

# A Man with a Mission

by

**WARREN E. WEAVER**

**T**he date was June, 1973. The place was my living room. As I sat alone thinking about the events of the previous months, I wondered if I had missed the most important truth of life? I felt that I had nothing to lose and prayed a simple prayer: "God, your word says I am a sinner. Even though I have tried to be a good person, I am still a sinner. I ask that you forgive my sins, be my Lord and fill me with your Spirit. If this is real, I want to hit the ground with my feet running. Please don't ever let me stop to make up for all the years I have wasted."

I was totally unprepared for what happened! The room walls seemed to disappear and I was enveloped in the most beautiful, wonderful love I have ever known. At that moment, I realized that Jesus Christ had gone to the cross and my sins had been forgiven. The enormity of this overwhelmed me and I wept uncontrollably for hours.

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This was the beginning of a journey that has been most exciting and life-changing. The day after this incident, I told my wife, my associates and anyone else that cared to listen. Jesus was alive! To me, the grass was greener, the sky bluer and people more real. Each per-

son I met had needs, desires, hopes, aspirations and opportunities that I had not noticed before!

Who was Warren Weaver before that event? I was born and raised in Maryland, earned a BS degree in Pharmacy and a PhD in Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the University of Maryland. God had blessed me in so many ways! But even though I had been confirmed as a young person in the Lutheran Church and attended it later in Richmond, Virginia, I had a view of God that put Him out of my personal life.

After college, I spent five wonderful years and gained important professional experience at the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC. I worked on numerous projects in the Chemistry Division, but most prominently in the development of antifungal agents of interest to the Navy. During those five years I married and was blessed with births of a boy and a girl. I was certainly happy in my Navy experience and left the Navy with a standing offer to return anytime.

In 1950, I moved to Richmond as chairman of the department of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry at the Medical College of Virginia. I really tried the Medical College as an experiment to see whether I liked teaching and college research. I soon found that I relished the classroom experience, the students and the academic climate of the pharmacy department. The people there were good, friendly and open. In 1956, I was named dean of the School of Pharmacy. At that time, I dropped my teaching load in chemistry, but continued to teach ethics, history and related subjects. I always liked being in the classroom and with students. Until my retirement in 1981, I was the only teaching dean at the Medical College of Virginia.

Professionally, those years were rewarding to me. During that time, I served in various roles outside the college, too. This included serving as a member on numerous national committees of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP) and as its pres-



Warren and Esther Weaver.

ident in 1968–69. I was the last chairman of the AACP Board in 1973–74, preceding its reorganization, and was also privileged to serve on the board of the American Pharmaceutical Association (APhA) from 1970–73. For several years, I was on the Task Force on Pharmaceutical Specialties and served as its chairman in the years prior to the formation of the specialty boards. Likewise, my experience as a board member of the American Council of Pharmaceutical Education (ACPE) from 1974–80 was rich and enlightening, as were the years on the Board of Grants of the American Foundation of Pharmaceutical Education.

Personally, those years were a mixture of rewards and trials. My wife and I had two more girls, born in 1954 and 1964. Then, my first wife died suddenly in 1968. Her death was the most devastating experience of my life. I suddenly found myself alone with three children still at home, (one of them only 4 years old), and no mother for them. Friends gathered around and were gracious and supportive and helped me through the long year that followed. During that year, I went back to Baltimore and visited Esther, the widow of a very close friend. She also had three children, one of whom was a handicapped daughter. After some months of telephone calls, correspondence and some visits, Esther and I decided to marry and put the two families together.

I could write volumes about the problems we encountered. We moved

to a new home in Richmond to give us a fresh start, but it was like giving a stimulant to mortal enemies. I can sum it all up by saying it was the second most traumatic experience of my life, and it kept going on and on. The details need not be elaborated here, but our combined children seemed determined never to get along under one roof. Esther's son, Wayne, was the most unhappy, in part because I did not care for his "hippie" lifestyle, appearance and music.

A further crisis occurred when Wayne was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease after he graduated from high school. Again, the Lord's hand was at work and this bright, intelligent boy was not only successfully cured, but enrolled at Carnegie Mellon University. He came home for a visit during his second year with a Bible under his arm and a total "new lease" on life. The transformation was remarkable! His appearance had changed, the rock music was thrown out, and he was more friendly and accommodating to me than any of the other children, including my own.

Frankly, since I had taught Sunday School and participated in numerous "intellectual" Christian activities in my church, I thought Wayne had a "fox hole" conversion and he would soon get over it, but I was thankful because it gave him a new perspective on life and a much "nicer" disposition. He was interesting to watch, for he now left his bedroom hideout and sat in the living room, always reading a Bible, and spent his evenings going to prayer meetings with a whole new set of friends. This never changed over the next few months.

