

## YOZGAT – A Testimony to the wonder of God’s care for all as we travel through life

### The Preface:

Stan and I were blessed with exceptional parents (Ralph & Polly Brown and Larry & Connie Johnson) who freed us to adventure and explore the marvelous world they birthed us into. Our parents prayed and let us leave, upon completing high school graduation ceremonies, to travel overland to Europe and then fly to America for college.



**Photo #1 (1974): At Fairchild’s in Teheran - Joanie (Fairchild) Wiley sent me this picture. R to L: Stan Brown, Tom Brown, Joanie in front, Paul Johnson, and the Fairchild’s Persian friend.**

I wish to share a story about a marvelous mystery of living which continues to declare the reality of a caring Shepherd/Creator/God as the source of healing and guidance for all along life’s trail.

This story involving Stan Brown and myself, MCS Alumni of the Class of 1974, began by us both being born of parents who were members of a unique generation of “caring adventurers”. As was told to me by shopkeepers and mechanics in Shikarpur & Sukkur, Larry Johnson/Dad was a man whose prime concern was to share a hope for the Christ-love making a better world. All who knew Connie Johnson/Mom felt the inclusive hospitality which flowed from her out of her love for God – she even taught the MCS kitchen how to bake her famous “cinnamon rolls”!

Stan would have similar quotes for his parents.



## The Story:

In 1976 Stan and I opted for a Junior Year 'abroad': Stan to attend UC-Berkley's Graduate School Urdu Program in Lahore, and me to travel and attend bhagat's and listen to oral singers while gathering research for an Honor's Paper on 'Oral Singer's and Oral History Transmissions' under an Indian Anthropology Professor for my undergrad S.Asian Studies degree at UW-Madison. We left the US in August 1976.

XWU 498, our 1953 Landrover, was purchased by my elder brother Bill, at a Military Auction in Oxford summer of 1976, while he was attending a Wheaton College course in Oxford on the Arthurian Epic.

My parents were returning to Pakistan from furlough in August 1976 and we all met in England, picked up x-ray equipment for BMMF's Hospital in Kunri from BMMF's London Office, and the first leg of our trip was to take my parents down to Germany to visit cousins, before Mom & Dad flew on to Pakistan.

Bill then travelled with us to meet up with his college program in Istanbul to then fly back to USA. The 3 of us drove almost nonstop through Europe and down the Adriatic Coast of then Yugoslavia (now Croatia & Serbia) – the entire Coast is incredibly beautiful.

When we stopped at a gas station in Macedonia, XWU 498 refused to start. After Bill and Stan located the problem – cracked Distributor cap- it was decided that Bill should carry on to Istanbul by bus and Stan (due to his excellent language ability) would return 120kms to Thessaloniki to pick up the part. I stayed at the gas station, washed and dried our clothes and waited for Stan to return to then carry on to Istanbul.



**Photo #2: Macedonian petrol stop overnight**

We stayed 4-5 days in Istanbul to repair the Landrover for the next leg of the trip through Iran and Afghanistan. In Istanbul our Hotel was next to the hippy/world traveler center – "The Pudding Shop". Upon leaving we put a note on



the 'traveler's board' at the Pudding Shop advertising 3 spaces to Teheran for any traveler who would share petrol/oil expenses. 3 Swedes joined us the morning we left and we travelled to the outskirts of Ankara.

As was our practice, we ate at a truck stop/café on city outskirts and then found a grove of trees to camp for the night.



Photo #3



Photo #4



Photo #5



Photo #6

**Photos #3-#6. Our camp site outside Ankara; the river off the Main Highway the next morning (day of the accident) where we washed clothes and bathed before onward travel.**

After washing and bathing we took the dirt road back on to the Main Highway. Tony - the Swede in #4 & #6 – asked us if he could help drive. Stan & I said OK. Stan sat at the window seat, I in the middle, Tony took up driving and the other 2 Swedes sat in the back. It was September 2, 1976, and the last thing I remember was nodding off to sleep as Tony drove on the Main Highway running from Ankara, through stunningly beautiful remote and mountainous Lake Van, onwards through Tabriz to Tehran (Stan, Tom and myself had travelled through the region by train in 1974).

[Now, Stan knows all about how XWU498 turned over ... and we will discuss it on our next meeting (in heaven).]

