

Pilgrimage of Prayer

By Lois E Callaway



**A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer
Book #1 (of 7)**

A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer

A Missionary's Reflections - in a 7-book series

Book # 1 Pilgrimage of Prayer

By

Lois E. Callaway

Dedicated to

My Mother:
Lura Groves Elkerton

who first taught me to pray the prayer of faith.

And to

My Grandparents:
Elmer and Netta Groves.
who taught her.

Cover composition by Joyce Callaway Nicholson.

Photo of Multnomah Falls, Oregon
Inset: C. W. Callaway and Thai porters
cross log bridge in Thailand.

All Poems not attributed to others
were written by Lois Callaway

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Book # 1

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This first book is the shortest of the series but serves
also as an introduction to the other 6 books

Acknowledgement

It has now been well over 20 years since my wife, Lois, wrote these seven studies on the subject of PRAYER. I want to express my appreciation to our children and their spouses for all they have done in the editing, checking of quotations, etc. Four who have done most are: Joyce Callaway Nicholson (covers, pictures, formatting), David Callaway (researching book and Bible references), Mark Callaway (art work on book 3 cover), and Cinda Lott Callaway (proofreading).

Lois had written her own appreciation for help on typing and critiquing from our daughter, Joyce Nicholson; granddaughter, Rhonda Callaway Corder; forwarding agent, Benette Rhoades; and friend, Elena Sims. She wrote "special thanks to missionary co-workers, Dorothy Uhlig and Valerie Bock, who knew themselves to be close enough friends to be completely candid."

C W Callaway, March 20, 2017

About the Author

Lois Nadine Elkerton Callaway served with her husband, C W Callaway, in Thailand among the Mien mountain tribespeople from 1949 to 1985. From then on they served Mien refugees from Laos in U.S.A. In 1996 at age of 75 she died in an automobile accident near Napa, California. She had a deep reverent love for God and for His Word. And she loved those whom she served so faithfully. She was an avid reader, a gifted poet, and a skilled writer in Mien as well as English. She was a woman of prayer as revealed in this series.

For more information about her see:
<http://www.mohteacher.org/>



Lois E. Callaway
11/24/1921 – 9/5/1996

A Pilgrim by C.W.

One dictionary meaning for "pilgrim" is "One who embarks on a quest for some end conceived as sacred."

Hebrews 11:13 (KJV) says, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, **and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.**"

Lois was **that kind of a pilgrim.** She was a pilgrim with a purpose and that purpose was to know God in all His fullness and to serve Him faithfully. It is thus that this series of booklets is titled, **"A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer"** and why this first book of the series is entitled, **"Pilgrimage of Prayer."**

She not only carefully searched God's Word (the Bible) but also God's World and was intrigued by how all revealed more about God Himself. She taught herself to identify trees, flowers, insects, and even rocks. Once when teaching Mien and Khmu in a college credit study of the book of Revelation she took her students to the Natural History Museum in San Francisco and there explained to them many facets of nature and how to distinguish the various gems mentioned in Revelation.

Here is a poem Lois wrote about pilgrimage:

Prayer of a Pilgrim

"I'm coming Father...
 I didn't know you cared so much!
 My friends were urgent,
 The glitter seemed so bright.
 I see you waiting there, Father,
 Peering down the distant road.
 What do you want, Father?
 Let me be your servant.
 I'll do your work –
 I'll work for you."
 "Son! You're home!
 Work can wait!
 I only want to talk with you,
 To look at you,
 To feast with you.
 For today just be my son.
 My hand is waiting – restless,
 Full of blessing."

Thank you, Lord, even for the valleys. They so often become a place of springs—always do if Your presence is recognized in the valley--sometimes only a trickle and sometimes a bursting artesian well.

The pilgrimage to Zion! What a pilgrimage -- valleys and deserts to be sure -- but Your presence through it all--Your strength for the journey day by day -- increasing strength through hard days. Truly, Lord, I had rather walk the thirsty valley with You than the heights without You.

