

Edith and Dick Miles sent the following letter to Pastor Dan Crane in September 2014:

Vern e-mailed us a copy of Kelly Strobe's piece about Rick's home going and the Young People. I wanted to share with you and Kelly how God prepared me for Rick's home going in the Lord.

God is so great, loving, wonderful and just. He is always there no matter what we are going through, even where the pain is almost unbearable. He is there when it hurts to go on and even when we don't understand everything that is happening. "Trust and Obey, for there is no other way" to us happy in Jesus. May the Lord bless you all at South Apalachin Baptist Church. My heart will always be with the people there.

Love in Christ,
Edith

PS If you wish to share with others please do. God was so good.

Saturday night 3/15/75. Cincy, Vern, and Shawn had all gone to bed. Richard Sr. was working late shift. Rick and I were sitting in the kitchen discussing Pastor Walter's series on baptism. Rick was saved but never baptized. He was going to speak to Pastor Walter the next day after church about this. He made the comment that he loved the Lord and was willing to be a missionary or whatever God wanted him to do. He said he was even willing to die. My blood ran ice cold. That was frightening, so I joked with him, that as the oldest he had to take care of mom and dad's funerals and besides I would have to go out and buy a suit, shirt, tie to bury him in. I was trying to lighten things up and threatening to do what he would not like. He was serious. He told me what he wanted for his funeral - very simple and told me what clothes he wanted to be buried in.



The next day 3/16, after Sunday dinner, Rick walked to his friend Mark Mikalonis' house. The rest of us were doing things that you do on a Sunday afternoon. Richard Sr. was getting ready to go to church to practice for the Easter cantata. When the phone rang, I answered it. Karen Mikalonis said you had better come up here, for Rick has fallen on the ground and we have called for an ambulance. Richard and I went right there. Rick was lying in the snow across from Barney Holden's house. I lifted his eyelid. All I could think of is Rick is not here. It was frightening and very painful. Only by the grace of God could I say, "only you can save my boy, and that is what I want as his mom, but your will be done, not mine."

On Monday, June 17th, the doctor came into his hospital room, with a nurse, who had a needle hidden in her hand. The Doctor said "Your son is dead." I don't know how it happened, but somehow I got across the room into a chair. In my mind, I was no longer in the hospital room but back in the toddler nursery of the old South Apalachin church. Rick was playing on the floor. The door opened up and in walked Linda Stone, with her arms flying around like a windmill. She has been running around the church to cool down. She was born without sweat glands. I could hear the words of this precious little girl. *"I know I am going to die, but I am not afraid because I will be with Jesus."* The words absent from the body, present with the Lord came to mind, along with peace. I now know what extreme pain with peace was like. I thank God for that little girl's testimony and for bringing it to my mind - God is LOVE. We did not need a needle, we had GOD!

On Tuesday the 18th, our good friends and neighbors, Glen and Helen Barnhart took us to the funeral home to make arrangements for Rick's funeral. Praise the Lord, we did not have to figure out what to do, as Rick had already told me. GOD IS LOVE.

Rick's funeral was Thursday, March 20th. I kissed my boy good night knowing he was with his savior. Part of the healing process is crying. He washed my eyes with tears is so true. Tears would come at different times in public and private. At the grocery store (Rick loved to eat), at the church business meeting, where I was treasurer. I was reading the report when I came to the money that came in on the memorial for Rick. I broke down crying in front of the whole church. I kind of felt bad for Pastor Walter.

It was decided that Richard Sr. would paint a picture of Equinunk Falls for the baptistery. The falls are on property that once belonged to Richard's grandfather's family. It was a place we would go camping.

Richard and I had a Monday (his day off) to drive down to the falls to get pictures of the falls. When we got up to grandpa's it was raining cats and dogs. This was in April. I don't know why we felt it had to be this day. Thinking about it now from a human stand-point we could have gone on another day. But God had His plan. We got in the car and started to drive to Hancock and then into Equinunk. It rained all the way down, it was raining when we got there, raining as we got out of the car, raining as we were coming to the falls. Then the clouds rolled back, the sun came out in all of its full glory. Dick took pictures, as I sat on the rocks and the sunshine of God flooded my heart. He was saying to me "I am here and I love you." As we were walking back to the car the clouds rolled over the scene and it started to rain. I made a wifely comment "Richard, it's raining." Richard made a husbandly comment, "I know it."

Richard Junior never became a missionary. However our neighbor and Rick's friend Joy Barnhart came to us on one of her furloughs from France and told us that Rick's death had an impact on her becoming a missionary.

GOD IS LOVE.

Edith Miles

PS Linda Stone is a very precious little girl to me. If I hadn't been in such pain at the time of the unveiling of the painting, I would have wanted that to be in memory of both Rick and Linda. I am so grateful for a little child's faith the day she said those words in the nursery. I think of Linda and Rick in heaven all these years.