

“I CAN DREAM AGAIN” CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

CHAPTER 4 – WE SHALL OVERCOME

Caught in the Whirlwind of Cultural Change

With nerves of steel, yet a tender heart of compassion, my mother worked harder than anyone else I have ever seen. With the responsibility to raise nine children and compassion for a hurting world, my mother faced many obstacles as she entered the turbulent 1960s. The nation was caught in a whirlwind of change. The Civil Rights Movement led the multiracial landscape from segregation, desegregation, to integration. The Beatles transformed our generation through rock and roll. This prepared the way for the Sexual Revolution. An era of love and peace was ignited by protests against the Vietnam War and fueled by Woodstock that produced flower power hippies, sit-ins, and love-ins. Coupled with the tragic assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert, *“Momma Jack” receiving an appreciation plaque from me at our annual Long Island Teen Challenge banquet* and then Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we were all embroiled in this tumultuous period of American history. It distorted our family’s security.

Mental Breakdowns

Mom suffered five mental breakdowns and was admitted into hospitals each time. After being released, the doctors prescribed unlimited Valium and other psychotropic drugs. They rendered her almost comatose but it was the only remedy the doctors offered. These episodes continued for years.

An Unforgettable Day—An Unforgettable Miracle

Trembling in her bedroom one night, my mother stared blankly at the dim glow of a tiny 13-inch black-and-white TV with a piece of aluminum foil wrapped around the tip of the antenna. Fighting the relentless roar to surrender to despair, in a final desperate grasp for hope, she tuned in to a Billy Graham crusade.

She heard him speak about a healing Jesus, a personal Jesus who “was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Those words penetrated her heart. He was not directing her to a religion or even a specific church. He pointed her to Jesus—the only One who could set her and her whole house free.

Suddenly, deep within the recesses of this compassionate mother’s heart, there was finally a glimmer of hope. When Billy Graham gave the altar call on the television, she knew that the only chance she had was to act on this truth she had heard. She bolted out of the house to cry out to the open sky for a miracle.