Thank You. Lord, for being my companion on the pilgrimage. Thank You!

Heart Set on Pilgrimage

Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

As they pass through the Valley of Baca¹,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.

They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.

Psalm 84:5-7 (NIV)

(Some Bible versions translate "Valley of Baca" as "Dry Valley,"
"Thirsty Valley" or "Valley of Weeping")

¹ Baca- Only mention of this valley is in Ps 84:5 but it is symbolic of such experiences as that of Ezra and the captives returning from Babylon to Jerusalem is in Ez 10:1. Baca was a valley near Jerusalem and as the captives returned through this valley to the fragmented Jerusalem, they wept bitterly confessing the sin that had brought on the destruction of their Holy City

I didn't realize on an Easter Day long ago that I was embarking on a lifelong pilgrimage. All my childish heart knew that day was that Jesus loved me; He had died for me; my sin made Him sad; and I wanted so much to please Him and be His child.

As the years have passed I have come to realize that the Christian life is a pilgrimage. God leads me day by day, sometimes in the shadows, more often in the sunshine. He leads me through the desert at times and through Thirsty Valley, the valley of weeping which is very near to Zion -- the mountain of God-- and that is my destination. He also leads me to green pastures and still waters.

My God is the Everywhere God. He is as much with me in the valley as on the mountain heights. He is as much with me in the desert as He is when He leads me beside the still waters to pastures of fresh green grass.

Sometimes I am not so aware of His presence. I may feel hemmed in by the desert as Israel felt they were at the Red Sea -- until God parted the sea.

At times I am very thirsty -- longing for the river that flows out from the temple of God on Mount Zion. If only I could reach the source and drink of the Living water there I would never thirst again. But here, in the Thirsty Valley, my throat is parched. I feel totally dry. He then causes water to flow from the Rock, my Living Rock, Jesus, right there in Meribah or in Baca² and I quench my thirst -- temporarily.

Sometimes in the Thirsty Valley it seems that my tears blend with His to cause this Valley of Weeping to become a place of springs and He dries my tears and lets me drink of Him, the Living Spring.

In the early days of our missionary work in Thailand we lived in a tribal village at the top of Long Mountain in North Thailand. The journey from our nearest market town to our home required a five hour bicycle ride across the hot dry plains, followed by the four hour climb up Long Mountain. In all that nine hour trail there was no safe drinking water. We and our five children each carried as many canteens as possible, but restricted ourselves to occasional sips of water when we longed for long cold draughts.

Sometimes dehydration also depleted our electrolyte balance and we had to suck rock salt to prevent the dangerous effects of the dehydration. The salt protected us from the cramps and heat stroke, but greatly increased our thirst.

We learned what it was to be really thirsty and how wonderful it was at journey's end to fully satisfy that thirst with safe, cool water from our earthen water jars at home.

² Psalm 81:7 and Exodus 17:1-7

We, on an earthly pilgrimage, will learn what it is to thirst for God on the hot battle plains, and the desert where fellowship is lacking, but we will find water from the Living Stream as we go to Him in prayer. Weary pilgrims finally at home in Zion will sit in His presence and drink to our full satisfaction from the Streams of Living Water.

Secret Place or Meribah ?

A few years into my pilgrimage, having experienced the Thirsty Valley, I came at last to my own encounter with God, to my own Sinai, an awesome realization of the presence of Father God. God had called me to covenant, to test my obedience to Him. It was not Sinai that shook that day but my own heart and finally I was able to say, "Yes, Lord, I'll go to the mission field, wherever you want me." I heard His promise, "And I will go with you even to the end of the world." I believed that with all my heart.

Over forty years as a missionary in southeast Asia have taken me through many Thirsty Valleys and a series of Meribah's where He had tested my faith in His promise and then led me again and again to the Secret Place of Thunder so that I could hear Him reassure me of His original promise -- and give me new promises, too.

