

# Pastor Ted Goodwin Remembers Castle Rock and its People

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## Training at Castle Rock Christian Church



Ted Goodwin - 1935

The following article is Ted's own description of his ministry at Castle Rock taken from his book called *Ride in My Chariot*. The article is titled, "Minister gets his Education from His Parishioners." This story is found on page 164. Of course we have the permission of the publisher, Finley Hayes, to run these quotes.

"A church minister gets his education from his parish. His field of labor, if he stays there a few years, will teach him more than he learned in college and seminary.

"A lumber town will teach him about people who produce building material. He will find out how they live, labor, play and die. He will discover their favorite hobbies and recreations away from their regular jobs.

"His ministry will add to him a new dimension of usefulness if he will go along with his people as far as his conscience and their invitations will permit. The same rule holds true for a preacher to miners, cattlemen, wheat growers, factory workers, shipbuilders or railroaders. The man with the gospel is going to school, unofficially, every day and his teachers are the men, women and children who look to him for spiritual help.

"The sooner he can start his apprenticeship after his arrival in the town or village, the better of his church and for him. We assume that his book learning is adequate, his biblical knowledge established, his basic sociological and ministerial culture passable.

"His personal spiritual preparation never stops. That has to be a continuing growth. So also must his mental and social development. His job will help him to mature in every way.

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“Looking back over a half-century as pastor, I regard my experience as the kindergarten of my education for the ministry. It was good, so far as it went, but my real school started when I began to preach at the age of 18 in the logging town of Castle Rock.

“Hardly dry behind the ears, I knew I was not very good, but I was the best those patient folk could get for \$12.50 per week.

“My railroad fare each week from college in Eugene, Oregon, was \$13 round trip. Arriving each Saturday at 3:20 p.m., I made parish calls to learn where and how the people lived.

“On Saturday night, I studied my half-prepared sermon for the next day, praying it would help somebody to enjoy salvation.

“Those novitiate sermons couldn’t have been all bad, for the record shows we baptized some new believers and the attendance increased from the first Sunday. The church quickly increased my salary to \$15 per week and soon to \$20 as the offering plates began to collect more free-will gifts.



*Ted Goodwin*

“No pastor baptizes as many souls as he wishes he could, but our human additions to the church included ages from a tender youth of 12 to one of President Lincoln’s old soldiers, a veteran of 86.

“Before the year 1920 was half done, the railroads gave me the usual clergyman’s ticket fare discount since I was a regularly licensed minister with a regular parish and pulpit appointment, even if my people said I looked “like a high school sophomore.” They said I was too young but “time will cure that.”

“In 1922 my salary escalated to \$25 per week. That figured out to the huge sum of \$100 per month and I began to think serious thoughts of marriage. A Bellingham girl who was graduating with me had some of the same thoughts and after 55 years of marriage and eight children, plus 33 grands and great-grands at last count, we reckon it’s the little things in life that sure count up.

“At this long look back, we have no way of knowing what Castle Rock learned from the young preacher, if anything. But this preacher learned more than he can ever repay them.

“They taught me how to preach to loggers and lumberjacks and their families. They gave me practice in funeral sermons that had to be short and full of compassion instead of cold eulogy.

“They taught me how to feel like a logger first and a preacher afterward. They also taught me how to hunt deer, fight forest fires and dip smelt.

“The Studebakers, the Littles, the Hungtings, the Watkins, the Moses, the Lorings, the Berrys, the Davises, the McCoys, The Drews - these and many more were my teachers who taught me how to be pastor, public speaker, prayer intercessor, song leader, and for tonight, a writer. If any of their children or grandchildren read this, I say thanks. And if they don’t, please tell them, if it isn’t asking too much.

“Probably my biggest thrill assignments was the time *The Daily News* sent me from Longview in 1937 to represent the paper when President Roosevelt came to dedicate Bonneville Dam. At Bonneville in the press box with all those big wheels of Journalism, East and West, I felt slightly overwhelmed. Riding on the president’s train with March of Time, NBC, CBS, AP, UP and the Big Press of the D.C. and New York was cool. For a Ryderwood logger preacher it was neat.”

## Descriptions of Castle Rock Church, the Town and the People

This was written in 1977, the year Ted Goodwin died. It appeared originally in *Stories of Western Loggers*.

### **OF THE ROCK AND THE RIVER**

“The rock at Castle Rock, Wash., is not as high as Gibraltar nor as renowned in song and story but to us who have grown up by it, the comparison favors our rock.

“We who have watched the Cowlitz River swirl against its base for 56 years and more look up to it with childhood awe as God’s creation.

“Whether it stands there since four thousand or four million years ago, it is to us a sort of Rock of Ages. The Huntingtons who crossed the plains by wagon team and founded the city of Castle Rock camped by its base, found shelter from the wind and rested securely in its shadow. That was in the 1850’s. Those were God fearing folk. They started the first church in that part of the state. Strong in courage, they feared nothing else; neither man, nor devil. Only a sovereign deity.

