

Daily View

"But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today'" Hebrews 3:13

June 29, 2020



I don't know about you, but many of my good memories took place around a kitchen table. This is an old one from the ghost town, Bodie, in the mid-1800s. The photo was taken in 1973.

Helen Greiwe I

Helen Greiwe (pronounced "Grī-vee") attended the Tustin, California church, where *Allison Horak's father is an elder. Turns out, Helen is also one of the people that made a huge impact on me when I was 7 and 8 years old. She was one of sweetest, kindest ladies I ever met living out the simple command to "be kind to one another" (Ephesians 4:32).

When we lived in Costa Mesa in the 50s, Helen's son, an only child named Stanley, was my best friend for awhile. Back then, the family attended where my dad preached and lived near us, so Stanley and I hung out together just about every day after school. I spent quite a few hours in the Greiwe house.

We entered the house through a back door that took us into the kitchen; I remember that kitchen as if I was there yesterday. Helen was one of those women who kept her apron on all day (or so it seemed) and... let's just say Stanley's "physique" was testimony to her cooking prowess. There was always food around, including lots of desserts.

We spent most of our time at the kitchen table eating stuff. Within a few minutes of entering the house, Helen was asking me what I would like to eat, and she offered several options. Since it was usually right after school, I was more than happy to eat her cakes, pies and pastries. My 7th year on earth was a diner's delight.

I often ate dinner with the family and, after finishing the first plateful of food, Helen kept asking if I wanted more. She asked with the pan in one hand and a spoon full of mash potatoes — or whatever — in the other, assuming I would say yes. If I said no, she would bend her head slightly, and ask, several times, "are you sure; we have plenty." She was so insistent, I was tempted a time or two to say, "no, please!" instead of "no, thank you." It was hard to refuse because she asked with such kindness and concern. She asked as if she was afraid I would starve if I didn't eat a little more.

When I reflect back on the experiences that led to where I am today, I think thankfully of Helen Greiwe and others like her. I could point to lots of reasons why I, like so many of my peers, might have left the Lord. There were many good things, but I also saw lots of division and animosity. The Bible classes — to the extent I even remember them — were not very good. We played a lot of hangman, using Bible trivia questions, and that's about all I remember. The best teachers were assigned to the adult classes. The kids were not encouraged to ask questions and when we did... well, pat answers were like McDonald's hamburgers: "billions sold."

My parents were solid and I give them most of the credit for my staying faithful. The rest I chalk up to one thing — not "great sermons" or impressive teaching or beautiful "worship experiences" — it was simply the kindness of the adults I met in the church when I was young.

The Bible gives kindness a prominent place throughout. It's one of the three things God says pleases him in Micah 6:8,

*"And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?"*

Jesus exemplified all of those traits and they are of utmost importance. It's hard to disagree with Frederick Faber's assertion that "*kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence or learning.*" The kind-heartedness of people like Helen Greiwe helped me see Jesus just a little more clearly — and here I am. Authentic kindness has a lasting impact.

Meanwhile, "she, being dead, still speaks" (cf. Heb. 11:4).

*Yesterday, Allison told me a story that her mother heard from sister Greiwe. I'll take that up in part II.