Both on the heights and in the thirsty valleys of Meribah and Baca He has opened His word to me and led through experiences of answered prayer. My heart is bursting to share His goodness. Above all I want you to share the glory of the mountain and the peace of the valley, for it is for you, too!

Prayer is not just something that happens in the secret place, though it certainly begins there! Prayer is a constant awareness of God -- a constant communication with God both on the mountain top and in the thirsty valley where one is frustrated by the bitter waters of Meribah. Prayer is a pilgrimage.

To claim originality for the material in this book would be presumptuous. To acknowledge all the idea sources would be impossible, for the quotations have found their way into my notebooks over the years from so many sources (many of them unknown to begin with) that I cannot always identify the source myself. I have identified those that I can, and offer my thanks for the ideas and blessings from all sources.

My husband has willingly borne the burden of many tasks to free me from responsibilities so that I could be away at times to work on the manuscript. He also wields an effective red pencil!. My daughter, Joyce Nicholson, had the courage to decipher my handwritten manuscript to put it first in typewritten form. Elena Sims, Benette Rhoades and my granddaughter, Rhonda Callaway Corder, have typed until a semi-final manuscript has appeared. Several have read the manuscript and offered

helpful criticism, but special thanks to missionary co-workers, Dorothy Uhlig and Valerie Bock, who knew themselves to be close enough friends to be completely candid -- that was a tremendous help. Benette Rhoades' various helps with criticism and secretarial help can hardly be enumerated.

The footnotes refer to books and other sources which I hope the reader may find and read more fully. The Scripture references listed in the text are essential to understanding the text. Don't skip them!

Birthing in Prayer

As we come to the Lord in prayer, seeking His mind, His thoughts, His plans for us and the ministry He has given us, He begins to share with us visions of what could happen in our lives, our families, our ministries. As we begin to share in that vision and begin to pray about it, we become, as it were pregnant with a plan for accomplishing His purpose in our lives and ministry.

Forty years ago God shared with us His plan to establish a church among the Mien people of North Thailand. So far as we knew there were no Christians among the Mien, and certainly not in Thailand at that time. He put this desire in our hearts and we began to prepare for its birth.

It was a long hard pregnancy. During the seven + years we lived in the Mien village, we saw only one spunky grandmother believe, but she was faithful 'til her death, and planted the desire to believe in some of her grandchildren, who did in fact become Christians many years later. Finally after many years of prayer and ministry among the Mien we saw the birthing of an infant church, weak, complaining, unsteady in its walk. We experienced all the joys and sorrows of early childhood as God led us in nourishing the infant Mien church.

Finally we realized that we had a teenage church on our hands. We experienced the same problems we had with our physical teenage children. We went through a period in which we were told, by actions if not by words, "Leave us alone! We can do this on our own." We saw them wrestling with power struggles amongst the leadership, and not much chance for our intervention in their quarrels. God again gave us a vision. This time it was for a mature leadership for the Mien church. Pregnancy is not easy and it hasn't been in this time of birthing a leadership truly dedicated and set apart for the Lord.

Again, as the birth took place, God gave us the responsibility of nourishing the infant leadership. Just as some children grow up and mature faster than others, we have been delighted to see some who seem to have released their hearts to the Lord much more quickly and easily. They have become mature enough to begin themselves

to birth visions for the development of the Mien church. We have been given the wonderful privilege of teaching some of the leaders in Bible College extension classes in the Multi-Cultural Institute of San Jose Christian College. Again, it has been strength and time consuming, but thrilling to share God's Word and our visions for the Mien church with this dedicated group of leaders. We feel much as Abraham and Sarah must have felt when they were finally given the son God had promised. God is also promising us "fruit in old age" and it is exhilarating to see what God is doing in leadership in the Mien church.

Some of the first group of leaders began to birth plans for developing a broader leadership to fill the many needs of a rapidly growing church. From that has come the opportunity to expand the Bible teaching program to include many who are not able, because of lack of primary education, to handle full college level work, but are eager to be trained in a new class taught entirely in their own language. This is more like birthing your own grandchildren!

