

The first time I met Derek Hawksbee was at the end of November, 1980 – right after Thanksgiving – when I left Pennsylvania and drove nine hours to Union Mills, North Carolina, to work for SAMS-USA, which was then headquartered there. I almost couldn't find the place: there was no sign and I had driven by the buildings without knowing what they were. A quick query at the local post office pointed me in the right direction and I then found the entire home staff eating lunch at the Hawksbee's house across the road from the administration building.

What I did not know at the time was that my arrival was not welcomed by most of the home staff. I had no idea that SAMS was in the midst of a dire financial crisis and that some of the staff were not receiving regular paychecks. Adding someone else – even a young person such as I -- for practically no salary was not seen as a good move.

When I was introduced for the first time to Derek, who was then Director of Missionary Personnel, his reception was polite, but cool. He was to be my boss. In fact, my official title was: "Executive Assistant to the Director of Missionary Personnel and Associate Editor." I was to be his administrative assistant to keep track of his schedule and the missionaries, help plan what were then called "Inquirers' Weekends," take dictation, write letters for him and organize a filing system for all his previous correspondence. The rest of my time was to be spent writing and editing SAMS newsletters and other publications.

Derek had had nothing to do with my hiring, and if his voice had been heard I would not have been there at all. It was not that he would not have appreciated the support; he just knew what shape SAMS's finances were in and the fact that it was not a welcome moment. The Home Staff at that time consisted of the Executive Director, the Associate Director, Derek, a Deputation Coordinator, a bookkeeper, a data processor, a buildings and grounds manager, two secretaries and me. That was a lot of staff. And the number of missionaries serving overseas was fewer than twenty. And expenses far exceeded income.

Derek had been "on loan" from SAMS-GB to help the fledgling American branch of the Society get started and to act as a liaison between the US and the UK. He brought with him fourteen years of experience as a missionary in Paraguay and ample experience at the home office at Allen Gardiner House in Tunbridge Wells, England. His understanding of and knowledge about the Anglican Church in the Southern Cone was invaluable. He was also the only one on the staff at the time who was fluent in Spanish and Lengua. He had recently made a trip to Honduras to investigate that country as a possible site for missionaries from the US. Derek opened up the door to a long and solid relationship that SAMS has had with that country and diocese ever since.

As a young man, I certainly benefitted from his tutelage and from the depth of his commitment to Jesus Christ. The Scriptures came alive during the devotions he would lead. With a humble and unassuming style, he would unpack the meaning and message of God's Word in a way that was transformational. His commitment to prayer was exemplary, and when we tended as Americans to be overly innovative, Derek would bring us back to scriptural principles that needed to serve as the foundation for our decision-making and life together.

Less than a year later, I was sent to Honduras as a member of the home staff to gain some experience in Latin America and learn some Spanish. I was to have been in Honduras for two

months, but those two months turned into two years when I became engaged and then married SAMS missionary, Gail Hastings. After our engagement, we asked Derek to marry us the following summer at Gail's parent's church in Pennsylvania. Derek readily agreed and preached a homily appropriate and apt on the importance of recognizing God's timing in the events of our lives. It was clear, simple, direct and pastoral – and it spoke to more than just the young couple who were getting married that day.

Derek was patient and steady, and during those uncertain start-up years for SAMS he provided a quiet leadership that, I am convinced, helped keep SAMS afloat. He became Interim Director in 1982 and then was hired to be the full-time Executive Director after a search showed that he was the most qualified candidate. SAMS was close to the brink of failure at that point, and Derek used his time as Executive Director to re-build trust between the Society, its missionaries and its donors.

Derek was loyal and faithful to his Master throughout his entire life. He served God wherever he was called to go and no matter what the circumstances were – whether it be to the Paraguayan Chaco as a young married couple, back to England, to Union Mills, North Carolina, and then once again to England.

Shakespeare's *King Lear* finishes with the faithful Kent being asked to assume the throne after Lear's death. He refuses the earthly crown he could have had and says instead:

“I have a journey, Sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.”

Derek never said “No” to his Lord. And now his Master has called him on the final journey Home.