

*(Presenter's Notes by John Kindschuh-- on behalf of Lolly and himself)*

Delores Marie "Lolly" (Hall) Kindschuh is the eldest of the nieces and nephews who survive George Hall; also the first of that group to be served by him as an officiant at the time of marriage.

The topic originally requested of Lolly for presentation at the 2012 AHA gathering was "The George and Lorena Hall Family". The addition of the words "A Saga of Sadness and Hope" was proposed by the two of us to acknowledge the compounded poignancy so evident in George and Lorena's experience.

Many may have known or learned elsewhere of the persons in the family story:

George Hall: Husband/Father /Pastor/Professor

Lorena (Daeschner) Hall: Wife/ Mother/ Artist/Art Instructor,

Their Four children: Terry, Peter, Camilla and Nan;

All four were to die under extraordinary circumstances.

Lolly and I declined to attempt a "history", leaning instead toward a bit of an oxymoron: Autobiography in the third person. To wit: We specifically determined to limit our resources to family documents -- (no usage of TV, magazine, or newspaper sources), committing ourselves to rely as fully as practicable upon what we called "**George words**", especially notes written at various times in which he recounted experiences within the family. Of special value were items drafted but left unedited in final years. Lolly undertook review of isolated memos and personal papers. At her request, I set parameters for sequencing, and did the presentation at AHA 2012. Inaccuracies? Likely. None intended by George, of course, nor by us. We knew he welcomed use of memory in his "nineties"; we sought to avoid miscues.

Therefore -- to repeat: We thought "**George**" sources should be central. So far as we know, no parallel notes from Lorena exist. In the oral presentation therefore, rather than to employ "quote -- end quote" terminology, the word "**George:**" served as the lead-in cue to items of his specific authorship. In the story, some disjointed calendar references are included. Some are imprecise. At other points we injected certain items of "connecting tissue"; a few quite personal.

For the two of us, the journey of recall evoked spontaneous punctuation from both heart and mind. Others might discover how easily that happens. To limit presentation time, we formed and followed this text-- attempting to knit pieces of the story together with efficiency, love, and respect.

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## ***A Saga of Sadness and Hope: The George and Lorena (Daeschner) Hall Family***

The arbitrary point of beginning for the story is Lanyon, Iowa... near Des Moines, the city to which George's father, a Swedish Covenant pastor had emigrated from Sweden.

Imagine 1925. George graduates from Lanyon High School. The decision which followed was a portent of his future. Having finished High School, he quickly sought out summer courses offered by Iowa State. His adolescent reasoning -- as he recalled it in the 1990's -- was [George:] **"My academic record was not good due to the LEVEL of education at Lanyon High School; excellent in many ways but lacking in academic competition and standards. How I was accepted for seminary training I do not understand -- for by today's standard I would certainly not be well-qualified!!!!"**

To Augustana College that fall. He would live with his older brother at Augustana Seminary. There was no family money for college. So he tried his hand at selling band instruments --that of itself reflects his lifelong indomitable sense of humor! A scholar by nature, he early on recognized he would have no success as a salesman!

But -- once at college, and with the aid of Dr. Henry Veld, he *was successful* in a pivotal bit of deception.

[George] **"In my studies I had heard about Dr. Edgar Goodspeed. He had been invited to The Moline Dinner Club to speak on his translation of the New Testament. There was no way for anyone not a member of that Dinner Club to attend. Then I heard that the Male Chorus of the College was to sing. I knew that they were to be dressed in tuxedos, so I did the same, appearing at the stage door with the rest of the chorus. Some Chorus members could not come; so the director, Henry Veld, said I could stand with the Chorus; but only pretend to sing! After the performance I sat down at one of the tables; was absolutely enthralled by the lecture. I resolved that I would try somehow to study with Goodspeed."**

Summer, 1928: George traveled with the Augustana Band to Europe for a concert tour. A total disaster! Upon arriving in Europe, the Band found that its European Steward of Band funds had absconded with nearly all its money. Everyone was on his own. In 1929, George was asked to write a history of the fiasco. He did. He published it. Another fiasco! {Very different from the nine books he would author later in life.}

College graduation -- mid-1929. Seminary studies began that fall. In his 'middler' year an unexpected diversion -- one prompted by Oscar Leonardson of Augustana Brotherhood fame:

**[George:] "Oscar had agreed to serve Ebenezer church in Chicago at Thanksgiving. A schedule conflict developed; in desperation he came to me. I agreed to serve in his place. Dr./Pastor E.K. Jonson and I hit it off very well. When he asked me about my future plans, I said I wanted to stay out a year to gain maturity and experience in the parish, and to study at the U. of Chicago."**

