved him too and that I would trust in the Lord always. All night, nurses and doctors were coming in and out of my room. I believe this was the longest night of my life.

“The next day, the doctors came to talk to me about the Lovenox and the Coumadin that I had been getting through the IV. They told me that I would have to continue on these blood-thinners indefinitely and that they were unsure about taking me to surgery at that time. Upon hearing that surgery might be needed, my husband was worried. But, after talking with the doctor, we agreed that we would just trust the Lord and let the Lovenox and Coumadin continue working, since they appeared to be dissolving the blood clots.

“I must say that it was a relief to finally find out what had been causing all my weakness and dizziness and to learn that jugular thrombosis can cause sudden death. My Lord had warned me! So, I thank God Almighty for taking care of me through all the years that I had been having problems. God is not finished with me yet, this I know! I love the Lord with all my heart and I believe in him with all my soul. I’ll bless the Lord at all times.!

“The doctors could not believe that I was lying on their bed with a big smile on my face and praying, when they came back in to check on me. By then, I was back in a hospital room and wishing that I were home.

“After I was allowed to go home, George and I had a hard time buying the Lovenox because it was very costly. I had to take an injection every day. My insurance didn’t cover the treatments, so my husband and I had to work hard to find ways to buy the medication. He had to take on more jobs and work even harder, and I had to do what I could to help him. This took a heavy financial toll on us, and I don’t know how we survived it.”

Chapter Nine

Lenora's Cancer Spreads

In 2002, Lenora found herself back in all-too-familiar territory: the oncology ward of New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington, NC. There, a CT scan detected a small mass in the tail of her pancreas. Her doctors decided at that time not to evaluate it further or to treat it.

In November of 2002, she was back in the hospital again: this time, for the removal and biopsy of the right scalene lymph nodes in her neck. The biopsy was positive for adenocarcinoma.

And so, in early 2003, Lenora began her second round of chemotherapy: nine doses of Taxotere, one dose of Carboplatin and Chlorambucil, and radiation therapy to the right side of her neck.

Three years later, in February 2006, a CT scan revealed that the tumor in her pancreas had grown. June 2006, she was back in NHRMC, this time because her right axillary lymph nodes were swollen. Once again, a dissection of the nodes came back positive for adenocarcinoma. The following month, Lenora went to her doctor, complaining of abdominal pain, weight loss, nausea, vomiting and pain in her back. He ordered another CT scan, which revealed a 5 centimeter hardened lesion in the tail of her pancreas and signs that her common bile duct was blocked. Less than two weeks later, she underwent a procedure with a tongue-twisting name: Endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography, or ERCP for short. The technique, combining fluoroscopy and endoscopy, confirmed that her common bile duct was nearly closed off, so her doctors opened it up by inserting a stent. Scarcely four months later the stent had to be replaced.

Now it was Christmas, 2006. Instead of being home celebrating the birth of the Christ child, Lenora had been admitted to Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC. There, the day after Christmas, an endoscopic ultrasound exam and a biopsy of the mass in her pancreatic tail came back positive, once again, for adenocarcinoma. Her doctors decided to treat her with a "single agent carbolated" chemotherapy drug.

Chapter Ten

Why Lenora Fights On

For an outsider like myself -- who has only entered the picture near the end of Lenora Moore's long, exceedingly difficult and painful journey -- it would be very easy to gloss over the suffering that she has endured the past 15-plus years. That's why I have resisted the temptation to spare you, the reader, from having to trudge with me through all the tedious details of her operations and treatments.

To fully appreciate Lenora's courage, determination and the depth of her Christian faith, I'm convinced that you need to know all that she has overcome. To look at Lenora now -- walking around her house, neatly dressed, smiling, wide-eyed and laughing -- it is nearly impossible for an occasional Hospice volunteer like me to realize how terribly ill she is and to absorb and appreciate all of the travails that she has overcome.

As I look back on all the chemotherapy, the pain, nausea, surgeries and other physical suffering that Lenora has been through, the question rings loudly in my ears: "Why would anyone choose to fight such a formidable foe? Isn't the "cure" worse than the disease? Wouldn't it have been easier for Lenora to simply refuse treatment and accept the inevitable? Were I in her shoes, wouldn't I have just asked for pain medication and slipped quietly away, as quickly and mercifully as possible?"