God has given us a new challenge to birth a church that is separate and set apart for God in total obedience and honesty. This is perhaps one of the hardest pregnancies of all. The Mien, as they came to the United States from a country where outwitting police and government officials had been a way of life, found that here the game was to outsmart the welfare system. They found the system all too willing to cooperate with them in perpetrating the false claims they were making. In America it is fast becoming a way of life in government circles to bend the law totally out of shape.

As I talked with a Christian sociologist about the problems, she agreed that the problems were varied and serious, but so deeply ingrained in the system and the people that the only hope for us as Christians was to rescue the young people. Challenge them with the need for education and jobs, so that the evil would not continue in the younger generation.

I looked at my friends who are in a very precarious situation, having been aided and abetted in their false declarations, but who will be the culprits if the system folds or any of their dubious benefactors should decide to turn the tables on them. They could be liable for charges of fraud that could send them to prison.

"Lord!" I cried. Is there no solution for Christian adults among my refugee friends?" God said, "Yes there is! You must teach things that you have thought were too hard and have refused to teach in the past. Challenge them with total honesty, whatever the cost, and the reassurance that I have promised I will never forsake them, and they will not have to beg bread from the world. They will be fed!"

This is one of the hardest pregnancies of all. The beginnings have been painful, having to say some very straight things to the Christian women I love so dearly,

knowing that I am asking them to step out into a very difficult path. I believe with all my heart that it is a path that will bring them great personal blessing and a testimony of "being the Lord's own people" that will bring many non-Christians to realize that there is challenge and blessing in being a true Christian.

This time it is more like birthing twins or triplets. To achieve this spiritual growth in the Mien church there is a need for some programs for getting more of the Word of God into their hearts. Simultaneously with this birthing is the vision of beginning small groups for the nurture of the adult Christians, and of Kids' Bible Clubs for making our kids Christian before they wind up in juvenile detention – or in our colleges where their faith will be blasted, leaving them with the suicidal hopelessness of our Godless system. Yes, for people who have passed their four score and ten, it is going to be a difficult birthing, but we believe it is in process and will happen as He gives strength. He has promised that He will not bring us to the time of delivery and not give us the strength to deliver. Praise God for His plans for replenishing the Church.

Burdens at Eventide



(Poem below was) written as I watched the Yao (Mien) women, silhouetted against the evening sky, bearing their burdens homeward from the fields far below.

Burdens at Eventide

To walk the labored path without Him!
 To know no comfort from the Lord:
 To have no hope of peace or blessing:
 To neither know nor love the Word.

To fear both day and night without Him:
 To know no healing at His hand:
 To know no path within the Valley,
 No Shepherd in the barren land.

To know not of His ruling presence:
 O'ercoming all life's fear and woe:
 To know not of the love of Jesus,
 Who stands triumphant o'er the foe.

O, when shall come the rising Day Star
 To shed His light in darkened heart?
 Yes, then they'll know my heart's full burden
 That often makes the teardrops start.

To walk the upward trail beside Him:
 To know sweet comfort from the Lord:
 To know they've found that peace and blessing
 Sweet fellowship within His Word.

To see them claiming peace at evening:
 To rise and face the day secure:
 To see them shoulder yet the burden,
 Yet find His strength that will endure.

To see them in His mighty Presence,
 Victorious over death and woe!
 Ah this, ah this is grace sufficient
 To make me know why He said, "Go!"

Romans 9:25-26
 By Lois E. Callaway 1957

A Pilgrim Ponders Prayer

A Missionary's Reflections

Here are the titles of all 7 books in the series:

- 1 Pilgrimage of Prayer (this book)**
- 2 The King Waits on the Mount**
- 3 Incense from the Mountain**
- 4 Behold HIM on the Mount**
- 5 A Man in the Gap**
- 6 Surprises from the Mount**
- 7 A Gem from the Mountain**

References in book 1

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