

*John McKendree Springer*

**BISHOP of AFRICA**

by

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## PREFACE

It has been a great honor and responsibility to seek information about the Springer families, both the father, Henry M. Springer, a pioneer preacher in Hamlin and Coddington and Clark Counties, and especially his son, John McKendree Springer, who became the first Bishop from South Dakota and Bishop of all Methodist work on the continent of Africa.

I am indeed grateful to all who collaborated by giving of their time and service to go with me as I traveled over the north eastern part of the state, to have interviews with neighbors and friends of the two great men mentioned. On these trips I searched old church records at Watertown, Hazel, Henry, Clark and some closed abandoned churches; even cemeteries and old deeds of lands that had been used by Henry M. Springer. Some of that property is still in use by the South Dakota Conference, like the Kampeska farm of 165 acres bequeathed to the Jenkins Methodist Home. Others who contributed to my source of knowledge were many friends, neighbors, relatives, east, west, north and south, in the United States. To authenticate such knowledge I searched through the old newspapers in the Watertown Public Opinion vault, the church history of Brookings Methodist Church for a xerox copy of a valuable letter, the Clark Methodist Church which gave copies of anniversary programs. The United Methodist Missions Board Library, Riverside, New York produced another xerox letter from John Springer. Much data was gathered from court houses in Coddington, Hamlin and Clark Counties. Last but not least I am indebted to Helen Everett Springer for the books written by her husband, Bishop John Springer: "Pioneering in the Congo", "The Heart of Central Africa", "Christian Conquests in the Congo" and "I Love the Trail", besides the two books his wife, Helen Chapman Springer wrote: "Snapshots from Sunny Africa" and "Campfires in Africa".

Upon recommendation of the South Dakota Commission on Archives and History the church at Hazel has been officially recognized as a Methodist Historical Site because it was the boyhood church home of Bishop Springer. In 1976 at a well attended ceremony the official marker was placed upon the church building by Dr. Matthew D. Smith, archivist of the commission.

Last year Helen Everett Springer wrote for me in long hand a summary of her life as a Missionary Nurse, and the last years of John Springer's life. For this story never published before, I am deeply indebted. Regardless of what book or books may be printed about Bishop Springer from the vast sources that are waiting at the Headquarters of the Commission on Archives and History at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, I am indeed satisfied that this is the first real research work from this state. It was done the hard way by an inexperienced person who used a 1958 two-door Ford car traveling through severe heat of the summer, miles and miles, often making double work as I did not know the territory very well. I commend to you the scores of people who helped; they are as much a part of this preface as I. Thank you, all.

(Mrs.) Grace D. Whiteside

## BISHOP JOHN MCKENDREE SPRINGER

### Introduction

Africa is the continent of the future. Thirty new nations have come into existence there within the last three decades. Its people are in ferment. Constant change is the order of the day. What developments the next few years will witness no one knows.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the world was startled by reports of the discoveries of David Livingstone who had gone as a missionary into the heart of the dark continent. Interest increased when contact with Livingstone was lost. Henry Stanley set out to find him. How the two men met, how Livingstone refused to return to civilization and finally died while on his knees in prayer for Africa is one of the most dramatic stories of Christian missions.

It was inevitable that William Taylor, "Methodist Evangelist with the Seven League Boots" should visit Africa. This he did for the first time in 1866. His work there became so well known among Methodists in the United States that the General Conference in 1884 appointed him Bishop of Africa.

Many Methodist leaders criticized his methods but they approved of his strategy in seeking to establish a chain of mission stations across central Africa. He sought to develop self-supporting stations in Angola, the Congo and Rhodesia. The effort proved unsuccessful but led to later developments.

Umtali in Rhodesia was one location where Bishop Taylor had opened work. When a railroad was built through the area it missed Umtali by ten miles, so the city was moved to a new location and old Umtali was largely abandoned. Cecil Rhodes the great diamond magnate and industrial king of Africa was the principal owner of the abandoned site. He turned over Old Umtali with 13,000 acres of land to the Methodist Mission. The gift was worth at least \$100,000. Joseph C. Hartzell, who at that time had become Bishop of Africa envisioned creation of an agricultural and industrial center for training Africans. Old Umtali became Methodism's largest mission station.

One of South Dakota's great contributions to Africa entered the work at this time. John M. Springer was a South Dakota boy. He grew up on a farm near Hazel and thus received experience on a pioneer homestead which taught him how to cope with the problems of the mission frontier.

Springer volunteered for missionary service while a student at Northwestern University and upon graduation from the Evanston Biblical Institute in 1901 he was immediately sent to Rhodesia and took charge of the Umtali Industrial Mission. Soon Bible translation, schools, an orphanage and an experimental farm were under way.

In 1907 the Rev. and Mrs. Springer traveled north from Rhodesia and explored the Southern Congo and saw the imperative need for Methodist missions in that area. Chiefly at his urging work was begun there in 1911. They headquartered for a time in Angola but later transferred to Kambove in the Congo. Recognizing the importance of Elizabethville Springer, now a superintendent opened work there in 1917. He was appointed Bishop of Africa by the General Conference of 1936.

No biography of Bishop Springer has ever been published. The following summary of his life has been a labor of love and admiration for a great leader of Christian endeavors in the dark continent and should aid in giving a better understanding of the work which the Methodist Church has carried on there.

Helen Emily Chapman Rasmussen married Bishop Springer in 1905. She was his faithful, inspiring, resourceful companion in his African labors for over forty years. Worn out by the great labor she had carried on under pioneer conditions, she was laid to rest in the Belgian Congo on August 23, 1949, greatly beloved by all who knew her.

It was Bishop Springer's expressed desire to spend his last years in Africa among the people with whom he had cast his lot. He was married in 1956 to Helen Everett, a fellow missionary who had known him for many years. But in 1960-61 came the terrible uprisings in the Katanga so it was decided to return to the United States. They established their home at the Penney Farms in Florida in August, 1963. He died on December 2 having passed the 90th milestone of a long, most fruitful life in the service of his Master, pioneering for the Kingdom in Africa.

Matthew D. Smith

BISHOP JOHN MCKENDREE SPRINGER

by

Mrs. Grace Whiteside

John Springer was born September 7, 1873 at Cataract, Wisconsin. With his parents he moved to Illinois in 1874 where his father joined the Rock River Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. John made his decision to become a Christian and joined the church in 1882. In 1883 the family left Illinois, entrained at Aurora to join the immigrants bound for the Dakotas. In May 1883 they took up a homestead near Hazel, South Dakota.

On January 2, 1886 his grandmother, Martha Scarrett Worth Springer, was taken suddenly ill and died that day. Thru the years she had prayed very earnestly for Africa, asking the Lord to call one of her sons as a missionary to that country. The last person she talked to before her death was grandson John about Christian work. No doubt she mentioned Africa to him. Two or three years later while he was cultivating the fields at Kampeska he found a leaf from a hymn book, and discovered on it the hymn "Rescue the Perishing". For a short time this made a deep impression on him. During the harvet time that year the pastor of Willow Lake Circuit, Rev. Timothy Donohue was appointed to China by the Mission Board of the Methodist Church. During his farewell visit to Rev. Springer's house he told about China and its spiritual needs with a background of superstition and poverty. With a full heart John couldn't stand to hear anymore, so slipped out under full harvest moon and stood near the farm Header. While there he made this prayer, "However far I may wander from Thee, O God, bring me to Thyself and send me out to those who need me so much".