The story which Yozgat District Governor told my father:

Not long after XWU 498 turned over off the Highway, 27kms out of Yozgat, a Turkish Highway Patrol car with a newly installed 2-way radio passed by our car and called the main Police station in Yozgat that 4 passengers were trapped under a foreign registered Landrover with one passenger thrown out & walking around, dazed. The District Governor heard this on his radio set and went directly to supervise our extraction and the storage of the car's contents.

Stan was unconscious, which I think he remained for 6-8 hrs. I remained unconscious with a fractured skull. We were placed in the local Hospital. Due to the severity of our injuries the local doctor sent us on to Hacettepe University Hospital in Ankara (I had the cash in my wallet and the ambulance driver put a receipt for the ambulance ride in the wallet before – I imagine - taking the money.)

Mom & Dad Johnson's trip to Ankara - a lived reality of Divine care and synchronicity. Here is a stunning list of events:

- when have you ever received an unasked for Double-Entry Visa to Pakistan? That is what Mom & Dad received – the only Double-Entry Visa they ever received – in August 1976,
- a US Embassy officer in Ankara visited Hacettepe University Hospital soon after Stan became conscious and Stan informed them our parents were in Pakistan
- the Embassy sent message to Karachi, who called SCH Shikarpur, who told them Brown's and Johnson's were in Murree where the only phone was MCS and the lines were down, so the Embassy sent MCS a telegram,
- when MCS received the telegram the van took it over to Forrest Dell, where ICF was having a meeting and decision was made that Mom & Dad would go to Turkey,
- within 24hrs Mom & Dad were in Hacettepe ICU room: God smiled and helped them arrive by having the ticket (Islamabad-Istanbul-Ankara) purchased over MCS phone (reconnected that afternoon), Mr. Roub's AMEX travel agent in Pindi arranged for the plane to be held on the tarmac (15mins) until the MCS van arrived, on the connecting flight from Istanbul to Ankara Mom & Dad sat by a Turkish businessman who, on hearing their story, got them into Hacettepe University Hospital –at midnight- to see Stan & I and, though I couldn't open my eyes in the ICU, I did recognized their voices and expressed gratefulness at their arrival; then the Turkish businessman took Mom & Dad to stay at his house until – through God's watchfulness -- US Embassy's Labour Attaché's apartment was given to my parents to use while the Attaché went on a 3-month break.

While I was in the Hospital Stan had 6 wks to recover. The apartment where Mom & Dad & Stan stayed was in front of a Park where Stan would often walk around and take pictures. (Hacettepe University Hospital was down in the valley.)

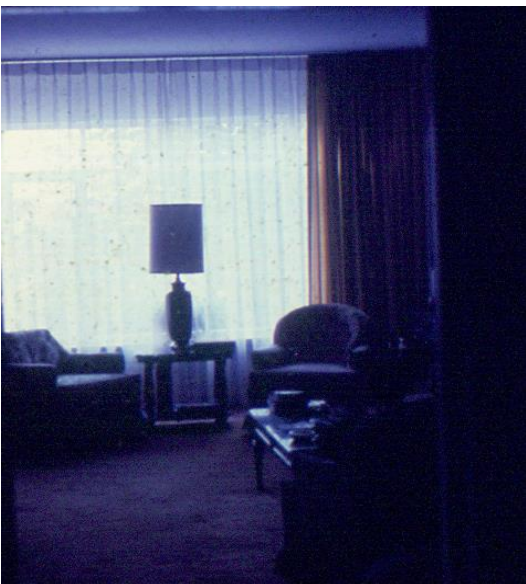




**Photo #7: The Park. Hacettepe University Hospital was down in the valley.**



**Photos #8, 9 & 10. Stan's self-portrait (the way it was done pre-selfies); the Apartment Living Room and outside**



**Photo #9**



**Photo #10**

Mom & Dad used to come visit me every day. For the first 3 wks I would scarcely move in the ICU bed. I did open my eyes after the first few days and was conversant but did not move and would cry out when Mom tried to move my left arm. Then in the first week of October, at 0035hrs Dad received a phone call:

***“Hi Dad. I just was talking with David and Jonathan. Our ship is leaving and I would like to see you before it departs,” I told him.***

Dad was aghast. I had not voluntarily moved in the ICU bed. He asked me how I was calling him and from where. I told him, “by the Desk” the Attendant had his number – Dad had given the ICU his # in case they needed to call. Dad asked me to give the phone to him, which I did and he confirmed my standing with the Attendant. The ICU Attendants brought me back to my bed. Dad came immediately to the Hospital.