Lenora sat down at her computer one day and answered my question:

"The idea of having to undergo chemo again is about the last thing on earth that I would elect to go through. Trust me: each time brings less ease than before. The thing that keeps me pressing on is the fact that my family still needs my help. It would be so easy now to go on to heaven and take my rest. But, there's something inside me that keeps moving me forward; that says **LIVE**, and not die. I know that it's the spirit of God, imparting in me the grace and the will to survive.

"And, when I look into my husband's eyes, they seem to be saying I know that you are ill, but don't leave me now. And when I look into my son's face, it tells me you can't go now. So, I began putting on the whole armor of God so that I would be able to stand to fight the good fight of faith. I keep asking the Lord to use me and get the glory out of my life. Suffering is easy when you know there is a purpose.

“I gave up my life and my will to the Lord a long time ago, and it seems that ever since then I have been tested on every hand and side, so to speak. My heart just knows that it loves Jesus Christ the Lord. And my soul knows that if I keep praying and stay in his will, I will make it out of this trial all right.

“It’s just that all those tests and needle sticks and IV days seem to wear on the soul. I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me. And it seems just having something to do off and on helps the human spirit. So, as usual, I’ll line up some jobs for my husband to do and I’ll be right there to lend him a helping hand.

“When I come up to Duke to get chemo, it helps to have a book, mints, puzzles and music to listen to on the CD player. It just helps the time to go by. It will take more income to support making the trips up to Duke. So, I will be praying that the Lord touches someone’s heart to call us to do small jobs for them. We have been praying and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ this way for years. Pray, and wait for the telephone to ring. Above all, we glorify the Lord with every job he allows us to do, by doing the best job that can be done. We try to show forth the love and compassion of God to all the people that he sends our way. Now, my faith is built, and I am ready for this next round of chemo.”

By February, 2007, Lenora’s latest chemo treatment, six cycles of Carboplatin, was finished. The level of cancer antigen 125 (CA-125) in her blood was still slightly elevated at 41. However her doctors told her that CA-125 is not necessarily a good marker for her disease.

The following month, while she and George were visiting her sister in Charlotte, Lenora went to the Presbyterian Hospital ER with severe pain in her upper abdomen. She was treated with a pain patch and Dilaudid and by the next day, her pain had eased and she was discharged. August, 2008 found Lenora back at Duke. There, a CT scan of her abdomen and pelvis showed continued cancerous growth around her pancreas, so she was put on three more cycles of chemo with Gemzar and Avastin.

Two months later, on October 22, she was back in Duke again, where her doctors felt that she could benefit from surgery to remove all, or most, of the diseased tissue around her pancreas. As it turned out, the mass the surgeons removed turned out to be a benign cyst. There was no evidence of

malignancy in the cyst or in the lymph nodes they removed from the lining of her small bowel. It was six days before she was well enough to be released, but when the time came, there was no way she could go back home to Wilmington. Her husband, George, was very ill and under Hospice care, unable to care for her. He was dying of prostate cancer in a hospital bed in their home. So, on a daily dosage of antibiotics and with a drainage tube still inserted in her abdomen, Lenora was taken to Charlotte on October 28, 2009, where her sister Kathleen and other family members could tend to her needs.

Chapter Eleven

The Angels Reappear

While recuperating at her sister's home on November 5, 2008 Lenora began having terrible trouble breathing. She was rushed by ambulance to Charlotte's Presbyterian Hospital with pain in her chest, struggling for breath, coughing and running a low-grade fever.

She was admitted to the Pulmonary Critical Care unit where X-rays showed she had a large build-up of fluid in the left side of her chest cavity. That was preventing her lungs from being able to expand to take in air. The condition is known as pleurisy.

To remove the fluid, doctors began a procedure called thoracentesis. After administering a local anesthetic, as Lenora sat upright and leaned forward over a table, a doctor pierced her back with a hollow needle called a canulla and drew out a liter of fluid from the area surrounding her lungs. The procedure was very painful, so Lenora says she began to pray. "Boy did I pray!"