Both the message of the hymn and the prayer were forgotten for a time. On his 16th birthday he left the farm determined to work his way thru the Agricultural College in Brookings, South Dakota. It was not his plan to prepare for the ministry or mission field, but rather study to be a lawyer, where he felt he could not only help make good laws but aid people to obey them. One reason he did not want to enter the ministry was the "unsettled existence" as he expressed it. He felt he wanted a settled home. After spending two years at Brookings he entered the Northwestern University Academy in Evanston, Illinois.

In 1893 he was fighting a call to the ministry. As though in answer to objections for the "settled life" of the ministry, he had brought home to him the words "He had not where to lay his head", and the thought came, "Who am I to insist on a settled comfortable home on earth?"

Sometime that fall Rev. John McNeil, noted evangelist from Scotland, was assisting Dwight L. Moody to hold meetings in Evanston, Illinois. Learning of this John knelt in prayer before leaving his room one evening to listen to an address by Rev. McNeil, and said to God that in some way he wanted a definite indication that God wanted him for His work. His prayer was answered

that night convincing him he was wanted in the ministry. He hastened to announce his decision and conviction to Frank Overholt, his roommate of the year before.

John R. Mott was visiting Northwestern University about this time to interest students in attending a Convention of the "Student Volunteer Movement" to be held in Detroit, at the close of the year. John found his name among those selected to attend from the student body. The following January he signed a Declaration Card of the Movement which said: "It is my purpose, if God permits, to become a foreign missionary". During the next Holiday Season he attended a second convention of the Movement in Cleveland.

During the following seven years in Seminary and College courses, he prepared quite definitely for missionary work in China. At one time he was asked to consider the Presidency of The Anglo-Chinese College, Foochow, but arrangements were never completed. In 1899 he was graduated from Northwestern University, and in 1901 from Garrett Biblical Institute. His degree was granted in absence since he was enroute to Africa. In his formal application for missionary service he expressed his preference for China. However before completing it, he consulted S. Earl Taylor, executive secretary of the Board of Missions. Soon after this Taylor met Bishop Hartzell, who was seeking a candidate for Africa. He suggested John. As a result the Bishop invited him to New York and on January 21st he was appointed as a missionary to Inhambane, Africa.

On April 24th Springer sailed from New York with Mrs. Helen Rasmussen and Miss Harriet Johnson who were under appointment to Rhodesia. Meeting Bishop Hartzell in London, England, the appointment was changed and John was asked to report for work at Old Umtali, Africa, until the meeting of Conference. In June the Bishop reached Umtali and on November 16, 1901, John was received on trial by the Central African Mission Conference. On November 24th and 25th he was ordained Deacon and Elder under missionary rule. In January 1905 he married Mrs. Helen E. Rasmussen at Old Umtali, Rev. John White, of the English Wesleyan Mission, performing the ceremony. In April the newly weds made their first trip thru the villages visiting Mrewa M. Toto and Nyanga.

We are and should be very proud to mention John M. Springer on the Honor Roll of South Dakota bishops.

Only as one reads his books can he understand this man's greatness in performing some of the most marvelous service on record as a worker in unknown territory. His first book "The Heart of Central Africa" was written to show the mineral wealth, as well as the missionary opportunity, and was dedicated to his wife who shared with him some 8000 miles of travel over native trails across Africa in 1905.

His first reference in the book to South Dakota reads "We were now on the watershed again, crossing it the third and last time. We are also on a treeless plain, which is known as the Kifuma-gi Flats... Noon came and we had looked in vain for a tree, which would indicate water". "At length we came to a water hole about two feet deep, ample for a simple lunch. I have never before in my travels seen a country like that--it reminded me forcibly of the Dakota Prairies in the eighties. There was the same mirage effect and haze. The sun beat down

piteously and we still suffered from thirst. We found another water hole before dark but the water was so unfit we left it to our carriers who drained it eagerly. Then we caught a glimpse of trees ahead, at the sight of which our "boys" burst into singing, but found the same illusion of distance we had been familiar with in South Dakota. The trees meant water but we had to travel several weary miles to reach them. Much of the country had never been travelled by white men, and natives had never seen a white woman."

"We found places in the Slave District among the copper mines and in about every place different tribes lived where mission stations should be established and many contacts were made. We suffered many untold hardships."

After 1500 miles they reached Molango to be greeted by other friends and missionaries. After looking over the Woman's Missionary Society's work they concluded that this country, instead of "being the bloody hunting grounds of slave raiders, was destined to become one of the greatest mining centers of the world and a strategic center for evangelistic action and the radiating light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

They returned home at the end of five years service. Instead of resting they entered an active campaign for additional funds to take care of the Congo Project covering an area of 400 square miles.

The great interest in the African work shown by South Dakota Methodists is typified by the following excerpt: he writes, "We were asked to spend a Sunday at Wessington Springs to encourage the church in their missionary giving and assume full support of a missionary in South Africa. We could but tell our story as we were expected to do. Helen spoke to the Village church in the morning and I at the country appointment. Then I showed the slides of our trip that evening. After the service the pastor said 'If this church cannot take on your support, as an additional extra special, a few of us will do it individually'". And they did, for in 1910 the Conference minutes showed the benevolence giving to be the largest ever. Wessington Springs became a Tithing Church, leading Methodist churches of America and the World in proportionate giving at \$15.00 per member. In 1911 it still retained its proud position with increasing amounts of Foreign Mission giving, and continued to do so as long as the principal generous givers--Dr. Vernon Fox, Dr. I. M. Hargett and Bishop Springer lived.

The Springers returned to Africa at Furlough's end and started many stations during the next 14 years. Of course they had already started work at Old Umtali. After much work Mrs. Springer finally started a girl's school.

"Pioneering in the Congo" was the second book by Dr. Springer, giving much information about the new work established and new adventures encountered. He told of traveling in the Mucumba country, low in rations and how difficult it was for his wife to eat the "sour mush".

Dr. Springer relates a very interesting incident of their hardships and the providential way in which their needs were supplied by a diamond prospector named Mr. Young. He writes: "We had used up the very last of our flour the morning that we went to see Mr. Young, and had practically nothing else in the way of European provisions. We were concerned about the return trip, as Mrs.



Springer was nearly ill from eating sour mush, and there was no hope of getting anything at the Kassai Co. stores."

"But Mr. Young, with a rare spirit of hospitality and probably prompted by his own experience of being short on the veldt when transport facilities failed to connect him with the liberal provision cases sent him by his company, made repeated and pointed inquiries as to our supplies until he learned the situation. He then insisted on our taking one twenty-eight pound case of flour, an assortment of tinned meat, and pickles enough to take us back to Lukoshi, a true God-send to us."