“Their direct descendants are just as devout members today of the very church those pioneers started 120 years ago. The new and finer church edifice stands not far from the base of the rock. On any Sunday, its halls are filled with praise. Its walls always ring with prayer.

“Fisherman have taken some mighty salmon from the stream close to the rock. The fighting steelhead have lost many a battle there. Trout by the thousands and silvery smelt by millions have been pulled from that river and the end is not yet. The first settlers got their food and drink there. To them it was the water of life.

“Such is the story of the rock and the river.”

### **TED GOODWIN DESCRIBING JENNIE STUDEBAKER**

Not many folks are left who remember this remarkable woman, but all who do have very glowing things to say about her. She served as Sunday school superintendent for several years, but it would seem that she was very involved in ministry all of her church life and maintained a great Christian witness throughout her entire lifetime. This could not be described by anyone else as skillfully as did Ted Goodwin in the following article:



*Jennie Studebaker*

“In the early 1900’s a young logger and his wife moved from their homestead cabin on the Toutle River to a more convenient location on the east back of the Cowlitz River a half mile downstream from the rock. In those days the river was without dike or levee. Floods sometimes put rowboats into the streets of town. The oldest houses had high foundations and still have high porches with good reason.

“The young logger and wife had used a dugout canoe up the Toutle, so they had no dread of flood from their new site on the Cowlitz. Nine children were born to them—five girls and four boys—a beautiful happy family.

“They ate plenty of good food. Their dad brought home the bacon, venison and fish. Their mother raised a bountiful garden of finest vegetables. She also milked a cow and raised a flock of chickens. When the minister was a dinner guest, he got the world’s best fried chicken. He licked all ten of his fingers. New potatoes, green beans cooked with hog meat, dumplings, hot biscuits so big they had to be cut with a coffee can. Hot bread, homemade. They had it.

“The children helped their mother with the garden. The children also learned how to get fish from the river less than a hundred yards from their door. Their clothes were plain and clean. Those washings were huge and frequent. A copper wash boiler on the kitchen stove did wonders. A corrugated washboard and a couple of galvanized iron tubs did all the rest. It was a clean family.

“They went to church regularly. All were scrubbed, combed and smiling. That little mother was superintendent of the Sunday school for several years. Often the youngest child would be carried in a little red play wagon pulled by one the older ones or by the parents. Large families were admired in those days.

“When Old Highway 99 was first paved between Toledo and Kelso, thousands of people passed the little story – and a – half house on the bank of the river.

“Travelers noticed the small, neat, tall house with its luxuriant gardens of flowers and vegetables. Often they saw the little mother working in that garden by the side of the road.

“A testimony of faith was being planted there for all to read as they passed by. Mrs. Logger planted a sentence in small plants of cabbage-looking shape, sometimes called hen-and-chickens, with the words clear and plain to read. The growing plants said “God is Love” Year after year passersby read the message: God is Love.

“A fire broke out in the house and destroyed everything. Everything but the message on the garden’s edge. No lives were lost. Only the house and all its contents. Townspeople quickly responded and built that family another house on the same spot.

“The children grew. The girls married and moved away. Two of the boys were killed in logging accidents. The parents stayed, and the garden with its living legend in that sentence of faith was kept for all to see. More years passed. Winter rains were heavy.

“Snow packed upon the mountains where the Cowlitz rises. Spring brought high water. Higher and higher the river rose. Flood stage was reached and about the usual levels. The river looked angry. It swirled at the road and swept at the east bank where the new house stood beside the one-acre garden.

“Like an angry wolf the river tore at the rivers bank and it yielded. The land washed away. The house fell. Sadly the owners and neighbors and townsfolk watched it go down the river.

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“A part of the garden was left when the flood waters receded. Pathetic but bravely the little planted legend still read “God is Love.” People read it and reached for their handkerchiefs.

“Death took the logger father away. A third house was built. This time on a high hill above the town on the road to Silver Lake.

“I went out to see that little mother, now grown old. She remembered me for the days when I was her eighteen-year-old pastor in my fist parish, her church. Now I was gray-haired.

“I put my arms around her trembling frame and said “Aunt Jennie, what do you say?” My eyes were moist but she was bravely smiling as she answered “God is Love.”



*Jennie Studebaker's Sunday School class of 1922. Jennie is at the upper left, 5 over from Jennie is Lucy Swift. Violet Hill is in the middle row. At the bottom left Ruth Cummings, 6 over is Millie Hendrickson. The names of all the others are unknown.*

From cemetery records, we learned that Jennie Studebaker was born in 1876 and died in 1952. Her husband, Frank, was born in 1863 and lived until 1932. Two sons, Sherman and Freddie, were both killed in logging accidents. Sherman lived from 1895 until 1920, and Freddie lived from 1910 till 1931.

*Old church records were lost when the Studebaker home burned in the 1920's. The house and more records were lost to the flood of 1933 even though a logging cable had been wrapped around the house and secured to a large tree. The house and tree were both lost to the raging Cowlitz River.*