

## THE ENTICING LADDER

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Walking around one Sunday morning I passed by the third floor warming kitchen and heard an unusual sound. Out of the closed door area came a myriad of laughing and giggling. Even in a good place like a kitchen this was not the usual sound on Sunday morning. I quietly open the door and to my amazement there were about 10 young teenagers in the process of coming down the ladder from the roof of the building. They were of course dressed in Sunday morning attire and being very careful, yet at the same time probably unaware of the danger of climbing a 20-foot ladder in a very enclosed space and going on a roof.

The usual question was asked: "What are you guys and girls doing?" The usual answer was uttered with a great deal of surprise on their faces. "We're not doing anything."

So came my caution: "You know it is dangerous on the roof, and using this maintenance ladder to gain access to the roof is as equally dangerous. You know you could get hurt." Then followed the confession that yes, they were wrong, and that they would never do it again if only I promised I would not tell on them. Not wanting to cause them to cease coming to church, we struck a deal. Nothing would be said if they promised never to come back in this room or get on the roof again.

Since this short conversation I have watched these younger teenagers grow into a level of maturity that has led them to work in the warming kitchen and serve others during events in Hudson Hall.

Being the church sometimes means offering forgiveness and second chances even for young teenagers having fun.

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## THE WAR HERO AND 8-YEAR-OLDS

The mid-1950s were great years to be an 8-year-old child. There were no leash laws on dogs nor children. You just went outside and played. There were very few houses and no cars had air conditioning. Even with the attic fan on, you could still hear the crickets and frogs. The back seat in most cars was big enough to hold five or six children, and you did not have to buckle up because there were no seat belts. When I got home from school, I would eat a snack and go out to play. One of the top activities was playing in the creek behind our house. Since most of our fathers were World War II veterans, we loved playing Army. Other activities included riding bikes, climbing trees, playing baseball or football. All of these activities were organized by the children, and if there were any disputes, we resolved them.

Mountain Brook Baptist Church always played a large part in my family's life. If the church was open, we were there. One of the milestones in Sunday School was being promoted from the Primary Department to the Junior Department. We had a formal graduation ceremony where everybody got a new Bible. In the Junior Department boys and the girls were separated, and the boys had men teachers. No longer could the boys run roughshod over the women teachers.

Our new teacher was Mr. Law Lamar III. At the end of the first Sunday School class, Mr. Lamar announced that we were all responsible for learning the memory verse that was in our Sunday School book every week. That did not seem too bad at first. Then he told us that each boy

had to stand up in front of the class and recite the verse for that week. We were to stand up straight, not fidget nor giggle, and we had to give the book of the Bible, the chapter, and the verse. He then told us that he had been shot in the head in World War II, and if we recited the verse correctly, we could feel the steel plate in his head.



*Top: The young Law Lamar III  
Right: A more recent picture of Law Lamar prior to his death. (Both photos were provided by his son, Law Lamar IV, and his daughter-in-law, Janet Lamar.)*



*Richard, Linda, and Sara Compton remembering the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion on Utah Beach in Normandy, France. (May 2019)*

To 8-year-old boys, this was about the coolest thing we had ever heard. Each boy wanted to be the first to feel Mr. Lamar's war wound. The next week only three boys performed everything to Mr. Lamar's standards. The three of them lined up to feel the steel plate, and they thought they were the coolest kids around.

As the weeks went by, we all learned how to recite the memory verse to Mr. Lamar's high standards, and we all got to feel Mr. Lamar's steel plate. What we did not realize was that we were not only learning Bible verses, but we were learning to speak in front of a group. By the end of the year, we all could speak in front of the class, and we also learned at least 52 memory verses.

Several weeks ago I had supper with one of my old Sunday School classmates. I asked him what was his most vivid memory of Mountain Brook Baptist Church. Without hesitation he said, "Feeling the steel plate in Mr. Lamar's head!"

Mr. Law Lamar received two Purple Hearts for injuries received in World War II. The helmet that saved Mr. Lamar's life is on display at the Military Museum at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Law Lamar III passed away on November 4, 2006. Thank you, Mr. Lamar.

*Richard Compton*