Mr. Young also gave Dr. Springer one hundred dollars in cash to tide them over until they could return to headquarters at Lukoshi. Shortly afterwards they met a Belgian prospector who was ill and wanted to settle up his affairs and return home. In conversation he mentioned a bicycle he wished to sell for sixty dollars. Dr. Springer continues, "Now it happened that Mrs. Springer and I had discussed the buying of such a mono-cycle for her use for some weeks before leaving Lukoshi. We had received a price list which showed us that we could get one in England or America for fifty dollars. We had talked much about it and then had decided that by the time it was shipped out it would cost us fully three times that amount, and we could not think of it."

"When we had left Lukoshi for this trip, we had left Jim behind to wait for the mail. He had joined us after four days and among other letters was one telling us that Mrs. Fox's Sunday school class at Wessington Springs, South Dakota (the church from which our personal support came, principally from three of its members), had sent us a Christmas present of fifty dollars and had sent it early, in order that it might be in time. As this was the middle of May, we decided that it was in time all right."

"Again the subject of the mono-cycle came up."

"After he went over to his tent we talked it over and it seemed to us as we recalled the Christmas gift and the cash almost thrust upon me by Mr. Young and then this direct offer of the very sort of conveyance from the Lord and no mistake."

In regard to the work at Kanshanshi Dr. Springer related: "The most notable feature of our stay here was the inaugurating of the Fox Bible Training School, funds for building the station of which had been given us by Dr. C. Vernon Fox and wife of South Dakota. We started with but six pupils, with only the sky for a roof, logs for benches, and a very limited supply of books. But primitive as it all was, we began the next day after reaching Kansanshi, that is on July 20, 1910, and from that day this institution has been meeting and will continue to meet a great need that section of the country. It is well accepted fact that Africa must be evangelized largely by her own people. Therefore the best work of the missionary is not preaching--important though that may be and much as he loves it--but in preparing the natives to preach, to teach, and to lead their own people."

The Springer's were constantly on the move visiting work spread out over a vast territory. It was a great relief to return frequently to their headquarters. They expressed the joy of getting back to Lukoshi after a six hundred

mile trek in this way: "How beautiful our house looked as we climbed the western bank at Lukoshi and it came into view! Not even Windsor Castle could compare in our eyes with this crude mud and pole structure with its leaky grass-thatched roof, for it was our HOME. And after two months of living in a small, hot tent, it was a treat to be in a bedroom once more and to sleep on a real bed, even though that bed were made of poles and the mattress of lumpy grass."

"The week after Mr. and Mrs. Pipers left Kambove on their furlough a night school was opened in the little Truax Chapel near the railroad. Over 200 enrolled the first month." "On June 27th Rev. and Mrs. Roger S. Guptill from New Hampshire came well prepared to take charge of the night school and the Fox Training School. The European War had reached Kambove and our missionary activities were somewhat restricted as hundreds of natives were going with the expedition and others going home, but the Training School was benefited, as these events did not seem to interfere with the growth of the school."

Somewhere along the way a house was built for the Springers, known as the Fox Villa, with an office, guest house and Kambove Mother's House. On January 2nd, our tenth wedding anniversary, Bishop Hartzell organized the Congo Mission, setting this field off from the West Central Africa Mission Conference.

It was a great event in the work of the infant church when a printing press was acquired. This was the first step in the formation of a large publishing house which flourishes in Africa today. The initial gift for the start of the Congo Mission Press came from Detroit and was given by the Rev. Arthur Wesley, a distant relative of John Wesley. An Uncle of Dr. Springer, the Rev. I. E. Springer of the Rock River Conference, added to the gift and also packed the printing press for shipment to Africa.

As they drove the last nail into the packing case their uncle proposed that they consecrate it by asking God's blessing on the enterprise.

So amid the packing litter in the church basement they prayed that this press would grow into a great publishing house for useful service in the Kingdom in Central Africa. It was set to work in 1915 by Mr. Guptill and John 3:16 was the first impression. From that beginning materials were prepared for classrooms, a Launda language hymn book, and later two Primers, Bible stories and parts of "Pilgrim's Progress".

The third book "Christian Conquests in the Congo" by Bishop Springer was dedicated to the memory of David Livingston. It was published in 1927 with an introduction by Frank Mason North, secretary of Missions in Africa. It gives a review of the past and opens wide vistas toward the future. Seldom is a missionary pioneer permitted to clear the land, sow the seed and view the harvest to appraise the ripening fields. Dr. Springer made a comparison with the beginning of the work in Rhodesia. "In 1901, when sent to Old Umtali there were only the buildings left by Cecil Rhodes. Not a single Christian in our territory. In 1926 nearly 200 native pastors, teachers, and 6000 members or probationers, besides thousands of adherents. Then think of the hundreds of little missions and hundreds of young churches. What brought this about? Not mere man with a human program. These transformations came about by the releasing of God's power."

In 1908 when the Springers were crossing Africa to the West Coast he told about going thru the cannibal country and meeting "kabongo" the most degraded chief he had ever seen. "He had a harem of 200 women. It was a gruesome and ghastly sight--a constant stream of girls pouring in and debauched women going out. We never had seen such crowds of children which swarmed around us like flies. They raced all around us, even in front of our bicycles. We remembered the words of the Master "Suffer the little children to come unto Me." "During the three weeks at the Kabongo, we got a house well started for the Worker who was to come later. Progress was so slow that at times missionaries were discouraged. However on the second visit four years later I was astonished at the advance made. The children came out to meet us singing Christian hymns. There was a large church congregation, a young people's group, and Mr. Gupstill who had opened four more outstations".

Dr. Springer spoke of his wife's main achievement when first appointed to Old Umtali in 1901--mastery of the Chikaranga language and preparation of a 700 word vocabulary and grammar. With this equipment she began to visit the people, travel the jungle trails, cross rivers and mountains and lived for weeks in the Kraal of King of the Mktass's daughter. Her ministry to the King while he was ill won his friendship. Here she found a girl who couldn't be sold or married because she had cut her upper teeth first. Helen finally won this girl--one of the first in the School.

The medical work's beginning for the Women's Foreign Missionary Society was started by Ona Parmenter from the Clark, South Dakota church when the Bishop's father was pastor there. He was indeed pleased to have this missionary nurse at Mutumbara. She arrived at her station in 1921. While she struggled with the language she began her ministry of healing. No place was prepared for her so out of odds and ends she fashioned a rude dispensary with soap box containers for medical supplies. Increasingly larger numbers of sick came for treatment--School people first, then those from the surrounding kraals. When she left on furlough a small neat brick dispensary was there and a book in the native language on first-aid and care of the sick. When she returned she was sent to the Wyndira Medical work, but her rejoicing was short-lived for the physician appointed by the Board soon left the field and Ona carried on alone. She opened a pioneer nurses training school instructing some of the best girls from Old Umtali. A unique feature of this institution was a group of huts in place of large wards. The school girls were housed in small brick dormitories.