Suddenly, she recalls with amazement, "two angels appeared and the room got very bright. The angels were praying, and as they came close to me I became immobilized, almost paralyzed. I could hear them in my heart, telling me not to fear, that they would be with me. They said I had found grace in the Lord. Boy, was that comforting!" Lenora exclaimed. "When they began praying for me I got calmer and calmer. Peace and love filled my heart."

Next, Lenora recalls, the angels moved back to a corner of the room as she was wheeled to another room for a CT scan. When she got there, she says, "the angels were waiting. When I got back to my room." she says, they began to sing. Boy, can they sing! They began to tell me 'Peace be unto you! Cast yourself on the mercy seat. Grab onto the horns of the altar and never let go! They repeated it again. They were asking me again, but I was in a hospital bed. How could I do it?' Lenora wondered. "Then I leaned up and reached out my hands. It was like I grabbed the altar. I knew right then that I was going to be all right. I would not die from this."

Chapter Twelve

Back Home to Wilmington

With a catheter inserted to continue draining the fluid from her chest, and given the fact that she was no longer able to receive further chemotherapy, Lenora was sent home to Wilmington to die.

Home was where she desperately wanted to be. Her beloved George was lying in a hospital bed there, with a team from Lower Cape Fear Hospice tending to his needs.

It wasn't easy, but Lenora's relatives in Charlotte managed to come up with the required up-front payment of \$615.50 – half of the medical transport company's \$1,231 charge to carry her home. Meanwhile Lower Cape Fear Hospice agreed to take her under their wing and arrange for a hospital bed to be set up in her bedroom. Lenora's sister Kathleen drove to Wilmington in advance of the ambulance to help get things ready. Then, on November 13, 2008, the ambulance carried Lenora on the 197-mile journey to the Moore's home at 1417 South 4th Street in Wilmington.

Here are Lenora's reminiscences of her final days at home:

"I always believed that I would grow old at my home in Wilmington. But life threw me a curve ball and it landed me in home care with Lower Cape Fear Hospice...here in a place I call home, with my family.

"Being very ill, I was told I had just months to live. So, with the help of my sister Kathleen, I began planning funeral arrangements for my husband and myself. I called Bob Dunn, Jr. of Dunn Funeral Home in Burgaw, NC who made all of the final arrangements for us. My sisters and I picked out the burial clothes. It was a very emotional time for us all. I decided to start clearing out the house, getting rid of a lot of my personal items and also disposing of other household belongings inside and out. This was a very hard task because I was so sick. I had to use oxygen so there were tubes going up my nose. I had tubes coming from my chest to drain off the fluid from my lungs and there was a tube in place in my pancreas so it would drain too.

"So, to get things going I called an auctioneer to come out and get things organized for the sale. Boxes and boxes were taken to his gallery to be sold. It turned out to be a big job, since there were some things only I

could do. The hardest part was selling all the things I had collected over the years. I had to dismantle my life in a short span of time, doing it all while I was sick. This was about the hardest time I had ever faced in my life. Life just doesn't get any harder than this, I said to myself at the time. But, in fact, I knew that it *could* get worse if I didn't grab hold of more faith and grace.

"I was having a lot of pain and was on some strong drugs to help bring relief. And then, having to think about the fact that my husband was lying in the same room with me in a hospital bed, just as I was, and that he was also dying. I tried not to think about it. I knew I just had to pray that the grace of God would be with him and that the angels of the Lord would stand by his side. And this I know, that the Lord answered my prayers. So many people were praying for him. The next-to-the-oldest of his sons was there by his side. After he would leave his job, he would come and sit with his father. He would take the praying oil and make a cross on his head and have prayer with him and sit and talk for awhile. He was right by his side until the end.

"While this was going on the members of the Hospice care team were doing all they could to keep us comfortable. The love and support they gave us both was heaven-sent. We grew to love the nurses, the social worker, the chaplain and the aides. May God bless them all! I never had experienced that kind of love and care ever in my life. All my life, I was the one who had been caring and loving and supporting. It was humbling to be the receiver of all this help that came our way.