George went on to note that his older brother, Clarence, had done something similar in Rockford. So he and Jonson agreed upon a plan: *A. -- Church duties* at Ebenezer with Jonsson. *B. -- University studies* at Chicago with Goodspeed. He reported how the Ebenezer plan worked out during the Christmas season: **[George] "At 3 a.m. we got up to take care of the traditional Julotta services. Foster Ave. was filled with people, the church filled to capacity. When we entered, it smelled almost like a bar. The men who had been drinking on Clark Street a block away had come over to attend Christmas services. One should not miss Julotta!!!"**

George's private plan was to delay Seminary studies, remain in the city, study at the U. of Chicago. Intervention came by way of Seminary Dean Conrad Bergendoff -- who advised him to finish work at the Seminary, *then* stand for Ordination. Bergendoff's trade-off promise: "I'll see that you get a call near the University." George's later comment was complimentary: **"Bergendoff was true to his word".**

1934: Ordained on a call to Miller, Indiana, George's pastoral service began immediately: **[George:] "My two years in Indiana were exciting and very successful".** True. Year one -- 100+ baptisms!- He also promptly pursued PHD studies at the U of Chicago. Before year-end 1935 he had completed basic requirements. The Degree was awarded shortly thereafter.

1936: Another diversion on his career path. **[George:] "My friend, Carl Lund-Quist: {known in Augustana Synod parlance as 'Hyphenquist'} came to see me as a representative of Dr. Pihlblad, President of Bethany College -- to inquire about my interest in coming to Bethany. The College had tried unsuccessfully to interest other scholars, but since they were married, they could not afford to bring families @ \$1400 a year. To keep accreditation, colleges were to pay a teacher at least \$2000 per year. Bethany did that;; but with the stipulation that faculty would turn over a check for \$600 as a gift, making the net \$1400!!"**

Summer, 1936, ended, Dr./Pastor/Professor Hall was off to Bethany, It was a Pied Piper experience: Eleven students from the Church in Miller followed him to Kansas!

The Bethany arrangement called for him to do preaching and pastoral service at Smolan Church on Sundays; teaching responsibilities in Lindsborg the rest of the week. He was busy! But in 1937 the pastor/ teacher and a young female artist from Coffeyville -- Lorena Daeschner -- of German Lutheran descent! and an assistant to Birger Sandzen, the widely applauded artist -- mutually found time for what became a three-month courtship: [George:] **"We decided there was no reason to delay our marriage. We were 29 and 26 respectively. Our mothers arranged to visit Lindsborg at the same time. We confided our plans to them. They approved. With the spring events there was a formal dinner for Lorena's sorority which she could not miss since she was President. But for me to attend as a professor of Christianity at a church college at which there would be dancing (which was forbidden!) was compromising. So -- she invited someone else! But the next day we were engaged!!"** (May 23)....

[George:] **"Graduation that year -1937- was on May 28<sup>th</sup>. The wedding was arranged with (the Pihlblads) for May 30. I conducted services at Smolan that morning. After lunch I picked up Lorena and her baggage. Mrs. Pihlblad made Swedish coffee cake and coffee. Lorena had sold her trumpet to buy a new dress; I had my suit cleaned. These were the only expenses and preparations."**

Dr. Pihlblad performed the service. The honeymoon was brief. 1938 arrived; Even before they had reached their first anniversary, George would receive two letters from GA : One from President Johnson, the other from Christianity Chmn. Edgar Carlson. "A vacancy! Would George be interested in a call to Gustavus?"

[George:] **"It was not a propitious time. The Pihlblads had been in a car accident; their lives were in peril. Bethany's Vice-President Lindquist made an urgent appeal to us to stay. We pondered. We prayed. We decided to accept the call to Gustavus. We prayed for God's blessing that our work would be acceptable, and that we could make that our home for the rest of our careers."**

That terse summary is followed by an editorial note; particularly poignant in reflection.

[George:] **"Our first year of marriage was a hectic one in many respects."** No one could have guessed what might lie ahead.

Once in St. Peter, Lorena initiated programs in Art -- for campus and community, laying foundations for what would become a grand tradition at Gustavus College.

A year or two later, her mentor, Birger Sandzen, came for a guest artist exhibit. The Gustavus Junior class raised enough funds to purchase a Sandzen oil painting; the first of his works to be included in the Gustavus Art Collection. Each member of the class contributed a dollar for the acquisition. (*On display during AHA 2012 in Hillstrom Gallery.*)

For the professor, the looming responsibility in 1938 was clear. Gustavus Policy was: "Earn tenure or out". George went to work in the Chris. Department: Tenure as a Full Professor was granted three years later – 1941.