Bible Training Schools, fashioned after the first Fox School were started in many other places. That, with the rapidly shifting industrial conditions, development of rail and motor roads and the growth of commercial and mining centers, had made possible great advances in "our work"!

In 1926-1928 the Springers were returned to America and detained two years. Other missionaries had been withdrawn, and returned, because of the financial situation.

However, the General Conference of 1928 decided to return the Springers to Africa. They sailed from England, arriving at Capetown July 9, 1928. Awaiting them was a message from Bishop Johnson appointing Dr. Springer as the District Superintendent of the Jadortville District, also asking him to hold the Annual Conference at Kanene. They left immediately traveling the old route of 1917 now with ease and comfort, most of the way in a car loaned them for the trip.

At Kanene Springer was elected a delegate to the General Conference of Congo Protestant Council to be held in Kinshasha, later named Leopoldville. On the return trip they drove past the Island of Kimpoko, the station where Helen and William Rasmussen, her first husband, were stationed in 1894.

The General Conference of the Congo Protestant Council was a Jubilee meeting, celebrating sixty years since the first missionaries started work in Africa. While there Dr. Springer bought a car and drove home on the return, the first car driven all the way from Leopoldville to Jadortville, a fifteen hundred mile journey.

At the new appointment the Springers found a well equipped parsonage but confronting them was the need for a church. The church members helped with building, even to making and laying the bricks. When the new "Y" shaped edifice was finished it seated five hundred people. They formed training classes, Church School, Women's organizations, using people from the mines as teachers. One fine couple helped through the seven years they were there. The mining engineer was a Methodist minister's son, and a local preacher. His wife was a Methodist minister's daughter, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In addition, there were some two-hundred white Evangelicals, not including the Greek Orthodox, who, in the absence of their priest, used Dr. Springer for ecclesiastical matters; baptisms, weddings, funerals. The Springers cooperated with the Dutch Reformed of Africa also. They held English services Sunday evenings and in French for the Anglicans, as time permitted.

During the depression no employment was available for the majority of people, white or black. The last months at Jadortville little mining was done. Every two weeks a train left for the coast packed to the last seat with white people. Almost daily trainloads of nationals left for the north, taking people back to their villages. Tithes and offerings dropped rapidly. Special gifts from America were few, every available source of income was carefully scrutinized. It became necessary for Dr. Springer to tell the sixty nationals that he could not give them "Posho" (pay) at the end of the month. He encouraged them to seek employment elsewhere. Not a man left; they were loyal until the end.

Finally the Springers gave their last months salary to send Christian workers to Kanene for extra training. All others were dismissed. Then the woman came to life in Helen and she asked: "What shall I do for new clothes when we go to America?" A few days later the answer came in an unexpected way. Helen had the Baptist minister's wife over for a sort of welcome back from furlough. During the conversation Mrs. Schultz casually asked if Helen could use a good dress she had, not new, but one that would fit her. Helen replied in the affirmative. That evening this Baptist woman, who had replenished her wardrobe while in America, brought two suitcases full of clothing from which Helen found five complete outfits including shoes. Later found in Helen's diary were these words, "The Lord is providing for us in ways as he did for Elijah."

The Springers left for a delayed furlough after serving seven years on the Jadortville District. Many people along the roads greeted them and cheered them on their way. After reaching America they filled engagements and attended several meetings before time for the General Conference of 1936 which met at Columbus, Ohio.

The Conference faced the problem of electing another Bishop. Bishop Johnson had reached the retirement years. It was decided to elect a Missionary Bishop.

for Africa on a separate ballot. Five names were presented. John Springer's name was one of the five. Helen had said, "If such should come, we will put the case in the Lord's hands."

The third ballot gave Springer four hundred eleven votes, a clear majority and he was elected. He and Mrs. Springer were both called to the platform amid a swelling applause. This was the first time in history that a Bishop and his wife were both escorted at the same time to the platform; also she was the first to be kissed by her husband before being seated. Bishop Springer said, "I felt that in placing in me the confidence of my leadership and administration which the church had done was due largely to my wife Helen; I wanted the public to realize the act of kissing was my thank you." The applause swelled to a roar of welcome and congratulations.

There were several engagements and meetings before August 1, 1936 when Bishop and Helen Springer and Maurice Parsons sailed for Africa. The Springers declared it their happiest departure they ever had. There was not a note of sadness, nor a tear, not even with Maurice Parsons whose parents, his brother and fiancée had driven almost three thousand miles to say farewell. The Board of Missions provided Parsons for the Bishop's secretary-chauffeur.

Their route took them by Germany, where they boarded the ship Adolph Woemann. On August 18th at Antwerp they were joined by Dr. Newell S. Booth, his wife and three children. They all traveled together, separating at Luzanda, Africa. The Booths continued to Lobita Bay, from where they drove over land with car and trailer. The Springers' freight was promptly delivered and with the car they had a long day's drive to Quessua.

The first Annual Conference opened September 18th. The Bishop conducted the sessions in the usual Methodist style; first the Communion, followed by organization for business. Assisting with the Communion service was John Webba, an ordained Elder who forty years before had been their "cook-boy". They hadn't seen his wife, Sala Webba, in twenty-nine years. She reported having four sons in the Christian ministry. First in line to be ordained Elder was Cecilia Cross, a missionary nurse from North Dakota. As they drove away from Quessua, Maurice Parsons said, "I doubt if you find in other Conferences a crowd to match that group for character and ability."

October 8th they arrived on schedule at Lubondai, to talk with friends in America. Arrangements had been made three months before. Dr. Brashares (later Bishop) said, "If Africa is as near as your voice, Heaven cannot be far away."

The Southern Congo Conference was held at Kapanga. They traveled through rain, heavy wind storms, over roads almost impassable, Helen suffered part of the time from fever and chills, passed through five big towns (most of them were mission stations) to reach East Portuguese Africa.

After that Conference they continued on to Rhodesia for a Conference at Old Umtali. Following that they traveled to Angola for two Conferences. By then all had decided their new Bishop was qualified for the position. They encountered many they had worked with, standing true to the Christian faith.

The Conference at Cape Mount in the western part of Liberia was set for January 27, 1937. The Treasurer of the Republic of Liberia sent his motor launch that took them a hundred miles on the journey to Monrovia going inland

until they reached Cape Mount. After that Conference boats were used. There was no harbor; they anchored out in the ocean, going ashore in canoes. Waves rolled over the sides of the canoes. All they had was water soaked, even the Bible and hymn books. They landed at ten o'clock at night.

Before leaving Liberia they visited Dr. and Mrs. Harley's mission station and leper colony. Carriers were sent to take them through the dense jungle to Ganta. The small men could not have carried the men three days without becoming exhausted, so the Bishop and Rev. Parsons walked up and down hills in the tropical heat. All felt richly rewarded with first hand information by the courageous couple. Mrs. Harvey, a petite woman, was responsible for much of the heavy work of the clinics, giving Dr. Harvey more time for the building program. The Springers were amazed at the Leper Colony, especially the care and attention given individuals.