"I would also anoint my husband with oil and pray with him night and day. Be he would call on my sister to anoint him and pray each morning before he would eat his breakfast. At night I would talk to him so he would know what my plans were for each day, and to keep his mind alert. Most of all, I did that so he would feel like he still had some control over his household. He told me one night as we talked that he was laying hold of eternal life and that he wanted me to live and get better. Oh boy! The tears began to flow down my face and I was trying to hide from him, but he looked over and said 'Just lay down a while and get some rest.' But my heart was heavy and I just rubbed his head and told him that I loved him, and he gave me the biggest smile that you have ever seen. He also gave me the peace sign, which was his trademark.

“It seems that we work hard in life for things, and finally we learn that all that stuff means nothing to you when you become ill and can’t use them. What *is* important is the love of family and friends, caring and sharing with each other; also loving people and letting people show love to you.

“My husband was an ordained minister of Jesus Christ and a pastor of a church for over 45 years. We both loved pastoring people and did all we could to make them happy. He loved helping anyone who came his way. Now, we have become the needy ones. That is why I pray so hard and continue living close to the heart of God. You just don’t know what’s going to come your way to test your faith.

“Although my body is wracked with pain and wounds, my spirit remains strong and I will stay steadfast as ever. I can feel the angels all around me. They move throughout the house. Family and friends have said they could feel them all around. And, as I speak, it’s as if the Lord Jesus Christ is speaking through me. He is telling me that he is working things out for us. I just must keep hope alive and the grace of God will abound in my life. The Lord has put so much love and power within me, sometimes I can feel it flowing out of me. I lay hands on myself all the time to feel his healing virtue. I told myself from this moment on that all my trust would be in Christ and his word and I prayed that the mercy of God would cover us.

“I am so blessed to have the Holy Spirit in my life and soul. I am proud to be a Christian and a Bible teacher and a prophet of God. I am also an ordained minister of Christ Jesus the Lord. Almost everything He ever has spoken to me has come to pass. And when I have a vision, or see anything in the spirit, it comes to pass. When he speaks through me it’s all truth.

“I am alive today because I have listened to the voice of the Lord from the time I was a young Christian. And I learned how to get the Lord to hear me to get my prayers answered. I would go in the closet and pray to the Lord in secret and pray, asking him to send someone my way that would speak the same thing I said to him in secret. And when I started getting confirmation, just to hear them say the same thing was a faith builder, for sure. So, I knew he was hearing me when I prayed. And this also confirmed that it was the Holy Spirit, the voice of the Lord, speaking within me. There is nothing like getting a witness from our heavenly Father.

“At that time I could feel I was getting stronger physically and I knew I must make a wise decision. I could see hope building within myself daily. It was the Lord who had prepared for my husband’s home-going. He gave me a peace about it all and it was like he was standing right by my side. And by my being with Hospice, I had a lot of support to help me with the grieving process. Now that he had gone to heaven, I knew that I couldn’t continue to live in my Wilmington home by myself, even with Hospice care. So, I moved to Charlotte, NC, where my mother and other family members were living.

“At first, I moved in with my sisters as they were my care providers. Then my sister Kathleen found a place for me to live, down the street from her house. My family felt this would let me feel a little independence, having my own place. I moved in the first of March and my son Derwan came here from Wilmington to live with me. It was not an easy thing for him to leave his home and friends behind, but he said it was his responsibility to take care of his mother. He felt he needed to be there for me, because I was going to need all the family to help me now. I am now with Hospice and Palliative Care, Charlotte Region. They are taking good care of me at home.”

Chapter Thirteen

Lenora Dreams of Writing a Book

In March of 2010, as Lenora passed yet another milestone in her battle with ovarian cancer...her 15th year of survival...she sat down at her computer and wrote this:

“I have a new-found faith in 2010. I have been given the opportunity to write a book. That, in itself, is a miracle of faith. Since I am under Hospice care, I decided to ask my social worker if she knew someone at Hospice who would be able to help me with writing my book. She said that she would ask around. And, after about two weeks or more, she gave me a reply that, yes, there was a Hospice volunteer who had retired from TV news who would be willing to help me. And I thank God for his favor, for I believe God touched his heart and let him know that this was *our* season. Also, the timing was right to write my book.

“Back in 2008 I asked the Lord Jesus Christ to let me live to set things in order in my life and to let me finish out his plan for my life. I had this plan in my heart to write a book. I also asked him for the opportunity to sell my home in Wilmington, to have the funds to take care of all things needed to set thing in order. Great joy came over my heart, knowing that God was granting my prayer requests.

“God is still hearing my prayers, and this makes my soul happy in Christ Jesus the Lord and I am happy in my God. I feel the Holy Spirit moving in my soul right now. There is praise in my spirit, the joy of the Lord is my strength. I am looking forward to getting the crown of life that Jesus Christ will give all of us who keep the faith. I know that I have eternal life and this is a great comfort in my sickness.

“I try to go to church every Sunday, if possible, to worship the Lord. Sometimes I forget that I am sick. You have to look at me real close sometimes to tell that I am ill. Thank God for his grace.

“My son has brought great comfort to me in my hour of sickness. But sometimes I feel a little sad because, at his age, he should be enjoying life, not taking care of his sick mother. But he has told me he feels good about being here with me, but wishes that there was more that he could do for me. I believe it’s the will of God that we are together at this time.”

Chapter Fourteen

Lenora's Living Room

Now that you've cared enough to take the time to walk with Lenora on each tortured step of her long and painful journey, why don't you come sit a spell with her on the sofa in her cozy living room? I've had the honor and privilege of doing that maybe a dozen times this year. We'll turn down the big-screen TV, which she leaves on throughout much of the day to keep her company.

Take a look around. I've found you can learn a lot about a person, and about their likes and loves, just by looking at the pictures and other items they've chosen to hang on their walls and place on their tables and shelves.

Over there to the right, prominently displayed on a stand by the front door, you can't help but notice an American flag, folded crisply in triangular fashion, just the way it was when the U. S. Navy presented it to Lenora after they buried her husband with full military honors at the Coastal Carolina State Veterans Cemetery in Jacksonville, NC on January 8, 2009. You see, George Linwood Moore, Sr. had served as a Gunner's Mate with the Navy back in World War II. He enlisted just as soon as he turned 18 in 1942 and was awarded the American Area, Victory-World War II and Asiatic Pacific Area service medals. After accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior in 1955, George felt called to the ministry. Lenora says he earned his seminary degree from the Detroit, Michigan Theoretical College and was ordained in 1960. She says the Lord bestowed on him the gift of healing, and in the ensuing years of his ministry, including the founding of his own church, the New Mt. Moriah Church of Christ in Rocky Point, NC, Apostle and Bishop Moore came to be known as "The Miracle Man." Lenora, who was 34 years younger than he, cherishes his memory to this day.

On a table to the left rests a large Bible. As you surely know by now, if you could open it, you'd find no dust on its pages. Instead, you'd find scores upon scores of Lenora's personal notations. Of all the books that have ever been published, Lenora says, the Bible is her book of choice to read – her "notebook for life and death." It's when she's in church, Lenora explains, that she hears the Lord's voice most clearly and most often. "So, in church," she adds, "you'll always see me writing notes in my Bible or in a notebook. Flip the pages of Lenora's Bible and, among the many writings she entered there, in ball-point pen, you'll find these:

1995 (*the year of Lenora's ovarian cancer diagnosis*) -- "I will heal and save you!" St. John 2:11 "The beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory: and his disciples believed on him."

1995 -- "This shouldn't be so hard!" Lenora wrote, after she struggled through her first surgery and her first debilitating round of chemotherapy. "Trying to work sick makes this harder. I must keep going!" Then she penned in her Lord's reassuring answer: "Hold on! I am with you!"

1999 (*when Lenora began having severe headaches, black-outs and dizzy spells*) -- "Thin my blood, Holy Spirit! Let me breathe better. I will hold on. Hold me Jesus! Carry me until I can walk on my own."

2003 (*when she began her second round of chemotherapy cancer was detected in her right scalene nodes*) -- Lenora wrote "Just trying get the lump out before it becomes a great problem." God's answer, Lenora wrote: "I am the God of truth. I'll bring it out. Help is on the way!" In despair, Lenora added: "This is too much for a lifetime. But Christ in me is the hope of Glory. Lord," she pleaded, "bring the truth to light!"

2004 – Lenora heard the Lord tell her in church: "Fight and keep the faith!"

April 18, 2006 (*as Lenora began feeling sicker and sicker with nausea, weight loss and back pain*) -- She raised up a desperate plea: "Help! Help! Help! Where are you Lord?"

May 1, 2006 -- She heard the Lord answer her plea: "More cancer treatment is coming. Prepare! I am with you. I am going before you to work this out! Mark 16:18 "...if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

July 14, 2006 (*just before doctors found a lesion in her pancreas and an obstruction in her bile duct*) -- Lenora wrote the words she heard from her Lord: "There's something else. But, don't give up. I am working it out. It will come to light soon."

August, 2006 -- (*Shortly after a stent was placed to open up her bile duct*) – She wrote: "My body belongs to Christ. Faith to faith. Glory to Glory in the kingdom."

August 13, 2008 (*as she prepared for another round of chemo to slow the growth of cancer around her pancreas*) – Lenora wrote that she heard the Lord speak to her: “Live on in the spirit and nothing shall hurt you.”

September 7, 2008 (*as she awaited further debulking of the cancerous tissue in her abdomen*) – Lenora heard her Lord say: “Be still. Don’t get in a hurry. Wait on me. It’s working to your good, sayeth the Spirit.”

Without a doubt, Lenora’s Bible is the centerpiece...the Rock...of her living room. But, glancing around, you’ll also notice a photograph of her mother, who is still living in Charlotte today. Lenora’s love of oriental objects and art is evidenced by the prints of two panda bears on the wall above her TV, the panda bear figurines on the floor and on a stand, the two Chinese dolls her husband bought for her in Charleston, and the oriental rug which stretches across her floor. A pair of chopsticks is artfully displayed on her coffee table. A silk tapestry of birds, flowers, bridges and ponds graces a wall. A pair of black enameled oriental horseshoe chairs with brass corners beckons visitors to sit a spell. Two brass Chinese symbols, representing peace and happiness, hang on a wall nearby. And then, your eyes are drawn to an 18” statue of a monk, holding a Bible and a cross. “That’s my husband.” Lenora smiles. A white figure of a praying woman stands by its side. “My husband,” she explains, “was a soul winner.”

Chapter Fifteen

Hospice Brings Help and Hope

“Now it is May, and I find myself in a different place. I feel that I have moved on from dying to living each day with peace and hope. Just a short time ago, I was told to prepare to die, by my doctors and Hospice. I have been with Hospice about 18 months now. The care that I have received from them has been the prime reason that I am doing so well, plus the power of prayer and faith. Also, I’ve been putting my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, who has given me the strength to move forward.

“My nurse with Hospice, with her smile and just taking the time to talk with me about my care and how things are going, has helped me to have hope for tomorrow. The chaplain that comes...we pray together and always have good conversations, talking about the love of God and the everlasting life that Christ gives us and we share in the observation of the Lord’s Supper. This is a very special spiritual moment for me. The social worker goes above and beyond to help with any need that I might have. My Hospice nurse, Ruth, is the best! She always greets me with a big hug, and most of the time, it is greatly needed. But, most of all, she helps me keep my pain under control.

“Just months ago, I was working hard to get all of my business finalized, so my family would not have to deal with last minute details of my life. I want to have all of that already taken care of. I finally sold my home in Wilmington, NC. I sold it for what the market would bear at the time. So, I am happy with that.

“My days are full of Scriptures and prayers. I read the 23rd Psalm each day and I also read the 27th chapter of Psalms. These Scriptures bring joy and hope into my life each day. My son, Derwan, lives in my home with me and keeps me praying and on my toes each day. He keeps me from feeling lonely. It’s good to have someone to talk with and just to have in the house. I enjoy watching daytime TV and Black Entertainment Television. I also enjoy Judge Mathis and Judge Joe Brown during the day. Sometimes, to help fill my days, I will play games on my PC and there are times when I go out with my sisters for lunch or dinner. Sometimes, we just go shopping. I make a point of going to church on Sundays. I go, even if I’m not feeling well, because, by the time I hear the word of God and the singing, my mind is off of myself and most of the time I begin feeling better and I get to enjoy another worship day with my church family. The name of the church is

Jesus Christ Holy Ghost and Fire Baptized Ministry. My oldest sister is the pastor of this church, Pastor Cassandra F. Loftin. During the week I watch the Word Network for good gospel preaching and I read my Bible for my spiritual food to stay strong. I thank God for having a strong Christian family that cares for each other.