Domestic life progressed accordingly. In 1941 Son Terry was born. A fateful year. Pearl Harbor was followed by Declaration of War, and a V-12 unit on the GA campus.

1942: Son Peter was born. {Important domestic corollary: -- Once tenure had been granted, the floor plan sketches for the family's house would go to a Mankato architect for blueprints. The couple's work with boards, nails, shingles *and friends!* soon helped make the family dream-house come true.}

1944: George became eligible for 6 months of sabbatical study, following 8 years of non-stop teaching that had accumulated so quickly! The terms were specific:

- \* Secure a teaching replacement
- \* Study with Reinhold Niebuhr at Union Sem., NYC
- \* Meet living costs (Geo. agreed to teach half- time at Upsala College)

Then, unexpected good fortune!!:

Pastor Bernard Johnson of Stamford, Connecticut would go on his own sabbatical in Europe; would exchange housing for pastoral service on week-ends. George agreed.

Arrangements were made for the replacement at GA.

Living expenses and housing had been solved; Lorena was happy.

Pastoral service was given to the parish in Stamford:

**[George] "Youth work accelerated as veterans came home and led Easter activities. They celebrated the day with an outdoor sunrise service by the ocean. A returning veteran thanked me and told me why he had pushed for such a service. He had been taken prisoner in the Battle of The Bulge, went down to 88 pounds as prisoners were moved ahead of the Allies. He did not expect to survive. But he vowed that if he did, he would make the next Easter as great and glorious as possible. He fulfilled his promise."**

1945: Sabbatical over. George and Lorena's family had barely arrived home before George would travel to Washington (State) to lead a series of services during Holy Week. In St. Peter. Lorena would have travel of her own. To the Hospital. To greet Baby Camilla who was on the way.

The record reflects a notable economy of words: **[George] "Ted Conrad brought Lorena to the hospital in my absence. He telephoned the good news to me in Spokane."**

1947: Baby Nan is born. A later, less than clinical, report: [George:] "Dr. Olmanson noted that Nan didn't seem to be right in the hips. Later, At the Duluth Clinic, they said there was something amiss, but it was too early to do anything yet. Dr Chatterton invited her as a patient. Discovering that both hips were dislocated, he put her in a frog-like cast. She adjusted quickly and scooted around the floor on a board with a wheel, and crawled up and down stairs."

1948: Vacation: Unusual enthusiasm, even for [George:] "It was 1948 and I was born in 1908. It was my 40<sup>th</sup> year. The family was complete, in good health, and we had been without an auto. We thought of spending a summer in the West at the National parks, living in a trailer.....I would do research and work in the Park libraries during the morning; we would enjoy the Park (MesaVerde) in the afternoon; then attend Ranger lectures in the evening."

George bought a used car and trailer, but the vacation was not to be as idyllic as the plan: [George:] "Terry became ill with an upset stomach for which we gave him the usual remedies. After lunch we thought to take him to the nurse in the Park; then he seemed to lose touch. She recommended that we drive to the closest doctor...When we arrived carrying Terry in my arms, the Dr. immediately gave him full attention,,,,,,,,,"

"It was decided that we should proceed homeward. We chose to go through the Black Hills. . . .When we arrived at the hospital in Deadwood, Terry was unconscious. They too gave him immediate attention. About midnight a nurse came to our trailer and called us in because they expected he would be passing within the hour..... he passed away that evening, July 11<sup>th</sup>. He was seven years old....."

"That was the sad end of a summer planned to rest, study, and as a family enjoy our Parks as I turned my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a lonesome ride back to St. Peter. We came back beaten. We had left a complete and happy family; now we were returning with the oldest boy coming by rail ... in a casket."

1949: The year of the unimaginable. It began with Minnesota cold. The city had blocked off a street for coasting by children. Peter was one of them.

[George:] "One morning he did not want to go to school, professing illness. His eyes were swollen. A bit irritated, I took him to Dr. Olmanson who immediately took a urine sample, and brought in the bad news that Peter had Nephritis. Dr. O. suggested we bring him to Rochester; through Dr. Hobart Johnson it was arranged for Peter's admission that afternoon."