Upon leaving Ganta, the Harveys provided eighteen men to carry each hammock making the journey by stages. The carriers worked as a team often exchanging loads. One time they were held up for a half mile by a "Devil-Bush" camp that blocked the road a half mile. There are many secret societies known as "Apartheid" meaning "Apart-Hate". This is part of the government system that has overrun Liberia and all the west coast. They are jealous and want no interference with their affairs.

The First Church of Monrovia called the "Mother Church" were delighted to have their new Bishop and gave them a reception. To Helen they gave a long strand of beautiful ivory beads. The Bishop received a gavel, the head of ivory and the handle of ebony.

Next homeward bound to southern ports as in 1901. Their residence was placed at Umtali, but a suitable house was not available. An invitation was extended from Old Umtali (ten miles between places) and they secured for them a home of two missionaries on furlough. They were comfortable and beautifully situated for a year.

The Bishop held four Conferences across Central Africa in 1937-1938. This involved 10,000 miles of travel each year. The women depended upon visits with Helen. To them she was like a breath of fresh air in helping renew their spiritual powers. Helen enjoyed talking with them, besides sitting on the side near the front of the churches to watch faces of Christian Africans that pictured joy, peace and transformed souls.

The last of 1938 time came to leave for the United States for attendance at the Uniting Conference that met at Kansas City, Missouri. Enroute Bishop Springer held Annual Conference in Liberia. At Monrovia Dr. Engrem, President of West Africa College for fifteen years, contacted Springer, to inform him that he needed to be released to serve as director of Education for the government. He brought a problem of paramount interest that required quick action. The man selected for the Presidency had developed high blood pressure and was not physically able to take the work as college president. It was time for school to start and they needed someone immediately. The College of West Africa had developed a prestige as the cultural center of Monrovia. The Bishop faced a human need for action.

It was decided to ask Rev. Maurice Parsons to assume the position as acting president of the work. When approached, Parsons said, "I could see that was moving my way." He took the position, leaving the Bishop without a secretary or driver. At the end of the school year Rev. Parsons went to the United States, married, returned and was president of the college three years, then entered the Christian ministry as a missionary preacher in Africa.

The Uniting Conference met at Kansas City, Missouri January 4, 1939. The morning sessions moved rapidly with business, votings pro and con; the day closed with the beautiful Hallelujah Chorus. Days were spent attending meetings and filling engagements until the great day finally came when Bishop Hughes gave a stirring address on "The Methodists are One People". This was confirmed by two other Bishops, one from each of the other two churches, Bishop John J. Moore and Bishop Straugh, making the announcement of the unification. With tears of rejoicing the great company of ten thousand people took their departure.

After Bishop and Mrs. Springer left Kansas City, Missouri from attending the Uniting Conference of the three great Methodist Churches, they went by way of Copenhagen, Denmark to attend the Methodist European Conference at which twenty-one countries were involved. Both the Springers had part in the programs. When they left for Africa they went across Germany, observing preparations for war. Some said it would not come soon, but Helen was relieved when they were south of the Bay of Biscay. Upon arrival at Lobito they took the quickest mode of travel to Angola for the Annual Conference. While it was in session news came that war had been declared. They went to Wembo Nyma and joined the festivities for the Unification of the Uniting Methodist Church in Africa.

The life of Bishop Springer, his methods of service, new areas of responsibilities were indeed different from the early years when they treked by foot, hammock, mules or bicycles to reach their self made destination. In 1939 they were in Central Africa only long enough to hold the Annual Conferences. Then they were called out to attend the General Conference back in America at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Aside from taking part in the sessions and discussion groups there were committee meetings, Council of Bishops, with others helping to gear into the total program of service, all making a busy, exhausting life.

Upon hurrying back to Africa, they discovered the war was on their door steps. It was impossible to hold conferences in Liberia from 1940-1942. The Bishop called upon the assistance of a brother pastor, a veteran minister from the British East Indies, to hold conferences for him. He became known and was called by the Africans "The Bishop's 'Eye'".

The Conference Area Office was located at Elizabethville for the second Episcopal Term. This was like going home as this was where Bishop and Helen Springer lived five years when Springer was District Superintendent. He had used Helen's plans to build the "manse" in 1917-1918. It was with joy that they returned to their former surroundings. The first Conference was held at Elizabethville where arrangements had been made by the Africans. The chairperson was none other than Josiah Chindzwa, whose grandfather, King Mtswa, Helen had treated in 1902, even staying in a tent near him for several days. The following year Josiah became a Christian and he continued advancement in Christian work. Later he was sent by the Bishop to represent the World Council of Churches in 1948 at Amsterdam, Holland.

When the writer was doing research on Bishop Springer, a man asked if any

of the Africans he contacted when he first started Missionary work entered Christian work. This last time round with the Springers I have endeavored to show how seeds sown did reap a harvest.

The second Conference was in Sandoa, Southern Congo (now Zaire). In the ordination class for Elder's Orders was Silas Mwele. They had known him over twenty years. There were other Christian men in government affairs. One Chief Mbako asked for the translation of the Bible in his tribe's language. They had only the New Testament that had been translated by the Bishop's second secretary, Rev. Howard T. Brinkon. Tshoma, a speaker at the Conference, was an outstanding merchant prince; three of his sons joined the business after graduating from the Congo Institute. Another son became a physician in the colony of Leopoldville. He wanted to become a surgeon and his father made arrangements for him to attend a medical school in Belgium. The oldest son, Kapenda, was lay leader of the Conference many years. The last speaker of the Sandoa Conference was Kayeke, known as the "Father of the Congo Mission". He had his home and lived just off the Mission compound, but worked and prayed twelve years without pay for the progress of the school.

From Helen's notes I quote: "The next Conference was Central Congo among the Otatale founded by Bishop Lumbuth of the Church South in 1914. It was the same year that Dr. and Mrs. Piper had settled at Kapango. These two mission stations were so close together they were often called "twin cities", one at Wembo Nyama, the other Mtwata Yamvo of the Congo (Zaire).

For the fourth Conference the Bishop and party drove 318 miles, a hard day of twelve hours, to reach South East Conference at Kambini. This group was an ethnical, cultural, Sheetama tribe. Much of the sessions conducted in Sheetams language had to be translated to the Bishop. One hymn they enjoyed singing was "Our God is Marching On". They all sang quite lustily even if off key, making up for it in volume.

Leaving Kambini, they traveled to the Teles Country to accept an invitation from the leper colony. These people always looked forward to having others visit them, especially the head of the church, and they went to great length to make ready for the reception, not only as to the cleanliness of the surroundings, but in using all available means to beautify the buildings. Even the roads had arches of flowers over them a quarter of a mile away. These lepers with their crippled, swollen, sore hands made the arches, doing labor that must have caused many a groan of pain, as they remembered a man who had worked for their salvation. In fact one leper said "I'm glad I am a leper; if I hadn't been I would never have known about Jesus." When the Bishop left they gave as their parting gift a mahogany cross, hand made and well sterilized.

