

## **A TRIBUTE TO CLINE PADEN**

The following tribute to Cline Paden was written by the undersigned on January 7th, '03 after having received a letter of thanks from Cline. He said he had singled out a number of persons to thank who had touched his life in a positive way, and that I was one of these. I loved Cline dearly, and had received so much help and encouragement from him, that I felt really embarrassed not to have written him such a letter. Now that he has gone from this life, I would like to share some of my thoughts about a truly great spiritual leader who has been an outstanding conduit through which the Lord has worked for the good of the world.

Dear Cline,

To say that I was bowled over by your letter is an understatement. To say I will always save it as an example of grace, is also an understatement. That I have been made to feel warm all over by the very thought that I might have been in some way a positive influence in your life, is very true. That I am the one that should have written such a letter to you makes me feel sad.

When I think about being sad, I am sad that I was not mature enough to have benefited much more than I did from the time that we were working together in Italy. But, I did learn enough from you to place you at the very top of my list of people that I admire. In my mind I can still hear your voice and see the scenes that I was visiting for the first time on our trip (winter of 1950-51) to Calabria. I remember people that we met along the way in Catena di Maglia, in Petilia Policastro, and in Catanzaro. I remember being served orange juice in the hotel where we spent the night in Catanzaro and telling the waiter I wanted orange juice, not tomato juice (some Sicilian oranges are called "bloody" oranges and their juice looks like tomato juice). I remember our being on a desolate road late at night and coming on branches that had been placed on the road to stop us, and how relieved we were when we were able to drive around them. I remember the games we played with license plates, and road signs. I am thankful that I was able to return to all of those places, and have something to do with churches still being in some of them. I miss Salvatore and Maria Puliga and so many others that we worked with who have gone on to be with the Lord.

Just in the last few days I was discussing the Paden family with a friend, remarking about the influence it has had on the church and the world. I said that someone should write a book on that family. I am happy to have known all of the children and their parents, but my life has intertwined in a very particular way with you, Harold and Gerald. I was telling my friend that Cline is a prophet, a visionary, the creative one; Harold is a poet and lover, and Gerald is a scholar/theologian.

I will not try to list here the contributions that you have made, but I believe there are monuments to your faith and to the hard work accomplished through you that will remain long after we are no longer here. In so many locations and causes God has placed you as the man for the time. Without doubt your initiative in developing what is now a world-wide training program for evangelists and other workers in the church, has given a model that has been duplicated by others an unknown number of times and will continue to reverberate through times to come.

So here at my computer on the Harding campus, late in the evening of this day, I am thanking you for counting me as a "favored" one, and thereby encouraging me to continue my road to wherever it may lead in this world. I am also thankful to Jo for the meals shared, and that when I used her best pan to feed my dog Jerry she was patient with me. I appreciate the unity of the two of you which helped me understand what a marriage should be like. I love you both with the love of the Lord, and I pray for your health and happiness in the context of your family. I pray you will always be surrounded by people that will appreciate what the Lord has done through you, and realize that He is ready to do more. Let people everywhere realize that you are an old shoe that has been seasoned and made fit through wear, and may they encourage you to stretch yourself into the future not stopping until you drop!

I am late (all'Italiano) responding to your letter. We have been in Texas, celebrating our 50th with our children and grandchildren who have all been with us. We are trying to get ready to go back to Italy for our usual spring stay. Pray for us. Frankie sends her love.

Carlo