**"I drove him there, a happy and cheerful boy, who looked forward to the adventure of being in the hospital. The diagnosis was confirmed; we were told that there was no treatment but bed rest.,.,.,."**

**"For a month's time he was in St. Mary's; the disease went on its predicted course. Near the end some radical new drugs were used which did not benefit him.,.,.,"**

**"It was Nan's birthday, the 28<sup>th</sup> of February. The children were at the Hollingsworth home. We drove back to St. Peter in a snow storm. We went to pick up Nan, then told the Hollingsworths the bad news that Peter was not expected to survive. We took the children home, and tried to have a little birthday party for Nan. At noon the next day there was a call from Rochester that Peter had passed away. He was seven years old. . . , We drove to Rochester to make arrangements with the funeral director.,.,.,"**

**"Lorena and I drove home in deep sadness...It was unbelievable that we could have these two healthy boys and they now were dead. ....And our youngest was in a cast for dislocated hips.,,"**

At this juncture in family history, George's writing was delayed although scattered comments appeared in his final years. He shifted gears somewhat abruptly in his retrospect, noting that --- given the War --- he and Lorena early on had inquired about emergency work as Educational Missionaries. Both understood the impact of The War upon mission fields.

By a strange irony, logical at that particular moment, the couple was told there was no possibility of such service unless they would "go without the little boys"! They didn't go. They didn't think they ever would.

However ... in due course George had been elected a member of the Board of World Missions; not long after, Chairman of the Board. By now The War clearly began to demonstrate unusual hardship on "mission fields across the world --. not least on Augustana fields in Africa, likewise on European missionary work elsewhere on the continent.

1951: Dr. P. O. Bersell, Augustana Church President, decided to go to Africa to discuss the missions' plight with the LWF (Lutheran World Federation) and CYCOM (Commission on Younger Churches and Orphaned Missions). The focus centered on mutual Church interests. -- recognizing that many European fields pre-dated those overseen by The Augustana Synod.

Bersell returned to report to the BWM the desperate needs that were emerging world-wide, but especially in Africa. As it happened, at a subsequent meeting of the Board, Chairman Geo. Hall and President Bersell were sitting side by side when a Board member asked: "What shall we do????



Bersell (looking neither right nor left), replied: "Send Hall to Africa", [George:] "He had not spoken to me about this. I was unprepared for it. Going home from the meeting I told Lorena about it. Next morning she said: "When do we go?"

[George:] "Plans were made as quickly as possible. Nan was still in her cast, but that was due to be removed, would surely be a success. But when the cast was removed, her hip was stiff, and at a wrong angle. But that was something that would rectify itself'....

Lorena began to pack what would be needed by a mother of two rather than four -- anticipating the days of the journey -- and at least three months of life in Africa.

George by that time had been appointed the official Executive. Secy. for LWF interests in Africa. He became accustomed to travel in Africa -- which meant being "on safari" about three days a week -- some for administration, some for supplies, some for hospitality. One notable instance:

1952-54 [George] "A major safari for our family took us at one point to Bambuli. Early in the morning one Sunday a brass ensemble played hymns as people gathered. Then a choir of more than a hundred voices rehearsed. The choir sang several hymns, followed by Handel's Hallelujah Chorus.

"It was the anniversary of Peter's death; I sat in tears thinking what an appropriate memorial this was for him."

Work progressed, duties increased. George discovered there were more safaris than he could handle -- for research and support documentation; teaching and counseling, and the coordination of other staff. The magnitude of the work would bring his personal role in Africa to conclusion.

1956 Back in the United States, he had responsibility for extended follow-up with LWF and the NLC (National Lutheran Council). That task preceded a call to become pastor at Arlington Hills Church in St. Paul -- which became a daunting task in a metro setting. The dimension of fatigue that was brought on by demands in a large parish before long began to create fertile conditions for George's return to academic and campus life. He was later to write of options with wistfulness and a dose of self-evaluation.

[George:] "I had been there (Arlington Hills) only two years when the Lutheran Student Foundation came and asked me to become Campus Pastor on the Minneapolis campus. It was too early to consider a change. But I had



**the burden to consider it seriously -- after being trained and experienced in the academic world."**

The University of Minnesota was home to nearly 40,000 students. Ten percent were Lutheran. George was by nature a student. The Lutheran Student work seemed a proper fit. He accepted the task at the University. But it came at a complicated juncture. Quite some time earlier he had committed himself to work with the LWF on a program geared to improving *basic education for African pastors*.

Simultaneously Churches in the countries of Europe, Canada, -- as well as the USA, became interested in a parallel program of advanced education for *non-church* African leaders, the thought being that similar programs might extend eventually to other areas of the world.