The Bishop and Helen took a plane from Beira, about sixty miles south. They passed over the port of Sofala, formerly that of Ophir, from whence King Solomon of Bible times secured gold, besides ostriches, zebras and other animals. There are still gold deposits and many are worked today.

On the return trip to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) Helen stopped a few days at Mutambara. The next Sunday they were in the city of Umtali for the Fifth Conference. Forty-three years before Springer started his missionary work and attended the first service in the chapel held in the Methodist Episcopal Church.



Now they attended the morning service held under the national pastor, Titus Marange, with a church audience that packed the house.

During the Conference the Bishop confirmed seven into membership of the Conference and ordained them Deacons of the Church. The Conference closed the following Sunday. David Mandisodza sang the hymn "Jesus is the Son of God" that Helen had written in 1902. David was the first African ordained in 1921 in Umtali Conference. The Springers loved this place. Bishop started his ministry there, they were married there in 1905 and it was there Bishop Springer entered the ministry under active appointment.

Dr. Newell Booth was elected Bishop June 12, 1944 and assigned to the Elizabethville Area. He wired Bishop Springer to continue service until his arrival. It was found quite difficult to secure passage owing to war transportation. The Springers had to continue service until September of 1945.

Elizabethville was the focal point for travel of the military men. Three hundred engineers were sent to build a base, with them another 3,000 army men. Helen acted as hostess on many occasions. She wrote letters for home sick soldiers, not privileged to write mothers, giving details of whereabouts. Helen did this as an Ecumenical service. Bishop Springer acted as a volunteer chaplain, visiting men, and he held church services each Sunday. They were host and hostess to the "African Provisional Conference", a delegated body, that corresponds to our Jurisdiction meetings.

They realized this was the last opportunity they could make use of the "Manse" that Bishop Springer had built in 1917-1918. They filled the range of contacts with hospitality to missionaries of all beliefs. Elizabethville was a regular converging point of travel.

They had tried to make arrangements for travel to America, but their friends urged them to remain in Africa. Why not, when the need was so great in the Southern Congo Conference and because of the reduced number of missionaries. Bishop Springer bought an incomplete building on Prospect Hill, called Springer Institute, at Mulungwishi, later the name was changed to Congo Institute.

When Bishop Booth arrived Springer was ready to move as a retired Bishop on a supply basis for missionary stations. When they moved they found more work on the house than anticipated. The house was far from being finished. The lower floor was for the "Livingstone Library", the second floor they finished mostly for guests and the third floor was their apartment.

Soon after they moved Bishop Booth held his first Annual Conference at Umtali. The Springers had eight Conference guests. At the close of the sessions for Conference, Bishop Booth dedicated the house where the Springers lived. They always lived by the highway, where a stream of humanity passed. Many stopped to enjoy their hospitality, including Marjorie Fuller and Lula Tubbs, two with whom they worked at Mutambara. Others included Bishop and Mrs. Earl Ledden from New Jersey, Bishop and Mrs. Brooks of New Orleans, Louisiana, Secretary and Mrs. Eugene Smith from the Board of Missions of New York and Professor and Mrs. Elmer Leslie of Boston, Massachusetts, who spent two weeks lecturing at Mulungwishi in the Congo Institute. One day a family they greatly admired, the Lalloo family

from Jadortville, arrived in a motor truck; the father, mother, uncle, brother, wife and three children. They brought along their lunch. At noon all went down by the river for a picnic. Back in Jadortville the father was a shoe maker. Daya was but fourteen years of age when they first became acquainted. He learned to drive and often went with Dr. Springer on his rounds as District Superintendent. They all became very fond of each other. Daya became a Christian and worked up in one of the large companies until he earned a substantial salary.

All the way, even when Helen's strength began to fail she enjoyed company. During her last month she was not ill, but didn't have the urge to go on work with her husband as he continued doing supply work, yet would not ask that he remain at home. When the Bishop returned from a trip, she was always so glad to see him and tell him how much she missed him while he was away, then exclaim: "I'm glad, I'm glad I am here." Having pioneered in three of the toughest sections of Africa, she had come to love the very soil of the country. She had flowers of all kinds and color around the house. Her cook and manager, called Gibson, she had taken him twenty years before and trained. He could carry on without supervision. Finally she was beyond taking active part in the work of the station.

The Annual Conference for 1949 was held at Mulungwishi. Bishop and Mrs. Booth and three others were their guests. One day she insisted that she be permitted to attend the Conference sessions. Many hands of her "boys" of other years came and took her to church. After Conference her strength seemed to ebb more quickly. Mrs. Booth stayed with her much of the time. She told Bishop Booth "I want to go home". Then one day she asked "Do we go home today?" She had no pain, only slowing down, a steady decline of strength. She went into a coma three days, rallied, took a little nourishment and talked awhile, then with a smile passed away August 23, 1949, past 81 years of age. This brilliant woman who gave her life, not a part of it, but the whole of it to her Lord to use at the age of sixteen years, never took it back, but when twenty-two years she was on her way to Africa as a missionary. Helen Chapman Springer was so beloved by all who came in contact with her and in consideration of years of missionary service in the Belgian Congo, "La Medailla Commemorative" was bestowed upon her by the Belgian Government in May of 1949 before she passed away.

Helen wrote "Snapshots from Sunny Africa" for Junior Heralds of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society and 30,000 copies were sold nine years later when the cycle came around to study Africa again. This same book was used for the children's work. Helen wrote "Campfires in the Congo", another book for the children. She translated several African languages for the people so they could read and write. She translated Bible stories and portions of the scripture. She wrote many hymns that were put to music besides others in poetry form. This beloved "mom" to the African Christians passed away in the morning and when laid to rest in the evening over 500 people gathered. Missionaries and African pastors arrived from Elizabethville, Jadortville, from Kapanga, Rev. Maurice Parsons, who had been the Bishop's first secretary, now a pastor at Elizabethville, Rev. Howard Brinton, another one of the Bishop's secretaries, now a missionary pastor at Kapanga. Joab Mulela, one of the boys who was a Christian pastor, Elwood Bartlett, one of the missionaries at Mullungwishi, all took part in the service, closing with the hymn "The Battle Hymn of the Republic". As pallbearers there were six men, three African and three white missionaries, who carried the remains

the short distance from the house to the grave on top of a hill at Mulungwishi. An illustration used by Dr. Kemp, in the appraisals and tribute to Helen Springer, "We stood at two graves, each on the crest of a high hill, with a marvelous view of great distances. One grave told how Cecil Rhodes had died to extend the Empire using gun powder and ball to do it. The other grave told of the one who lived and died to extend the Kingdom, using the Bible and love, and was followed by those who loved her who had pointed the way." Her husband, companion, and Bishop said in the preface to the book, "I Love the Trail", "A number of years ago I became impressed that there should be published an account of the worthiness of her personality and contribution she made to the Kingdom." No richer tribute can be made than the above and her poem, "I Love the Trail".

I love the trail

Within the depth of the great forest  
Where the rubber vines and parasites loop up  
And down like serpents of a former age;  
Where crystal waters leap from mossy beds  
And chase each other over silvery sands and fern-trimmed rock.  
How joyous there to slake the thirst  
And eat the frugal, well earned lunch;  
I love the trail.

I love the trail

Though mile on weary mile is through tall grass  
Armed with a million spears  
And tsetse flies that thirst for blood,  
Along the narrow, twisting, crooked path,  
Each sudden turn concealing stump or stone  
To throw us from our wheels or trip our tired feet;  
And wherein lurk the elephant and ugly buffalo  
Aye, even, so, I love the trail.

I love the trail

Around our fire at close of day  
Sit squatted on their haunches nearly naked forms  
Of men and women and little children too,  
In some mean, filthy, vermin-swarmed kraal  
And hear, with mouths agape, the amazing tale  
How God so loved the world; a cleansing fount  
Where sins may disappear and there come forth  
New lives, new life and resurrection power.  
I love the trail.

The Bishop's last book was a sketch of his wife's life taken from her diaries and entitled "I Love the Trail". This was a masterpiece, written for the Woman's Society of Christian Service. Dr. Eugene L. Smith said "merely" to survive those years was an achievement which, particularly in the early days meant the physical threat of wild animals, primitive savages, deathly insects, and the psychological problems of lonesomeness, hardships and illness".

John McKendree Springer, Minister, missionary, District Superintendent of the Methodist Church, ten years battled with primitive conditions in opening of the work in the Republic of Congo, then with Helen Emily Springer he traveled across the continent from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic in 1907. In 1936

he was elected Bishop of all Methodist work in Africa, serving more than his two terms as Bishop until 1946. After that he gave fifteen years more for missionary work.

During this time Bishop Springer saw missionary work develop from its very inception to the place where the annual conferences were mainly conducted by the Africans. It was a rare opportunity for a missionary to see his harvest under the one who had sown the seed. This was so. The Bishop conducted conferences in six countries; namely, Angola, Central Congo, Southern Congo, Rhodesia, Liberia and Mozambique. This church leader was a modest man, yet all his work was done with a special simplicity, dignity and charm. He never mentioned any honors bestowed upon him, yet we know he was honored by the Belgian Congo with the medal of the "Order of the Lion" for his generous attitude of brave work among their people.

When it became necessary for the African people to change the name of the school from "Springer Institute", they simply changed "John" Springer to African and officially named the school "Kita-ba-to-ba". This signifies a huge wild fig tree which has a mighty stretch of branches bringing comfort to all within its reach.

Bishop Springer often spoke of the great influence South Dakota territory had on his life in helping shape him into what he had become. He had a praying Grandmother who put Africa on her prayer list until a member of her family answered that call. After he left home and was in school at Brookings (later Northwestern and Garrett Seminary) he said, "I like to think that grandmother realizing I was going into missionary work, must have slipped close to God's Throne and asked that her prayers for her son to go as a missionary be transferred to her grandson and that he be sent to Africa. Be that as it may, at the last minute I was sent to Africa instead of China by Bishop Hartzell in 1901."

This Grandmother Scarrett Worth Springer came with her son Henry to South Dakota in the early 80's and settled on the section line so each could live in his own home and still be on his own land. At her death in 1886 she was buried on her land and later she was moved to a cemetery near Vienna.

#### HELEN EVERETT SPRINGER

Second Wife of Bishop John M. Springer

Helen first met Rev. John Springer and wife, Helen Emily Springer, in August of 1920, just prior to her graduation from the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. She had been a student volunteer at her alma mater, Mt. Holyoke College, and had already applied to the Board of Foreign Missions in New York to go as a Missionary nurse to Congo, Africa.

Helen Everett's brother was an ordained minister and had gone to Congo in 1918. Helen was accepted and after a semester of missionary orientation at the Kennedy School of Missions in Hartford, Connecticut was sent to assist Dr. Arthur Piper in the medical work at Kapanga and do Bible work in the nearby villages in the afternoon while she was learning the language. Later Helen Everett was assigned to teach part time in the Girls School.

She developed a rare skin infection on the nose that was caused by exposure to the tropical sun. It was necessary for her to go to Cape Town,

Africa in 1923 for treatments. The doctors recommended that she go to London, England or Europe. Eventually at the end of seven months she was discharged and pronounced able to return to Africa. She had been under care of physicians not only in London, but at Brussels and had taken a course in tropical medicines while she was herself being treated.

Helen's parents insisted that she return to America before going back to the mission field. Her mother was not well. She did not want to go home, as she had only finished half of her first term and was afraid it would cause delay in her schedule by the Mission Board in sending her back. She was home until 1926 before she was permitted to return due to lack of funds. To her great surprise Rev. and Mrs. Springer were home on furlough and secured the necessary financial aid. The next four years she worked with Dr. Piper at his big dispensary and temporary hospital and maternity work. These were years of great happiness and satisfaction.

Helen Everett returned one year early for furlough as Dr. Piper was due a furlough the same year as Helen and rather than have both away at the same time the Doctor decided that Helen should go first and return to take over the medical work during the Doctor's absence. This plan was cancelled for lack of money. Fortunately there was a fine Danish nurse and Girls School Principal, Miss Marie Jensen, who filled the gap.

Helen Everett was in the United States from 1930 until 1935 nursing at the Massachusetts General Hospital, as she called it HER hospital. Then she got a position teaching for the American Board of Missions in Rhodesia, by paying her own way. She was there only two years, when Bishop Springer was able to finance her return to the Congo where she served seven years.

The furlough brought another task to confront her, a sick mother and a father losing his sight. Her mother lived four years. Helen continued caring for her blind father and an uncle. Her father passed away in 1955. Helen remained with her uncle who was getting feeble. It was during this period that Bishop Springer lost his first wife, Helen R., called "Mom" by friends.

In 1950 the Bishop came to the United States to write his deceased wife's biography, to fill speaking engagements, raise funds for Africa and write his new book "Power and Purpose". While in Boston area he heard that her father had passed away and that Helen Everett was caring for her uncle. He went to see her, arriving in a February blizzard in 1956 at Westwood, Massachusetts.

Of course they did much reminiscing over past years while Helen Everett was a missionary nurse. During the hours spent at Westwood, and at Helen's uncle's, the Bishop asked her if she would like to return to the Mission work. Helen replied in the affirmative but added, "The Mission Board would not accept me after such a long absence from the work." Finally the Bishop replied, "The Mission Board wouldn't have anything to say about it if you went as my wife". That was a staggering announcement. Helen caught her breath and looked at Bishop Springer showing her great surprise. The persistent man kept talking and pressing home the idea that he really wanted her for his wife. Helen made excuses that she had promised her uncle to "see him through" and remain with him as long as he lived.

