

LIFE SKETCH OF WILLIAM (BILL) AMBLER

February 25, 1922 – October 13, 2014

I would like to thank each one of you personally for taking time out on this beautiful fall day to celebrate my dad's life. Let's make this a celebration of a man who loved life, who loved his family and many friends and loved the Lord more than life itself. He was a happy man, at ease with himself ... and although he certainly had a serious, spiritual side he also loved a good joke, he loved to laugh and smile. At Christmas when the family would occasionally give a prank gift, no one laughed harder than dad. When dad passed away this past Monday, he did not die a wealthy man ... monetarily that is ... after all he had been a pastor for 40 years! But it is said that wealth is not measured by our bank account, but by the number of friends we have.

By your turn out today to remember dad, yes, yes, yes! ... my dad indeed was a very wealthy rich man! Let's all smile now as we reflect on dad's life.

Today we want to bear witness to the fact that the Lord in His goodness brought into our midst, and into HIS church – a person whose Christ-like influence, whose dedicated talents and selfless love for everyone, has had a great impact on the lives of all who know him.

William George Ambler was born on February 25, 1922 to Carl and Lora Ambler in the beautiful, small New England town of Wilder, Vermont, about fourteen miles from where his mother came into this world. Those were difficult times in this country, for the Great Depression caused many families to struggle to make ends meet. Carl worked at one of the large paper mills, while Lora worked in a hat factory. Bill grew up with two sisters: Mildred who was four years older, and Sylvia who was three years younger than dad. Both sisters are deceased.

At the age of four Bill became very ill with bronchial pneumonia. Not only did his mother earnestly pray for his recovery, but she also did something that probably helped save his life. The family doctor asked her to keep fried onions on the stove twenty-four hours a day. With this she made a poultice and placed it on his chest, which loosened the congestion. His fever broke and he became well. His mother praised God for His healing power. She always felt that God had something special for Bill to do for Him.

In 1928 the family moved to North Newport, New Hampshire where Bill was enrolled in first grade. While living there, Bill's mother came close to losing her life from scarlet fever, but recovered. In 1932 his dad felt that he needed to move his family to West Lebanon, NH, a town just across the river from White River Junction, Vermont. It was a railroad center and hub for that section of New England. The railroad was paying well for labor and Carl was offered a job as transportation clerk. It was here that

Bill's mother heard the Seventh-day Adventist message for the first time. Elder C.M. Bunker had rented a Unitarian Church for a series of evangelistic meetings. What a memorable day it was when his mother, older sister and others were baptized in the waters of the White River! This helped to strengthen the small group of believers in West Lebanon, a church that produced many faithful workers for the cause of Christ. Its influence has been felt in many countries around the world.

The church was deeply committed to Christian education and established a strong church school. Through the influence of the dedicated Christian teacher, Mrs. Violet Hall, Bill gave his heart to the Lord. He was baptized in the cold county creek by Elder W.W. Rice and he attended church school grades 5 through 8. He often said that these were happy, joyous years in his life. He had learned to ski on his uncle's farm and took lessons at Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH. It was at Dartmouth he was secretly taking ski jump lessons off a large ramp, afraid to tell his mother. He wanted to become a locomotive engineer, but later decided he would become a nurse anesthetist. He loved skiing so much; he would ski thru the woods in the summer, downhill, on pine needles.

In 1936 after Bill had graduated from the eighth grade, his family moved to Springfield, Massachusetts. The winds of war were beginning to blow which led to World War II. He attended high school in Springfield. His mother was very concerned about his involvement in high school sports, and wanted him to strengthen his relationship with Christian friends and the church. She became even more concerned when he became interested in a young lady who lived a few houses down the street. Through the influence of Elder O.D. Wright, Bill was encouraged to attend Atlantic Union College in South Lancaster, Mass. He was very impressed with the college and enrolled as a freshman that fall. His mother's prayers had been answered. After his first year he was urged to prepare for the ministry, graduating in 1944, having worked assembling dressers in the wood shop to help pay for his schooling. His first car was a 39 Chevy coupe.

Bill met Ruthe Anderson, the love of his life, at Atlantic Union College. They were married on June 27, 1943 in Utica, New York by Elder August Anderson, Ruthe's dad, in the church he was pastoring. They spent their first night at Ruthe's parent's house along with 30 other family and friends; leaving the next day to help get ready for an evangelistic series of meetings. They lived in a one room tent their first summer, a half-block away from a bathroom. They cooked on a kerosene camp stove. The next summer while they again helped with evangelistic meetings, they had a fly in between two tents which gave them more room. Mice and big rats roamed the area. Dad would have to shake his shoes in the morning to check for mice. Needless to say, they were more than thrilled to move into their first apartment at the end of the summer. So they started their 71 years of a God blessed marriage. Ruthe was a marvelous, loving pastor's wife, who's strong, devoted support and influence helped make Bill's ministry very successful.

There was one special time in his ministry that he enjoyed telling his friends about. Ten years after entering the ministry, on March 27, 1955, Bill had the privilege of baptizing his father. What a joy it was to have his dad give his heart to Christ and see

how his mother's prayers were answered after many years. The family circle was now complete in Christ.

Their 40 years of ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church took Bill and Ruthe to pastorates in Paris, TN; Lexington, KY; Miami Springs, FL; Binghamton, NY; Rochester, NY; Charlotte, NC; West Palm Beach, FL; Collegedale, TN; Atlanta, GA; Asheville, NC; Berrien Springs, MI; and Des Moines, IA. In 1980 Bill was asked to become Director of Trust Services for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. However, his first love was always as a pastor. He was a very warm, outgoing, happy person, who found it easy to have compassion and respect. He always expressed his thanks to God for the hundreds of precious souls who joined the remnant church during his ministry, and for the countless church members he challenged and nurtured daily in their Christian growth under his leadership.

Bill and Ruthe retired in Andrews, a beautiful little town nestled in the mountains of Western North Carolina. They had their home built on a ridge overlooking the Smokey's, and were very active, along with a group of Adventists, who were in the process of building a new church home. In addition to Bill's many church responsibilities; he took part in community activities. He was treasurer and then president of the Lions Club; worked long hours at the Adventist Community Service Center; worked with Meals on Wheels; the Food Pantry; and County Food Distribution. He enjoyed woodworking as his hobby. He was also a voracious reader, and loved watching professional baseball, especially the Boston Red Socks and Atlanta Braves. After nineteen wonderful years in their retirement home in Andrews, in July 2003, they moved to a villa at Fletcher Park Inn in Hendersonville, NC. They were delighted to be in such great surroundings, and thanked the Lord every day for allowing them to be together in such a lovely environment during the sunset years of their lives reunited with so many old friends and cherished new ones. Mom and Dad moved a total of 27 times. Dad fell asleep in Jesus last Monday morning, October 13, 2014.

He is survived by his wife Ruthe, a daughter, Sharon Harper of Charlotte, NC; a son, Dr. Don Ambler of Andrews, NC; a son Bob Ambler and wife Janet of Martin, TN; a daughter Beth McTaggart and husband Keith of Fletcher, NC; 9 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren. Every day that I can remember, dad would lead our family in worship and prayer, morning and evening. One of the sweetest memories his family and friends will attest to is when dad with a tear in his eye and his voice slightly cracking would express that the greatest desire of his heart was that when the awaking time occurs, that they would experience the endless joy of fellowship together throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. Let's all determine to meet dad under the Tree of Life, where our Lord and Savior will lead us ALL in worship and praise for eternity.

-- Don Ambler