All of the foregoing, after going to sleep in XWU498 on 2 Sept I have no conscious memory of; all told to me by my parents. My memory begins to crystallize when they put me on a wheelchair and wheeled me down the hall to the elevator up to a semi-private ward.

The day following my call the Doctors decided I could be moved to a semi-private room. I shared this room with Hikmat, the translator for the Turkish Ambassador to Egypt (I don’t remember why he was Hospital)

Stan occasionally accompanied my parents on trips to Hacettepe University Hospital, when he felt strong enough. He took the pictures below.



**Photo #11. Dad bringing me some mail**



**# Photo #12.** My memory only slowly returned helping me understand the why I was having lonely long hours in bed. I remember feeling trapped by my injury and wondered how I would ever get back to my studies. So when Stan took the picture, I remember seeking to memorialize that thought by putting my head behind the bars! (far bed)





**Photo #13.** Hikmat with wife and daughter

Scenes taken at the Ankara Apartment:

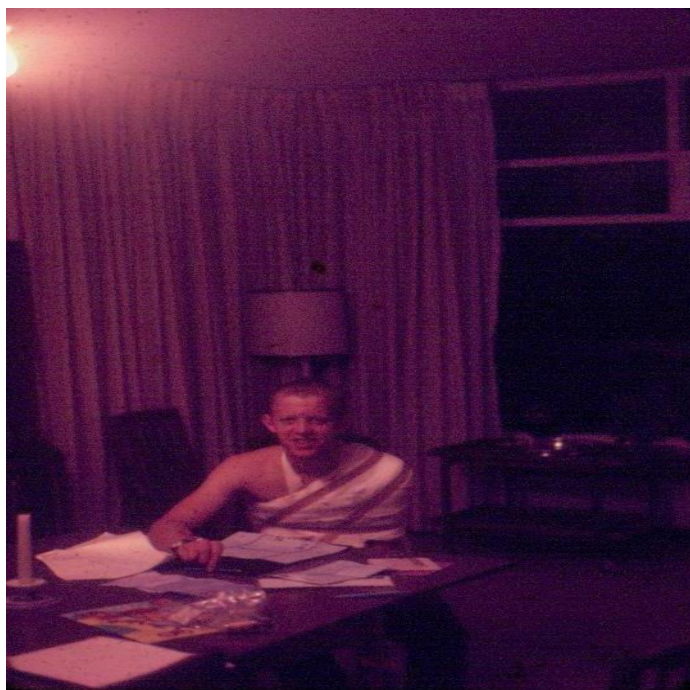


**#14** Dad writing his newsletter



**Photo #16.** In the apartment resting ... and that is NOT a remote or cell phone in my hand!!





**Photo #15** Trying to write with a self-healed broken collar bone – set during my time in the ICU - left shoulder & arm wrapped when leaving Hospital so as to allow movement with minimal pain.