The Bishop suggested that she talk the matter over with her uncle and see if he would not release her from her promise and make other arrangements, which she did. Her uncle very graciously responded and was willing that she follow the voice of her heart's desire. She had never dreamed that Bishop Springer would want her as his wife; she felt small and humble to have such an honor thrust upon her.

After that the courtship was indeed short; in fact, she called it a "flying courtship" because the Bishop became John, and wanted to attend the General Conference that met in Minneapolis in April, and he wanted her with him, so he arranged that they be married in the Chicago Temple April 20, 1956.

Before that time arrived, Helen Everett had much to do in disposing of personal belongings, besides the preparation of her wedding trousseau. The "honeymoon" included General Conference, a visit to Bishop Springer's old home site near Hazel and Watertown, South Dakota where they stayed three days with Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Antrim while the Bishop filled speaking engagements. The Antrims were most gracious to them and they felt the warmth of their companionship many times after they left there, going to Kampeska and visiting the vacant church that had made such a deep impression upon John when he first faced the question regarding his life's work. From there they visited the old home at Hazel. Helen E. Springer saw her husband rake away the leaves and dead grass that all but covered a damp looking spot until a tiny trickle of water began to flow, then John Springer fell on his knees and lapped up water from a spring that his father had dug years before. Helen said, "I never realized how much his boyhood home meant to him until I saw this man made humble by the remembrance of events in his life that made such a deep impression upon his mind".

They visited relatives at Ervin and Badger and others in Iowa. That winter was spent in New York City, living at the Biblical Seminary working on the book "Power and Purpose". In June of 1957 they drove their car to Phoenix, Arizona where both of them had brothers that had retired. In July they left the car and went on their real honeymoon to the west coast where they visited in California, and relatives in Seattle, Washington. While the Bishop did some speaking Helen noticed it was hard for him and he practically made no appointments.

They returned to New York City. In November they moved into a friend's apartment in Jamaica, New York. In 1958 he gave up trying to secure publishers to take his manuscript, as he had received several rejections. Helen said she did not encourage him to try selling it. She had typed it; it was not up to the standard of his other books. When he realized this, it was quite a blow to his pride, but with Christian fortitude he bore it with grace and understanding.

From then on, all efforts were put forth with preparations for the return to the Congo in Africa. They lived in Africa five years in the home he built on Prospect Hill at Mulungwishi. During the first dry season they took a few months trip visiting all the Methodist Mission Stations which he had founded where he had preached and renewed acquaintances. They went several thousand miles visiting the stations of the Central Congo of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which now of course is part of the United Methodist Church. Most of the time they held Sunday morning services in nearby villages until he became disabled from failing memory and feeble limbs. The years in the Congo were happy ones for them until the Congolese Rebellion against Belgium in 1960-1961.

Twice they had to evacuate with other missionaries to Rhodesia and stay in a mission school. Finally in 1963 Bishop Springer began to talk about going home. Helen comforted him by saying, "You are home, you always said you wanted to be buried in Africa, you are in the house you built, why do you want to leave?" He was content for several days and again he would bring up the subject. After the fourth time Helen asked him if he really wanted to go to America and his reply was in the affirmative. Then Helen said, "We will go." Secretly Helen rejoiced with his decision for two reasons. He was approaching a stage of invalidism. There were no hospitals for chronic diseases; second they had no reason for retiring on the field, except that he was the founder of the Mission and they had given him a special dispensation.

Immediately Helen began inquiring where to find a home in America. Neither of them had relatives who could take care of the Bishop. One of the Congo retired couples had gone to the Penney Retirement Community at Penney Farms, Florida in March, so Helen wrote to them asking if they would recommend the Penney Home for them. They replied enthusiastically and sent application blanks, promising to do all possible to help them get located. Dr. Echstruth was visiting the station and he signed the applications. He was the same doctor working at Piper Memorial Hospital, Kapanga who was shot to death as a "spy" April 19, 1977 and his body left in a hole by the rebels from Angola. He was the only missionary attacked. A recent announcement was made on T.V. by his wife that he had died.

God seemed to open one door and close another until it was made possible for the Springers to reach the Penney Farms August 29, 1963. Helen E. said "John was happy here at Penney Retirement Community. One day he said to someone 'this is a good place to go home from'. When she looked puzzled, he pointed upward 'O, I mean up there'." His wife seemed to think life had become a burden to him. He couldn't walk, he had no control over bodily functions, he had to wear equipment that was not satisfactory. He lived in a wheel chair. There was a great deal of laundry work that Helen was able to handle by the help of electric washer and dryer. She tried to get him outside each day and there was always someone to help her with the wheel chair.

He was cheerful and appreciative and that made it easier. His wife watched him so he wouldn't try to get out into neighbors' yards. All this was so short lived! December second he had a massive brain hemorrhage and never regained consciousness. God honored him by taking him speedily and painlessly.

A beautiful Memorial Service was held in the Sanctuary at the Memorial Home, and his wife sent his ashes to Africa by a returning missionary where they were interred beside "Mom" Helen R. Springer, his first wife, at Mulungwishi, home of Springer Institute.

His wife, Helen Everett Springer, who was with him during the last years reported that John was always uneasy and felt he must be going somewhere. He was on the go all his life, between either Rhodesia or the Belgian Congo or home in the United States raising funds intermittently from 1901 until 1944 when his Episcopal two terms were finished, and he was seventyone years of age.

In thinking about Helen Everett Springer and her life as a missionary nurse, how she ministered in Africa, in the United States at hospitals to earn a return ticket to minister through healing, back to the home land to minister to loved

ones, and again was called by the Heavenly Father to take another course of action by becoming an aged man's wife and giving unstintingly of her love and herself the last years of a great man's life, I came to understand more clearly what her husband, John Springer, meant when he inscribed in her copy of "Christian Conquests in the Congo", the following: "Yes there have been Conquest blessings, and help of the Heavenly King. Conquests for Christ; the Heavens can say by whom are due apportion and credit. Among those who have witnessed convincingly for the Lord and thus contributed to these conquests is a tightly built little lady who arrived in the Congo in 1921 and ever since has shared the Conquests to win Africa for Christ, and by the gracious overruling she now is my life companion, Helen Everett Springer--to her I dedicate this volume with affection and appreciation--John M. Springer." These words in his writing are on the flyleaf of the book so named.

In another volume of his books, "The heart of Africa", John Springer dedicated it with these words, "To Helen Everett Springer since 1956 my beloved wife and whose devoted service as a missionary nurse has been mainly in this same heart of Central Africa from 1921 on, Fondly and Appreciatively--John Springer, Mulungwishi, Belgian Congo, Christmas 1958."

I leave this brief autobiography of her life sent me in 1977, referring you to Matt. 20:28, "Whosoever would be great among you, let Him first be your minister", which exemplifies the sterling quality of a great woman, in soul and spirit, yet weighing less than one hundred pounds. Helen Springer lives at Penney Farms, Florida. She recently said, "This has been a good place for me to call home." She recently resigned after 11 years as president of the Penney Farms Woman's Christian Temperance Union, but is continuing voluntary services at the clinic and at Beyer House (mini-care unit).