



## **Old Reminder**

By Bruce Mundell

**R**ose and her husband built their house shortly after they were married 87 years ago. It boasts of just one bedroom and contains barely 1000 square feet but it has protected them from storms, warmed them from the cold Appalachian winters, and captured the memories of generations. Twelve childhoods began within these walls which allowed for a training ground of family love and loyalty surpassing most I've witnessed in my lifetime. The house hugs its residents with a love that I could feel just observing this family care for their mom. Rose is now 104 years old and after the death of her husband 20 years ago; she alone absorbs all the attention invested in her 30 years of child-bearing and over 80 years of child-rearing. This has to be an amazing woman and I yearned to discover some of her secrets of family life.

This mission trip certainly started as something totally different and more than once I considered pulling the plug willing to forget the whole thing. I was often confused about what our project would be even up until I pulled into Rose's driveway and discovered the handicap ramp we had come to build already in place.

*What are we doing here Lord?* I said under my breath as we approached the house. A brief conversation with the family quickly led us to the roof and God showed me the answer to my question. I'm sure God got a kick out of watching me formulate "my plan" for this trip knowing all along it wasn't what He had in mind.

Nestled in a notch off the west side of the Blue Ridge Mountains is the town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina. The downtown area gives the familiar Appalachian setting of flat spots chiseled into the side of the mountain that leave just enough room to shoe horn a few buildings, squeeze in a couple of sidewalks, narrow streets, and a railroad before splashing down in the Toe River. The air is clean and the clear sky allows the stars to decorate the night

Charles, Rose's youngest, pointed to the Cedar tree standing beside the driveway, "I played under that tree when I was still in diapers." That was nearly 60 years ago. "We were poor, so Momma would get up, milk the cow, and walk six miles to work."

I detected a lump in his throat as he talked with admiration about his mom. I felt that lump being passed to my throat. How come this family raised in a poor home not having many extras left me feeling like I was lacking? I have heard it said that success can be as simple as "having your needs met while having the capacity to enjoy it." Certainly I witnessed a live demonstration of this concept. Sometimes I have to

admit I can't find the capacity to enjoy all the things that I have which are way above my basic needs being met. What a privilege to be reminded of important things.

The journey between the cradle and the grave is shorter than we're used to thinking. The hands that we hold as parents could soon be holding ours. Some folks spend thousands of dollars each day on therapy with little impact on their lives but here I stand in God's exam room watching a 104 year old educator with the equivalent of a PHD suggesting life changing therapy without saying a word. She let her children/pupils do the teaching. What a great God we serve.



Rose and three of her children: left to Right, Rose, Charles, Louise, & Wilma

Right now Rose is recovering from Pneumonia (yes, I said recovering) and her ever watching children witness of an obvious love instilled in them as they give her 24 hour care nursing her back to them. The sags in the roof and the humps in the floors in this old house symbolize a parallel of how determined they must have been to hold together and overcome obstacles for 87 years. When we asked them about their relationship with the Lord, they responded with, "Our faith in the Lord has brought us through many a hard times."

Oh, I could boast about how God allowed this team of three ladies and me to complete this roof in just over three days. I could tell of how He provided a new material that none of us were aware of prior to this trip and supplied the finances needed at just the right time to purchase it. I will even praise Him for dropping breadcrumbs of hope so many times when I was tempted to turn and run.



Names: Rose Silvers in bed

left to right: Linda DeMaris, Katie Smilie, Bruce Mundell, Charolai Brown, Rose's daughters Louise, Bessy

These things were all true and certainly significant but the thing that will remain imbedded in my heart for the rest of my life is watching 60, 70 and 80 year old children caring for their mother. Feeling the love for her just flowing out of them and hearing them say "We could never repay our momma for what she has done for us." These are the things that will squeeze a tear out of a dry eye. This is the trophy that will take an honored spot in my trophy case. Always to remind me of the many valuable lessons I have learned while serving God.