

# Chit-Chat

...A Publication of Ken Sumrall Ministries  
4900 Forest Creek Drive, Pace, FL 32571

Special Edition 2010



**A SPECIAL EDITION OF THE CHIT-CHAT  
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF JOHN SUMRALL  
by Ken Sumrall ©2010**

**JOHN SUMRALL'S OBITURARY  
JUNE 1950 -AUGUST 2010**

John K. Sumrall, our oldest son, was born in the maternity hospital in Pensacola, Florida, June 3, 1950. At the time Wanda and I had moved into our new home on Jackson, Street in Pensacola. I was top salesman with Peninsular Life Insurance Company for Northwest, Florida. I loved my work, loved my little family and genuinely adored and served the Lord. At twenty two years old I was ordained as a Steward (Elder) in Richards Memorial Methodist Church in Pensacola. Little did we know that I would be called to be a preacher within 10 months and licensed to preach as a Methodist Preacher soon afterwards. We moved from Pensacola in May 1951 so I could train for the ministry at Bob Jones University. We never expected the sacrifices and hardships required for the entire family of a minister of the gospel. But we did our work with submission and Joy. That same year, because of the liberal teachings of the Methodist Conference, I left the Methodist Church to begin an independent Church in Greenville, S.C.

John was one year old when I began my college career and my first Church in Greenville, S. C. in 1951. Beth, our oldest daughter, was 16 month's younger than John. She and John played Church hour after hour. When it stormed, they paused to pray about the weather. In one vicious storm, John prayed: "Lord we don't mind the rain, but cut out that lightning and thunder." Beth rebuked John with: "John, don't talk to the Lord like that." John's response was: "That's the way Daddy talks to Him."

We were taught in our ministerial studies to burn out for the Lord; so I went to college on the G.I. Bill in the mornings, worked for Western Auto in the afternoons and Saturdays, visited the church community long hours in the evenings, and preached twice on Sunday's at THE PEOPLE'S CHURCH in what we called" THE BOOTLEGGERS COMMUNITY I worked day and night to prepare sermons and pray for an anointing to preach. Wanda, my wife, was very patient with me and took care of the cleaning, sewing, washing, cooking, shopping, and caring for the children. In order to spend time with John, I allowed him to sit on my lap as I studied Speech and Greek; he repeated every word I pronounced. Hence, he learned to speak more distinctly than any of our children.

After leading churches in South Carolina we left Bob Jones University and pastored in Mississippi, we then moved to Hattiesburg, Mississippi so I could go to William Carey College and finish my B.A. During this time I graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

I was called to be Pastor of Boulevard Baptist Church in Pensacola, Florida, June, 1961. The Church grew to about 800 over the next three years and we built an auditorium to seat 900 with plans to build a balcony seating 300 as soon as we had the funds. John, Beth, Stanley, and our youngest daughter, Marlene, attended the Boulevard Christian School while I was Pastor at the Church.

In March 1964, I received the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and was encouraged by the deacons to leave Boulevard Baptist. The same month I founded Liberty (Baptist) Church in Pensacola. John was 14 years old at the time and a bit wild. Our whole society's value's in the U.S. began to change during that period, the youth becoming anti-establishment during the period. President Kennedy was assassinated in 1963 and racial riots caused a lot of havoc in the northern and northwestern sections of our nation. and many young people left home to live the "hippie life-style."

In 1966 I founded Liberty Bible College and traveled a lot in the U.S. and in foreign fields. In 1967 I

conducted a evangelistic meeting in a soccer stadium in Guatemala. Hundreds confessed Jesus as Lord including the governor of that state. One evening a telegram for me was brought to the platform. My heart sank as I read it. John had left home and could not be found. I excused myself and came home to look for him.

After encouraging my wife, Wanda, I went looking for John, fearful that he had left home to live the hippie life-style. Joyfully, I found him at one of his friend's home. I asked him if he wanted to come home. His answer was: "I don't want a whipping!" He knew my discipline was rather stern and being a preacher's son was hard for him. My answer was: "John, I don't plan to discipline you. You are a young man now and I promise to treat you like a man if you will come home." He agreed and came home with me. Wanda was delighted to see him and so were his siblings. He and I established a father-son relationship which caused him to change his behavior for the better. A rift came when he skipped classes one day and went to the beach with friends. I brought him into my study to talk to him.



"John, what do you think you deserve for cutting classes and going to the beach." He answered: "I guess I deserve a beating." As I took off my belt, He prepared himself for the discipline. Then I handed the belt to him and leaned over the chair and said: "I will take your beating for you." Crying profusely he said: "Dad, I can't hit you." "John," I said, "one of us must be disciplined. I am offering to take your whipping for you." He fell into my arms apologizing for his actions. From that time, I never used such severe punishment on him. He enrolled in Liberty Bible College and formed a singing group with other college students. Later he went to tech school to train to be a computer programmer. He also trained to be a printer. He later married CarolynK Doan, a Bible college student. They moved to Tampa, Florida and he became a full-time printer. They later moved back to Pensacola and he was hired as a printer by the Baptist Hospital. When we started Liberty Press, he became the head printer. Later he took a job in Liberty Studios and operated the cameras. He and Carolyn moved to Birmingham, Alabama and he was hired as a Computer Data Processor. After his three girls grew into teenagers, he and Carolyn divorced and he remarried. Later he and his new wife had a traumatic divorce. By then the girls were all married and he was alone. So he moved home to Pensacola, devastated over his separation. Data processors were not in demand in Pensacola so he was hired by Dish Satellite, then went to work for his first cousin building houses and finally worked for Primerica. He became a member of Gulf Breeze Community Church and served on the music team as a bass player.

*John is not dead --He is absent from the body and present with the Lord.  
(II Corinthians 5:6-9)*

In April 2009 John was diagnosed with colon cancer in the fourth and last stage. I believe his grieving over his failure as a husband and father caused the cancer that eventually killed him 15 months later. He, without my knowledge, had donated his body to medical science and signed for his body to be cremated after they took all the healthy organs.

John's Memorial service was held at Liberty Church on Blue Angel Parkway in Pensacola on August 10, 2010. Buford Lipscomb moderated the service. John's pastor, Robert Pooley and Charles Simpson, my best friend and spiritual son, spoke for the memorial service.



Thanks for all those who came to offer their consolations at the meeting. Thanks also to all who sent cards, brought in food, and sent flowers. We love you much and dearly miss our oldest son, especially at the family gatherings each morning for our morning devotions. We took turns around the breakfast table reading two chapters each morning, each reading five verses until the two chapters were finished. Then each of us prayed. John never failed to pray for Israel and the Jews. We miss John mixing it up with his siblings with his puns and teasing. It was a fun time and spiritual time simultaneously.

Wanda is 83 and I am soon to be 84. We fully expect to be with all our family at the marriage feast of the Lamb in Heaven. Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus!