

MY PRECIOUS MEMA

By Terri

Your presence in my life has been an anchor, strong and sure. You've told me how special we've always been to each other, even when I was too young to remember. How as a newborn baby you took me home from the hospital so my mom could rest, thus securing a close bond from the start. I've been told that as a toddler I would carry around your picture, showing the neighbors and strangers alike my "Mema". Even though at age 3 we moved from Texas to California, we remained close through visits, calls, and lots of letters. Whenever I learned a new craft, I always wanted you to have the first one. You always made me feel so proud of myself.

When I was only 6 years old, I sang my first song at the church you and Grandpa Pastored. I tried singing. I'd heard you sing many times, "His eye is on the sparrow". I'm not sure how good it was, but I tried to sing it just like you. You've told me a few times how I would claim that I wanted to grow up and be a preacher's wife and sing, like my Mema. Even though for years I didn't remember saying that, you reminded me of it after it had come true! A dream I am fulfilling to this day.

Though I had some rough and rocky teen years, your presence continued to influence my life. The God consciousness you had instilled in me kept me assured that Jesus was with me. I know it was the prayers of you and Grandpa that preserved me from the ravages of sin and paved the way for me to meet and marry my life partner, a musician and minister. Now, Derwin and I are carrying on the work of the Lord that you and Grandpa began.

When sickness and trouble had the best of me, you were always first on my mind to call. Just your sweet voice and words of love and encouragement would make me feel better. You always promised to pray for us and I had faith and confidence that God heard and answered your prayers. Your presence has extended to the lives of my children. Their Great-Mema will always hold a special place in their heart. I am so thankful for the supreme influence you and Grandpa have had on them. What a privilege to continue to carry on that Godly heritage.

It was such a special time for me a few days after your heart surgery. I was so disturbed when Mom called to say that although the surgery had been successful, you had been unconscious for 3 days. I knew I had to go to your side and I caught the next plane out. When I arrived, visiting hours in CCU were over, but the nurse let me see you anyway. I stepped up to your bed and spoke your name. Immediately you regained consciousness and began moaning and moving your head and hands. I was so touched to see your response to me. I prayed that night that God would move upon you and we would see a big change in the morning.

The report was that when Grandpa went to see you early the next morning, you were awake, talking and eating! To hear you say my name again was so wonderful. I was so happy to be able to spend the next week and a half with you and Grandpa. You were able to go home and we saw you make such great progress before I had to go home to my family.

The night after I got back home, I got the call that you had suffered a major stroke. I thank God that I was able to spend those last few days together. What a special memory to hold in my heart, you and I together talking, laughing, sharing our love for

each other. You've never been the same again. As I see you laying there so frail in your nursing home bed, understanding what is happening but unable to communicate clearly, it breaks my heart. I dearly miss the relationship we enjoyed so many years. You're past 90 years old now and ready to move on to heaven to be with Jesus, Grandpa and all your other loved ones. I'll be there with you some day too.

Mema, your presence will continue on. It will remain in every thought of you, it will be there when I look at one of the many pictures of you that I cherish; one of the quilts and doilies you've made for me; one of the family heirlooms you've passed down to me. But most of all, your presence is within me. You're there when I prepare one of the recipes from the handmade cookbook you gave me; when I smile and say a kind word to a stranger at church; when I hug a little elderly lady who always arrives early; you're there when I worship the Lord in song; when I pray with someone at the altar.

Your presence and influence will never die, for it continues to multiply as your Great-grandchildren and generations to come sing and worship God. Your presence will not be extinguished, it will continue on this earth, and will begin anew in heaven!

I love you with all my heart,

Your favorite Granddaughter,

Terri