It was decided eventually to develop a two-year course to be based in Marangu, Tanganyika. As the initial phase of this plan, George was asked to do a three-month stint as "Professor of New Testament Studies" at Marangu; then to enlarge research during a parallel stint by means of what was called the "Around The World Lectures" which would take him to Rhodesia, South Africa, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, India, Pakistan and NW Alaska. The new initiatives occupied the first half of 1960.

As a campus pastor, George Hall had been presumed to be in a better position to be absent from his home base for this length of time; better than would have been the case were he serving a parish.

One underlying reality: This time Lorena and the girls would remain at home. A corollary factor was the importance of concentrating on student involvement and participation. To test preparation for the six-month around-the-world Lecture series, George hitch-hiked on earlier "Hall family" African experience, offering a "Class in Swahili" at the Lutheran Student Center. Surprise! **[George:] "I expected perhaps 10-12; imagine my consternation when enrollment swelled to more than 50".**

Eleven of them later accompanied George to Marangu; then on to succeeding stops - action they chose in expanding their personal educational goals.

To make the Hall family future more complex: The Lutheran Student Foundation at the turn of the decade reverted to its plan for construction of additional Campus Ministry facilities. The requirements were far from simple: Issues of zoning, land

acquisition, building permits, funding -- all were complicated -- especially in the University's metro setting.

After resolving basic options, George gave his assent as to location. The Foundation then pursued detailed plans for construction of new and larger facilities to house a burgeoning program.

The project was nearly ready to engage in construction operations when at about the same time the University began to lay out a plan for major changes that would relocate multiple academic centers.

The unexpected action left Lutheran Campus Ministry (and other denominational student programs) in an eddy, not the mainstream. It created a huge dilemma. The campus pastor felt the flak: **[George]: "Across the river it was proposed to build a *single* center for all religious organizations to use. While a splendid idea, all of the student religious organization buildings would now *be put out of the way* of student traffic as students proceeded to classes or activities elsewhere.....**

**"It was a rough beginning. Morale was low. It seemed that the LSF building had been a huge mistake to be regretted: a burden for the work instead of the assistance we thought to be valuable.....When we had open house for the new building, the feeling was general that it HAD been a big mistake -- one to be regretted. I bore the blame popularly, although the building was planned before I came -- it was by decision of the National Foundation as well as the local Board."**

Further obligations entered the family agenda in that period.

1959: George was asked to become Guest Lecturer at NW Seminary.

1959: The LWF would hold its Assembly in MPLS; Given his previous LWF contacts in Africa, Europe, Sweden, etc., George was asked to be coordinator of Communications, TV, and Hospitality, (He knew the personalities and egos involved!!)

Meanwhile, further complications: At this juncture, among Lutherans MERGER had become the item *du jour* or *du annum*!!

- \* LCA predecessor bodies
- \* Likewise, predecessor Seminaries (Four to comprise LSTC)
- \* Corresponding Synodical/Institutional affiliations

In keeping with this growing momentum, George was invited to leave the Minneapolis setting in favor of joining a Chicago matrix. In the Fall of 1963,

the plan called for George and his family to depart the University in order to join the Mission School Faculty at Maywood. He did so with great enthusiasm for the change, specifically because of his perception of faculty composition and structure:\*\*

**[George]: “+They were products of different universities and theological schools in the USA and abroad.**

**+They were conservative representatives of their respective churches, understanding their immigrant beginnings and a knowledge of the home country.**

**+It was a strong faculty academically.**

**+There were scholars from Latvia, refugees, who were world recognized.**

**+They likewise were in relationships with other seminaries and universities in the Chicago area.**

**+They knew the city, its people and problems.**

**+They were not as parochial as the seminary faculties that would be joined to them in the merger. His conclusion: “I felt right at home with them.”**

**\*\*(A rather intriguing list of standards for a graduate of Lanyon High School to compile!!!)**

But --- behind the scenes, a strange conundrum that would affect the Hall family was beginning to take shape. Consider that the early '60s had been pre-occupied with multiple views of international mission within merging Church bodies.

Consider that one aspect of ecclesiastical maneuvers was to move the School of Missions from Maywood -- to LSTC.

Consider also that one of George Hall's assignments during this Missions paroxysm would be to do research in So. America -- along lines of that which earlier had been undertaken in Africa in cooperation with CYCOM. For the better part of a year, Lorena and Camilla were to travel the South American Continent with George as he gathered data from all but one of the countries

there -- research deemed essential to revitalizing missionary work in the Southern Hemisphere.

