



Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

By Marti Ensign

Further Background

There are many exciting biographies, but I'm sure by now you feel that *The Hiding Place* stands out for its drama, its spiritual challenges, and for being among the most memorable.

If you are a visual person, imagine with me now the Beje ... with its tiny rooms, one house behind the other but attached, a business facing the street, steep stairs, always full of people—and only one bathroom! In such a situation, the division of labor is a fascinating and fluctuating subject. Throughout, we see God's hand helping them to adjust to positions for which they were most gifted.

When the family was convinced that God wanted them to aid the Underground, the Resistance sent an architect to the Beje to build a secret room where several could hide in case of a raid. They also put in a secret buzzer so people could be warned to hide if the Gestapo was coming. Imagine how it must have felt to push that button ...

Wrapped up in a Person

Tante Corrie used to say the best way to put an idea across is to wrap it in a person. Perhaps you've heard the story of what happened to Gerhard Kretschmar, known as "Case K"? In 1939, a German father wrote to the chancellor of Germany, Adolf Hitler, asking for permission to euthanize his severely disabled 5-month old son Gerhard without having to face legal repercussions. Not only did Hitler send his personal doctor, Karl Brandt, to oversee the sanctioned murder of this child, "Case K" became the catalyst for the Nazi euthanasia program that ended up destroying the lives of 300,000 mentally and physically handicapped people.

Well, after the ten Boom family was picked up and put in a Haarlem jail, Corrie was called to a public hearing. There she told about her work with mentally disabled people. You can imagine how the officer scoffed. Work with disabled people? Why, Germany had been killing off such people for years!



Undaunted, Corrie defended her work. “In the eyes of God,” she informed the court, “a disabled person might be more valuable than a watchmaker— or,” and can you imagine a defiant twinkle in her eye, “a lieutenant!” The value of human life was wrapped up in every person Tante Corrie met.

A Personal Story

This section begins with the decline of Corrie’s mother, related vividly here by Corrie, as she was the only family member in the Beje to witness the stroke. After the coma and the partial recovery, it was apparent that Mother ten Boom would not get her speech back. They ended up having conversations by using a method that was something like Twenty Questions. She maintained the ability to say a few words and always retained “Corrie”. Since that was the last name she spoke and could pronounce it well, she just called everyone, “Corrie”.

Here is something you may not know: It is amazing and a bit ironic that in Tante Corrie’s last years when a stroke had taken her speech, we did the same thing for her and covered one wall of her bedroom with photos of everyone we could think of. Then, when she wanted news of this person or that one, we used the same kind of question game. I would point to a photo and she would nod or shake her head. Then, once we’d settled on the person, we would discover what she wished to know.

There were also certain words that she retained until nearing the end of her life. One expression was “thank you” and it was offered with a smile for even the merest of favors. Another word was “PRAY!” and I always counted that a great privilege for each of us.

If she just could not make us understand, she was so patient and dear and would go on to something else. Once when I was caring for her and was the only other one in the house she wanted me to play the little organ which she treasured. I sat down and said, “What should I play, Tante Corrie?”

Corrie stood up from the chair where she was sitting. I tried again and sort of leafed through the hymn book, but she just stood up again. Then I GOT it. One of her favorite hymns was, “Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus”!

We actually sang that at her memorial service. It is wonderful to read how God nudged both her and Betsie into the roles that he had equipped them for and



used each of their gifts in creative valuable ways. You will enjoy finding out how that came about.

Looking Ahead

In this section one gigantic event starts overshadowing all others in the life of the ten Booms: the German Invasion of Holland begins. When they hear on the radio the voice of their Prime Minister soothingly telling them that there will be no war, Father ten Boom reacts with passion and turns off the radio. He says, “It is wrong to give people hope when there is no hope. It is wrong to base faith upon wishes. There will be war and Holland will fall.” This, then, began the time of suffering for all of Holland, but most especially for our beloved ten Boom family.

For the five days that Holland held out against the invaders and so during those days they kept the watch shop open to try to retain the look of normalcy, but when they heard on the radio that their beloved Queen had left Holland, everything changed.

If you’d like to pick a theme, look for all the changes that happened to the family and the Beje. Can you imagine what you would do if you had always emphasized “truth telling” and suddenly you were forced to lie to save lives?

It is interesting to watch the way different individuals and families deal with the stress of the unbelievable pressures put on all the people in this time and place—especially on the ones Father ten Boom calls “God’s ancient people.”

We find ourselves and the ten Booms now in the thick of the Resistance. This week’s reading will take us even deeper into this journey with the ten Booms. Steel yourselves.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. —Ephesians 2:10