In early 1973, I was intrigued by the scriptures he seemed to know and understand and the kind of message that he was sending. He never confronted me when he came home during these months, but just spontaneously offered scriptures and talked about and with Jesus as if He were his best friend. I had never seen anyone like that, but it certainly made him a lot easier to get along with and what he was saying really challenged me to start reading the Bible again from a new perspective.

Everything he said was right there in the scriptures. You can know God personally, but you can't change yourself. Only He can change you. All of us must make the decision to trust God, accept His rule over our lives and believe and receive Jesus as Lord and Master.

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As I look back on those years and the experiences that introduced me to Jesus, I am most grateful to Wayne! He was the instrument that God used to introduce Himself to me. The years that followed brought so many unexpected blessings! I was not a "closet Christian" before, but this also transformed my marriage and my relationship with my wife, as we began to walk together in the Lord. I did not hesitate to tell others in my church, who were tolerant of me, even though they didn't always agree or understand what happened.

Around the campus, it was clear that some thought me a bit "daffy." But the Christians on campus understood and I entered a whole new world of Christian organizations. I was the advisor for years of a predominantly black, Pentecostal group on campus. It was a wonderful experience! Soon the Christian Medical Society and its friends also became part of my walk with the Lord.

During those years, I became active in the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship and went to Israel in 1974 to the First World Conference on the Holy Spirit. Later, Esther and I spoke all

over the East coast in chapters of the Full Gospel. I was one of the early board members of a new business and professional evangelical group in Richmond known as Needle's Eye Ministries. I attended numerous Christian conferences around the country and my early retirement in 1981, was occasioned in part by my desire to devote full time to Christian activities.

Prior to my retirement, I had explored the membership structure of the Christian Medical Society and discovered to my surprise, that they offered membership to physicians, dentists and nurses, but not to pharmacists. In fact, until 1973, my own spiritual walk was mostly related to my own church's activities, a few experiences in churches as a child and to a Billy Graham crusade. Otherwise, I was totally lacking in knowledge of things going on in parachurch ministries or other churches. I had discovered a new and exciting world! Through the late seventies and early eighties, events led to the formation of the Christian Pharmacists Fellowship International. (See page 5.)

I can sum up the past 20 years by saying they have been the happiest and most rewarding years of my life. A totally new perspective became part of my life and thinking. It changed my understanding of truth, of the Bible, its inspiration and authenticity. My way of thinking has been completely revolutionized by the message of scripture and the roles of believers as they relate

**WARREN E. WEAVER, PhD**, was born in Sparrows Point, Maryland. He graduated from the University of Maryland with a BS in Pharmacy in 1942, and a PhD in Pharmaceutical Chemistry in 1947. He served as a chemist and Organic Group Leader for the Naval Research Laboratory in Washington, DC, from 1945–50. He was appointed in 1950 to the faculty of the School of Pharmacy, Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia, as associate professor, and was promoted to the rank of professor in 1954. Then, in 1956, he accepted the position of dean. He retired from the faculty and as dean in 1981, and retains the positions of dean emeritus and professor emeritus.

Some of his many accomplishments during his illustrious career include: Board of Trustees (1970–73) of the American Pharmaceutical Association; Board of Grants (1982–90) and Vice-Chairman (1988–90) of the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education; Chairman (1969–74) of the Virginia Regional Medical Program; Member (1975–82), Chairman Protem (1975), and Chairman (1976–80) of the Board of Pharmaceutical Specialties; Vice President (1967–68) and President (1968–69) of the American Association of Colleges Pharmacy; Council Member (1974–80) of the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education; President (1977–78) of the Virginia Pharmaceutical Educational Research Foundation. He has also received numerous honors and awards such as: Virginia Pharmacist of the Year in 1963; Honored Alumnus, University of Maryland, School of Pharmacy in 1969; Sigma XI; Rho Chi; Alpha Sigma Chi and Sigma Zeta.

He has served the church, parachurch, and community organizations in a variety of ways. He was on the board of directors (1975–93) and president (1981–87) of the Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, Richmond Chapter; Board of Directors (1977–84) Needle's Eye Ministries, Inc.; Founding Member and Executive Director (1984–93), Treasurer and Board Member (1993–present) of CPFI. He and his wife, Esther Schiesser Weaver, live in Richmond, Virginia, where they attend the River of Life Church. He has four children and three stepchildren.

to God's church and our daily activities in social and professional circles. I praise the Lord that He had enabled me

to have such a close relationship with Him and His word which has so enriched my life.∞