The conundrum was amplified by the fact that the years just ahead were to produce alteration in some ways exceeding that which affected student facilities at the U. of Minnesota. The emerging reversal was that *The School of Missions itself* -- and all the planning therefor -- would be phased out after a short decade of life. [58 -- 68]

As that decade ended, George became eligible for a 6-month Sabbatical leave; He decided to spend it in Sweden in service at the American Church in Stockholm. Lorena once again would stay home --- given that she now was caring for her mother who had been invited to live with the Hall family.

While in Stockholm, there came an authoritative word for George, delivered in person by Dr. Hermann: No longer was there to be a role for the School of Missions; consequently, no longer a role for George Hall as Professor of Missions. He understood the implications.

[George:] **"At the age of 60, I was now unemployed."**

In contemplating this "sea change" one must take the larger view: The Sixties *were* unsettling times. Mergers brought on sudden and substantial changes for many families in The Church.

George & Lorena Hall, however, were to face events peculiar to them. A very specific example: Saturday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 1962. The day before the Third Sunday in Advent. (One day before our 13<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, December 16.)

That Saturday morning marked the final Advent Lolly and I would be spending in ministry at Messiah Lutheran church, Burlington, Iowa, since I had accepted a call to Augustana College. I was reviewing sermon notes, the Collect, other Propers and prayers for Sunday services . . . . when George called.

He had helped to officiate at our wedding on that date thirteen years earlier. We were not surprised to receive his call. The message was overwhelming: **"Nan died this morning"**.

He gave us the story – much later recalled it in writing: [George:] “One week earlier Nan had been at Church choir at Mt. Olivet. It was dreadfully cold. When she came back with me to the car, she was chilled, came home for lunch, went to bed to warm up. The next morning Nan was ill with a deep cold. The Doctor came, said it was lung congestion, suggested admission to the University hospital. In spite of having called ahead, she ended up waiting in a drafty hallway. I went out to get some cinnamon candy she liked....

“Nan did not improve. In a few days it was clear she could not survive. She was in the final hours of kidney failure....

“We needed a night nurse. On Saturday morning I went out to secure the cash to pay the nurse in advance as required. Lorena and Camilla went to a Laundromat because much more laundry needed to be washed than usual....

“When I returned about 10:30 a.m. I was told that she had just passed away. She was 12 years old.... I contacted Lorena and Camilla in the Laundromat in the middle of their wash. I arranged basic matters with the undertaker. I held Nan’s hand as her body cooled. Then we were together as a family about her bedside.”

IMAGINE”: Could anything have been more eloquent or relevant than the Collect for that Third Sunday in Advent:

“Lord, we beseech Thee, give ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by thy gracious visitation.”

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George and Lorena that winter did as they always had done. They returned home. That’s what families do.

The Sixties brought vocational change to both Lorena and George. Lorena entered a late-life career in Social Work; service urgently needed since she had an advantage in working with Hispanics -- use of their own language. That role expanded as she also undertook work with Asian families via an interpreter;

Keep in mind – she had become the daily caretaker for her mother, who lived in the Hall household almost until the day of her death

For George the academic, the Sixties came to mean 'back to the parish': This time to St. Johns, Lincolnwood in 1969. It became a very productive ministry, truly marked by sadness and hope.

Early 1970: By a twist of circumstances involving career change by a prominent DePaul University faculty member, George was invited to become Guest Professor of World Religions at De Paul, a part-time post he held until 1993. The observation he made in that year was typical: [George:] (by then at age 85) **"I felt embarrassed that regular professors at DePaul were retired in their sixties while I had continued teaching. So... I retired from DePaul... "with honors from the faculty and President!"**

On another "family" front: Camilla had graduated from the University of Minnesota; at the turn of the decade she briefly held positions in social work -- Duluth, Minneapolis; then decided to move to California with friends -- among whom she became a relentless pacifist and tax protestor.

[George:] **"We met some of her radical friends (in California) and liked them very much. Camilla had changed in her dress --not caring for style very much. We attributed it to a fad she had picked up -- and eventually would drop.**

Then {Back in IL} **"Watching TV one night there was the terrible news of the kidnapping of Patty Hearst right out of her apartment. We felt a dread having a daughter in that area. A few days later Camilla called and said she was moving in with some girl friends in a neighboring community for which she did not have an address....**

**"We received a letter or so from her with a fake address and fake names....**

**"Then the FBI came to us, and told us that she was among the Symbionese Liberation Army. Would we provide information for them? Of course we knew nothing....**

**"The night of Camilla's death we were at a play in Lincolnwood, and on the way home were listening to the car radio when news came of the shoot-out in LA. Camilla was reported among the dead --- then they were not so sure, for her body had not been found.... {later} -- as we were dressing for a concert at Northwestern University --the telephone rang. It was the LA Coroner saying that Camilla's body had been found, that the**

news would go on TV in five minutes; reporters wanted to talk to me. I had followed the policy of always being courteous and available....