“The Hospice care team truly works on my behalf to keep things running well for me. They also work well with the family, taking care of my needs. I wake up each day looking forward to making the best of every day. I make sure I talk to a family member each day.

“The summer is fast approaching and I find myself thinking about my late husband. We would be making plans now for summer trips and outings. So, I have to work hard these days to keep my mind on reading and talking to my social worker and chaplain about my feelings and the things that worry me. I have had to learn to go on and live without my husband by my side. It takes a lot of faith and hope for tomorrow to get by each day.

“I’ve been thinking about planning a trip to Wilmington just to see and talk to old friends and visit with some family members. I think it would do me a world of good. So, it looks like I have a trip to plan!

“Yesterday I realized that my life seems to be in a good place. I am feeling better these days. My pain level is better and I feel really good about life. If the Lord would call me home now I would have no regrets. Although, sometimes, I feel that I could be doing more with my life at this time. It takes a lot of faith to watch one’s life come almost to a close.

“Sometimes I get lonely when I think about my life before Hospice. The Hospice nurse comes on Mondays and Thursdays and the Hospice home attendant comes on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

“I’ve been working on my feelings about my son. I have been concerned about what will happen to him. When I pass on to heaven I know that I must place him in the hands of the Lord and I pray that he learns to do the same. I pray that he will seek out ways to survive as a young man. As a mother, I have done all that I know to do to help him find his path in life. I just pray that we both find peace. I know for sure that it takes God’s grace and faith to make it through each day. I have great hope and empowerment flowing through me. I have a need to help someone else.

This is the first time during my illness that I haven't had something to fill my days. Before, I had my husband to take care of, and the church."

"Dr. Porter (*Lenora's Hospice physician*) came by this morning and I was glad to see him. Over the weekend I had a little nausea that seems to flare up from time to time. Dr. Porter changed the medication that I had been taking to a different kind and it's working well. He thinks that I am doing remarkably well at this point of care. He seems to believe that prayer is working on my behalf as well.

"I have swollen lymph nodes in my neck and in my shoulder area there is a small tumor. I asked Dr. Porter about it and he seems to think that there's nothing to worry about at this time. It mostly gives me problems at night when I am trying to sleep. The pressure from lying on my side does cause some pain from time to time.

"I must say that I do get tired from lying around not having anything to do. I do understand now why retired people volunteer their time to help others, because it does get you up and moving and out of the house. We all need to feel needed. I would love to do the same if I were well enough to do so. But, I remain thankful for the strength that I do have.

"My back is the weakest part of my body. It gets real tired sometimes. I think it comes from lying around a lot. So now, I get up more and move around. My sister and I go out more and ride out to the stores and shop. We take drives out to the Dairy Queen sometimes and just sit and talk. Kathleen is always coming by and getting me to ride out with her. I thank God for her. She keeps me from getting lonely. My two little parrots are also fun to have. They just sing and play and bring me great joy. They are the first thing I hear in the morning when I get out of bed. I have also been getting out to the Farmer's Market to get fresh fruits, and I surely feel better being able to eat fresh fruit. I had some peaches that were so sweet that they just brought back memorable times I shared with my husband. There is not a day that goes by that I don't think about him and the joy and happiness he brought into my life."

Chapter Sixteen

Lenora's Parting Prayer

Seven months ago, when Lenora and I first took on the task of writing this book together, I asked her to tell me why she wanted to share her story with you. After all, I feared that having to relive all of the pain and suffering she'd been through, including her greatest pain -- when another form of cancer took the life of her beloved husband George -- might only add to her sorrow and stress. Here is the answer she gave me:

“My intention in telling my story is to let everyone who's fighting cancer know that through faith in CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD, and faith in life, love and family, you can survive. My off and on battle has opened me up to ask the hard questions, to get myself heard and helped.

“What I want people to take from this book is a deep feeling of hope and faith. I want you to reach a true personal level of love for life and to conclude that it, *alone*, is worth fighting for. You cannot just give up on your life and your dreams. Fight the fight of faith if anyone tries to tell or lead you otherwise. Smile with a joyful heart and a peaceful mind for your being is bound for everlasting life in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior!

“Just Believe...”

