



## Ronald Leigh Simpson

September 6, 1933 - November 3, 2022

In November of 2020, in the midst COVID's first year, Ron Simpson became a resident at Eskaton Grass Valley. It was a return to a long-loved and familiar community, but the absence had been close to four decades and the move was at a time where visiting and general freedom of movement was strictly curtailed. Sadly, Ron was not able to enjoy the many reunions and activities that he and his family had eagerly anticipated, yet all who encountered Ron day in and day out noticed his friendly, uncomplaining spirit. "He always put a smile on my face", remembered one Eskaton staff member, and many shared that Ron always welcomed them with his smile.

Ronald Leigh Simpson was born in Bellingham, Washington, September 6th, 1933. He grew up in the Silver Beach community on the shores of Lake Whatcom with extended family nearby and loving grandparents, both maternal and paternal, a short walk away. Ron's boyhood included lots of hunting, fishing, and clamming. All provided both outdoor recreation and an important means of adding to mealtime variety in an era where daily life was impacted by the Depression and then World War II ration coupons. Ron's family was involved in the Silver Beach Community Church where his Grandpa Nick rang the church bell Sunday mornings. When Ron was a teenager, his commitment to Christ deepened. He dedicated his life to serving God and decided to go to Biola College (now Biola University) to study the Bible with the intent of eventually becoming a pastor.

After graduating from Bellingham High School in 1951, he made the long, pre-Interstate 5 drive to Los Angeles, California, where Biola was located. While there, he met and fell in love with Barbara Olson, a Redding, California gal. As the Korean conflict was winding down, the ongoing draft intervened to separate the young pair by sending now Army GI Ron to Giessen, Germany, as a Motor Mechanic with the 5th Engineer Battalion. His two-year term of service ended with a joyous return to the States where he and Barbara were united in marriage.

The young couple headed to San Jose, California, where Ron finished a Bachelor of Arts in English. Then, with their young son Brian, they headed across the Southwest to Dallas where Ron worked to earn his Masters of Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. A three-year degree was stretched into four after a lengthy illness forced Ron to temporarily suspend his studies to recover. Finally, in the summer of 1964, his family that now included another son, Bruce, drove North to Birmingham, Michigan and a pastorate at the Birmingham Community Church. After three years and a daughter, Gail, adding to their number, the Simpson family excitedly headed west to Grass Valley, California. Ron and Barbara were thrilled to be in a new community, in a more familiar climate, and to be so much closer to their families.

At the family's arrival in the summer of 1967, Calvary Bible Church, whose name had been changed in 1966 to reflect the severing of ties with the Congregational denomination, had been worshipping in a 78-year-old building on the corner of Neal and Church streets. The facilities were inadequate, drafty, and even leaky: during rainy Sundays, drops from the ceiling rang pots melodically. Pastor Simpson had been called to minister to this church. He did so wholeheartedly and served the congregation and community one family and individual at a time. CBC grew both in attendees and in the Faith as the current facility on Colfax Highway was built and services began there in 1970,

a year that also brought another son, Neil, to complete the Simpson Six. During his 15-year tenure as pastor, Ron saw many lives positively changed by the power of God. Besides being instrumental in the change in location and facility, he also saw the increase of pastoral staff. One church member recalled, "Pastor Simpson said that he would forego a raise in salary so that there would be funds to hire an Associate Pastor."

Ron and Barbara left Calvary Bible Church in 1982 and moved to Porterville, California. Ron pastored the First Baptist Church of Strathmore for 12 years. During this time, Barbara began to experience health issues that would impact the remainder of their lives. Yet, all who knew him greatly appreciated his sincerity and dedication to teaching God's truth as revealed in the Bible. He especially worked to build unity and to show others how disagreements could be resolved with mutual respect and encouragement rather than bitterness and division.

After retiring from vocational ministry in 1995, Ron and Barbara were able to enter a new period of time where they could support and invest in their growing number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This generation knew Grandpa or "GP" as a merry soul who didn't hesitate to get on the floor to play "bear trap" with giggling tykes or to cheer on the sidelines of a soccer game. They saw the individual who would take them on early morning trips to the Donut Nook where they would have hot chocolate in their younger years, and then develop a love of coffee (to their grandmother's mild disapproval but GP's affirmation) as they grew older.

Ron and Barbara spent 8 years in Atwater, California before moving to Chico, California in 2005. It was a full circle for Barbara who had been born in Chico and had many long-standing ties to the North Valley. Ron kept a spotless garden and shed/workshop where he put his considerable mechanical skills to

good use fixing many a tool or household item. Barbara's declining health revealed, or perhaps engendered, a depth of kindness, patience, and fortitude that Ron could only attribute to God's cultivation in his character.

These qualities and the Redeeming Love of his Savior, Jesus Christ, are what enabled him to endure to the finish, which quietly came November 3, 2022.

Barbara predeceased Ron in 2014 after 58 years of marriage. He is survived by his sister Adele (Bob) Heinke of Marysville, Washington, and brother Gary (Cheryl) Simpson of Tuscon, Arizona; children Brian Simpson of North Augusta, South Carolina, Bruce (Kathy) Simpson of Nevada City, California, Gail (Mark) Hunt of Dayton, Nevada, and Neil (Laura) Simpson of Greenacres, WA; 10 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

A Celebration of Life will be held on January 21, 2023 at Calvary Bible Church, Grass Valley.

# Tribute Wall

PB

“ We knew Ron Simpson as our Grass Valley Pastor in 1977 when we first arrived there; we recall he said "Don't preach when you pray...and don't pray when you preach"! His devoted joy as God's servant and his love for people was inspiring. We were so blessed to have him as a shepherd of Faith.  
*Paula and Robert Barnes, Prior Lake, MN*

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**Paula Barnes** - January 25, 2023 at 08:24 PM

PC

“ He was so encouraging to be with because he had two "count on" traits. 1. He always believed and taught that the Bible was inspired by God the Holy Spirit; and 2. He was faithful in his love of God and the people he was with. *Pastor Bob, Evangelical Free Church of Chico.*

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**Pastor Bob, Chico EV Free Church** - January 17, 2023 at 01:01 AM

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“ *Condolences Neil, Laura, Jack & Olyvia and to your entire Simpson family. Regards, Pam Dacus (Evangelical Free Church of Church).*

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**Pam Dacus** - January 11, 2023 at 02:00 PM