"For months afterward there were calls by the Press based on having heard that the congregation had fired me ... Columnists wrote excoriating columns on me as a pastor with "such a daughter" -- which they sent, hoping for a reply from me, but I did not do so...

"The police also made a full report -- on the use of the smoke bomb which caused the fire, the break down in communications during which it had been agreed for a cease fire so those inside could come out and surrender. Camilla was one who did -- and was shot in the yard. Others seeing that the arrangement was not holding, dove under the house, and perished there."

The family was down to two... right where they began in 1937: George and Lorena.

At age 70 George resigned as pastor at St. John's to accept a call as Associate Pastor of the Church of the Holy Spirit, Lincolnshire. He would serve there for 10 years. He eventually would conclude parish ministry by a succession of three one-year interim pastorates: 1988-91.

Summer, 1991: George at that time accepted what would be his final role; a task that lasted to the end of life: Chaplain at the Swedish Retirement Center in Evanston until death in 2000.

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In 1991, we were invited to join George and Lorena for celebration of her birthday --April 13; -- and George's recent assignment. About a week earlier, she had developed severe abdominal pain. After careful study, it was diagnosed as cancer of the colon. She underwent surgery; was still at the hospital when we visited her; following which we went on -- at her request -- to the Edgewater Beach café with George (one of their favorite places) for the remainder of the twin-cause celebration. The party opened with Budweiser -- also a favorite of George -- and a special fish menu, a favorite of Lorena even when she could not be there to enjoy it! Activities concluded at an early hour!

Three years later, Lorena's cancer returned. Inoperable. Life in the hospital became the new norm. [George:] " May 30 came, the date of the



anniversof our wedding in 1937, with 58 years of life together. She was bright and happy as we remembered those years .....The nurses came in with two slices of cake. We were so thankful that matters seemed to be improving... . . .

“On June 8<sup>th</sup>, I came to the hospital in the afternoon as usual. Each night we had prayed, and recited the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm together. When we came to the line ‘yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death’, she would squeeze my hand a bit tighter. . . .

“ At supper that night I chided Lorena that she should eat better. We said good bye as usual, and I went home. I was doing my own laundry in the bathroom sink and my clothes were soaking when the telephone rang. The nurse told me that in their rounds they found Lorena had passed quietly away.”

Following the final services for Lorena, life slowly would regain a measure of equilibrium for George with friends at the Retirement Center in Evanston. Worthy of contemplation, to say the least, is that: George’s life was to close as a single person -- and chaplain. His energy would center on a course he created for 80 and 90 year-old residents entitled: **“Understanding the Bible as Literature”**.

We talked about it at some length just a week before his death.. He sang the praises of his aging students as **“among the most dedicated I ever met”**. He told how he wanted to help them to understand the Bible in its historical context; that the Bible was 66 Books, not just one; that each had an author or authors, its own particular history and purpose.

That final teaching-learning venture was a high tribute to the other members of the “teaching-learning family” he prized so greatly:

Edgar Goodspeed. Reinhold Niebuhr. Conrad Bergendoff. Edgar Carlson. Bernard Erling. Eric Wahlstrom. Paul Holmer. Fritiof Fryxell. Not least beloved companion teachers at GA: Oscar Winfield. Paul Holmer. Chester Johnson. Theodore Conrad. Richard Reusch. (To name only a few.)

After he died, notes for his classroom work and a variety of computer drafts were spread across an untidy but active scene on his desk.

The George and Lorena Hall Family.

George, the pastor.

Lorena, the Artist.

George, The Teacher.

Lorena, the consistent Companion. .

George, Lorena: Father, Mother.

Four Children with shortened lives.

George and Lorena. Two become one.

### A Saga of Sorrow and Hope: The George and Lorena Hall Family – Epilogue

George and Lorena's wider family and friends do well to recall the prayer made the time of the decision to move from Bethany to Gustavus:

**"Lorena and I prayed for God's blessing that our work would be acceptable and that we could make that our home for the rest of our careers."**

If Chicago and New York once were stimuli to stir the father's mind, years in Minnesota were to stir the mother's heart. No one could have estimated the **countless** prayers amid sorrow and hope that would rise *from them and for them*.