**Photo #17.** The street below the Apartment



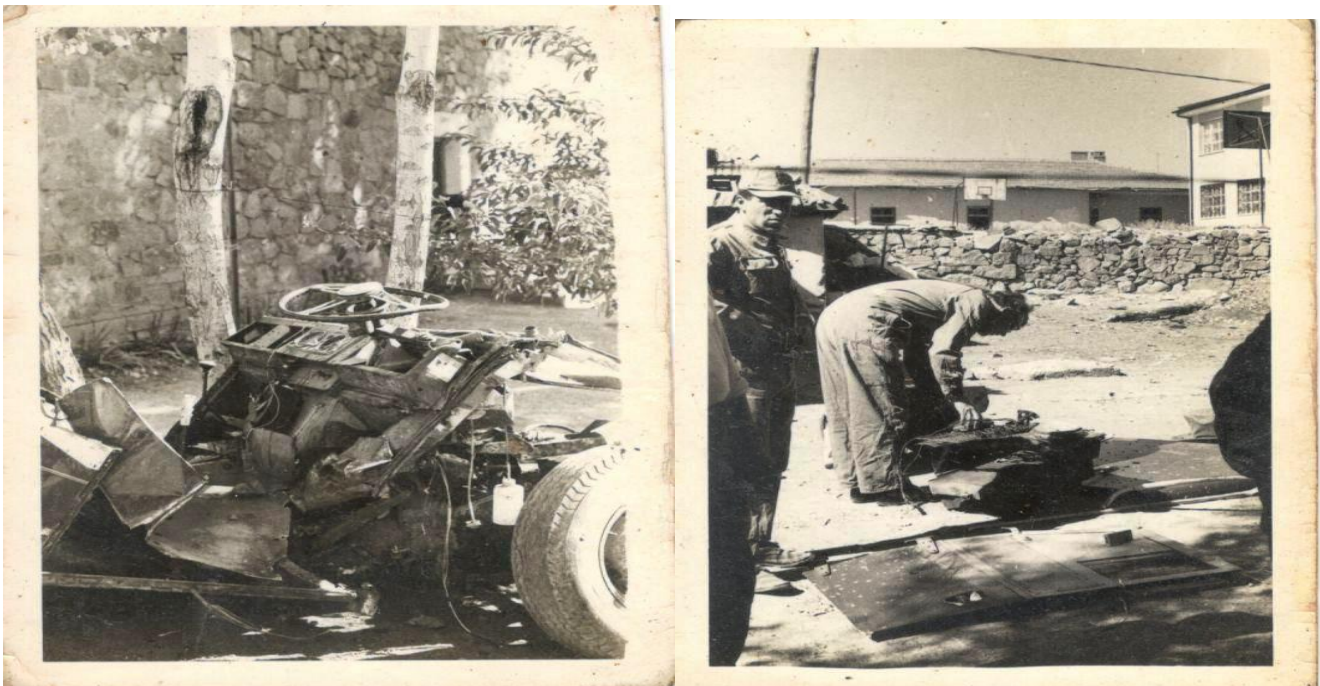
**Photos #18 & #19.** Mom & Dad Johnson in the Ankara Apartment



One day Stan went with my father and an Officer of the US Embassy to the scene where the Landrover turned over off the road to identify the car and collect the belongings, equipment, clothes and Stan's camera from the Police Office in Yozgat.



**Photo #20** Larry Johnson and the US Embassy Official at the site of the accident



**Photos #21 & #22.** XWU 498 laid to rest at Police Station in Yozgat, Turkey; Dad in overalls inspecting the damage





**Photos #23 and #24.** Stan's pictures of people in Yozgat



For 44 years I have been in continuous gratitude to the villagers of Yozgat Turkey for their compassion and care, allowing Stan and I to live on, being gifted to find wives and, reconstructed through parenting children, to share in the spontaneity and love of grandchildren.





**Photo #25.** Oct. 1976: Stan and Paul on the Ankara Apartment's porch sitting on XWU 498's seats surrounded by luggage from the Landrover and xray plates for Kunri Christian Hospital

One of the profound graces we were blessed with growing up in "the Mission" and its "MCS-family-of-heterogeneous-spiritually-attuned-individuals" was the unbeknownst reality of being part of a broad, yet very close, kinship of crib-cousins and classmates - brothers and sisters all - albeit from different mothers. Stan was such a brother/friend to me.

In February 2020, Stan was in Thailand visiting his daughter and family, when he accidentally fell from a ladder head-first onto a concrete floor. He never recovered consciousness.

An adjective that could best describe Stan would be, "steadfast".

From his present perch  
-hiking, drawing or riding his bicycle-  
I see him smiling,  
Knowing;  
we will all be together  
... again.

Paul

Paul Johnson  
MCS Class of 1974



**Photo #25.** On the road from Ankara to Yozgat (I think this slide was taken by Stan in a trip to Yozgat wt Dad)

44 years after this event I am reading a book that is helping to unveil the ‘wonder of it all’ – “The Universal Christ” by Richard Rohr. I highly recommend this to help all see through the veil of the moment to realize a foundational profound Truth.

For listening, while you reading, the url under is from a musical artist Stan and I listened to for hours in our room at Sandes Home during our senior year (1973-74) – though I don’t ever remember seeing this video version of the music:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hUcy0IrdJw&feature=emb\\_rel\\_end](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hUcy0IrdJw&feature=emb_rel_end)