

August 2018

Dear Friends,

After being married for 69 years, it's hard to distinguish where one person ends and the other begins. Speaking literally though, one person (Orneal Kooyers) ended almost a year ago and the other passed into glory on August 7, 2018. Figuratively speaking it will be difficult to separate Martha Kooyers from Orneal Kooyers because for all intents and purposes they were a dynamic team! Grandpa/ Neal, the driving visionary with a distaste for the mundane details, and Grandma/ Martha tenacious to accomplish all the nitty gritty details with a flourish. Although it may be awkward to completely separate the two this letter is a small tribute to Martha Lee Miner Kooyers because she, like all of us, deserves, "Her own thing", as one of my cousins put it.



After Grandpa passed last year Grandma went to live in southern California with Tim and Pam Manthei (her daughter and son-in-law). Then in June she went to Kalamazoo, Michigan to live with Eric and Penny Schering (her other daughter and son-in-law). On July 25<sup>th</sup> she went to live with the Tim and Pam again- this time in Petosky, Michigan. I (Michelle Hawkins) am including email excerpts from Pam Manthei and Penny Schering in the following paragraphs:

*Martha Kooyers, faithful wife and work partner of Neal Kooyers for almost 70 years, went to sleep in the arms of Jesus and woke up in heaven early Tuesday morning. She got there on the same day as her daughter, Leah Heidema, only three years later, 8/7/18.*

*Martha cared deeply for Leah while she was suffering with MS for so many years and called her almost daily. They were very close as they had worked together for years in PNG creating lessons and organizing the Sunday Schools.*

*Neal cared for Martha in recent years after her osteoporosis kept her confined to her chair. He went to be with the Lord 8/29/17 so Martha went to Sky Valley in SoCal to stay close to her daughter Pam and her husband, Tim Manthei. By God's gracious provision Megan Marcoux from Central Lake, MI lived with Martha giving steady care often 24/7 when Pam couldn't be with her in Sky Valley Resort. Megan committed to stay with Martha until she was no longer needed. And she did.*

*Martha's last year taught us that knew her about waiting patiently for God to show His perfect will and to enjoy your food. We sang, said and read verses to her and loved on her at home here until God called her home. Her amazing example of caring for the poor, working with full energy beside Neal, raising 4 children and being the matriarch to over 50 grand and great grand children is a testimony to God's graciousness to us all. We were blessed to call her Martha, Mom, Grandma and Oma.*

*Pam Manthei*

*We are thankful and celebrating our mother's home-going early Tuesday morning. It was a privilege to call her Mom. She was a peaceful person, agreeing with our decisions and participating with a*

*lovely attitude when we cared for her. We could not have done things like having her in our homes and moving her all over the country without her full cooperation. Her greatest desire was to be where we were. It was truly a blessing we all benefitted from!*

*Her passing through the Heavenly Gates has been with lots of activity around and has been a happy celebration. Yesterday and today heavier thoughts press in of how to honor someone who played such a big part in who we all are. Some sadness comes and goes but doesn't stay long as grandchildren catch frogs and grandpa gets the little snake out of the canoe which showed itself as a stowaway.*

*So life goes on and our gift from God right now is peace. Mom went peacefully (our prayer for her going). We have peace and as my friend said it is one of the things we get to take with us to heaven. In John 14:27 Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'*

*Mom loved her meals and her snacks, but once she ate, she couldn't remember what she had eaten or when or what meal was next! She would get mad at me occasionally and say, "Come on, can't I have a snack before I go to bed?" Dad (Neal) would always give her cottage cheese and applesauce before she went to bed.*



*Though she forgot meals, she never forgot Cory (son), or Pam or me (Penny) or Eric or Tim or Doug or Rueben. Who we were and who everyone was related to and how she was blessed by being in Eric's house or Tim's house, she always had clear. She liked it when we would come around her chair before a meal and Eric would pray for the food and for her. She loved it when Tim would pray for her or share a verse (later when she was up in Petoskey). And we would all love it when Mom had strength to pray. Then the Mom we knew all those years would come back to us with calm and quiet peace, her heart for PNG, for us and for the hurting ones in the world.*

*We are not scheduling a memorial service immediately.*

*We're still working out the timing and location.*

*Much love,  
Penny Schering*