In addition, Lolly and I recall some family encounters that elicit special poignancy. It was 1948. I was 21, she was 18: We were three years into a five-year courtship. It was the year of George's hope for a vacation in mountains of the west. They brought Terry home; subsequently invited George's brother Clarence and his family, (including ourselves), to gather at George and Lorena's cabin on the North Shore of Lake Superior.

The specter of the loss of Terry was omnipresent.

As a young couple – not yet formally engaged – when we first saw the parents, we did not know how to respond. But they did. They came home. They opened their hearts. That's what families do. And they gave us their example of living through sadness with hope.

How widely that lesson was repeated! Not just after Terry, and the Black Hills of South Dakota.

They were to drive home in the snow amid sadness and hope as Peter lay in the hospital in Rochester, and Nan waited for her birthday party.

They were to come home amid sadness and hope mindful of music from Mount Olivet, and the bustle of a Laundromat, and of Nan's last day in the hospital -- all on a cold Saturday in Advent.

They came home amid sadness and hope despite fiery days of smoke in The City of Angels!!! -- even though they understood better than anyone that the Symbionese Liberation Army was inherently a "hopeless" venture.

And after holding his hand in one last clasp, Lorena went home through the Valley of The Shadow, even as her husband was washing his shirts and sox.

Home was the place where they learned to live with sadness and hope.

At the end, one ironic common denominator nevertheless touched every member of the family: Each one at the Moment of Death was without the presence of another. Even family members at those irrevocable moments were elsewhere.

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Yet never did George and Lorena reject the polarity with which they learned to live. Many persons since have acknowledged their own inabilities to have added to George and Lorena's patient depth of understanding of complex social currents that emerged in the mid-Seventies, to say nothing of cascading personal loss.

Two remarkable instances reflecting their perceptions were to emerge from the unwelcome climate encroaching on the family:

#### **Item 1**

In one of George's writings, a remarkable autobiographical extract appeared:

**[George:] "It was a troubled spring, heavy with grief. This was Camilla's gradation year from Washburn High School. ....We made it to the outdoor exercises late afternoon where everyone but us was taking pictures. During the supper hour all the families had arranged for special dinners, but we did not know about this custom. Later, as Camilla made a sandwich for herself in the kitchen, she cried and spoke bitterly, saying that she was the only one left of our children, and we had not shown her the attention and honor she deserved. She was right. But it was not that we lacked love for her. We were not aware of the customs in that community which honored graduates, confirmands, and Bar Mitzvahs with lavish parties."**

George's propensity for candor seemed to some to be incredulous, not least in this instance. But it always was taken apace by Lorena; seldom challenged by peers; seamlessly supported domestically, even when the daughter they were to lose had upbraided her parents in rather dramatic, albeit understandable fashion. Together they sought hope by which to live through such days and years.

## Item II

1981

George joined me (John K.) in officiating at the wedding of our second son: {Guess what? Named "Peter".} George did the homily, at Peter's request. On that wedding night at Lincolnshire, George stated that his text would be from First Cor: 13. Most wedding guests thought they knew what sort of soliloquy to expect: The trilogy of faith, hope, and love.

But George's short message was:

St. Paul is right when he teaches that love is primary, and faith important. But life teaches us that *hope* is indispensable to experiencing Love and Faith.

Those at that wedding who knew the story of the George and Lorena Hall family could not help but sense that a multi-layered pall of sadness does not counter the relentless over-burden of multiple loss. Only Hope will do. Only Hope offers hope.

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A saga of sadness and hope.

The final chapter on the Hall Family began closing with Lorena's death in 1995. The final pages were sealed with George's death in 2000.

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George joined his family in the common experience of being alone at death. As it happened, nieces and nephews, including ourselves, were far from Chicago at that unexpected moment. Arrangements for final disposition of the body had been made well in advance by George. As was true for Lorena, George also had designated his body to appropriate scientific study. Their decisions have influenced some within the larger family to consider a similar decision.

Not unlike that commitment, another remarkably practical corollary to the saga of sadness and hope was expressed by George and Lorena Hall.

They had developed their estate principally in their later years. They had proceeded wisely in their choices of real estate, also, of conservative savings plans.

Having no children to provide for, they created a large scholarship fund benefiting five Church-related institutions -- all of which they had attended or served. Their charitable plan was instituted and became effective just prior to George's death.

Taken as a whole, the dimensions of their respect for the world of learning could not have portrayed more clearly a teacher's mind and an artist's soul.

Thanks be to God!

John and Lolly Kindschuh  
Gathering VIII  
Augustana Heritage Association  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
June 21-24, 2012