

## AARON J. (SCHMIDT) SMITH

Born October 22, 1887 Avon, South Dakota  
Died November 9, 1960 Greensboro, North Carolina  
Married Emma Esther Dressel July 28, 1915 Stockton, California  
Emma born June 30, 1891 Elkton, South Dakota  
Died March 17, 1972 Intercession City, Florida

Aaron talked of his early years on the farm in the windswept prairies of South Dakota. His mother was a kind, loving and wonderful person and taught him and his siblings from the Bible. His mother died when he was seven years old. Their new stepmother was very strict; however there were 12 children still at home for whom she assumed responsibility. As a boy they would swim and fish in nearby Choteau Creek that fed into the Missouri River. In 1899 the family moved to Mountain Lake, Minnesota. Aaron worked hard on the farm, sometimes operating the steam boiler threshing machine. Upon completion of high school he left home to attend college at Newton, Iowa, then on to Chicago where he graduated from Chicago Theological Seminary. It was in Chicago that he met his future bride, Emma Dressel. After the wedding July 28, 1915 they moved to Morristown, Minnesota, where he pastored an Evangelical Church. Emma was a graduate of Chicago Evangelistic Institute and was a superb pianist. They sang together and always delighted everyone with their duets, Emma accompanying on the piano. Aaron played a number of instruments and played the violin especially well with Emma accompanying. Aaron sang tenor and Emma sang alto. Wherever they went, they were always asked to sing. Emma gave birth to twins, Gordon and Lois; Gordon ~~Hanley~~ Smith died at birth.

Aaron's sister, Anna and husband, Peter Kiehn, had been missionaries in China for several years with the Mennonite Mission. The Nazarene Church began to expand and asked the Kiehns if they would start a Nazarene Mission in Tamingfu, Chihli (now called Daming, Hebei) in North China. They agreed and after they had the mission well started, they asked Aaron and Emma to come out and join them. After much prayer and thought, they agreed and the Nazarene Church accepted them. They left their church in Racine, Minnesota, and joined the Nazarene Church in Seattle, Washington, just before the ship sailed! Lois was three years old. They departed for the Orient on October 27, 1920 aboard the SS Fushimi Maru. The ship survived a typhoon that was so intense that the waves came over the smokestack and put out the fire in the boilers, leaving the ship adrift without power. Upon arrival in China, they went to language school at the Peking University for several months before leaving for the interior where Aaron was head of the Boys' School and Emma headed the Girls' School. After about a year, Kiehns went back to the United States on furlough

and Aaron became the Superintendent. They moved from their house (which became the Girls' School) into the Superintendent's three story house where they stayed the remainder of their term. Other brothers and sisters were also in China at various missions. Brother John and wife, Mary, were with the Mennonite Mission along with sister Mary and oldest sister Nellie and husband, Henry Bartel. Sister Eva and husband, Stanley Dixon, were with the Pilgrim Holiness Mission and youngest sister, Catherine, was with another Nazarene Mission. Aaron took several instruments with him to China - a violin, trombone, cornet and accordion and a specially made small piano for Emma that was moisture and mildew resistant as they expected to live in a mud hut! They served at the Nazarene Mission, Tamingfu, from 1920 to 1927. During this time Bethel Marie and Miriam Gloria were born.

Upon return to the United States, Aaron was asked to fill in as Minister at the Nazarene Church in Fresno, California. The family lived in Fresno from the fall of 1927 until spring of 1928. The family was expecting to return to China under sponsorship of a close friend, Mr. William Trumbower. However, Mr. Trumbower died; his will was contested by his children which resulted in the loss of sponsorship. They spent the remainder of 1928 in Stockton, California where Ardon Wesley was born. In the spring of 1929 Aaron took his family on a tour of the United States. He spoke at different Nazarene churches each night; the three girls had to don their Chinese costumes and sing in Chinese "Jur Yo Eeway Jenshen" (There is Only One True God). Ardon was just a baby and almost died of dysentery on the way home. All the driving and speaking took its toll on Aaron who came down with rheumatic fever when they returned to California; he was bedridden for several months. Just before the trip, Aaron's book, Jesus Lifting Chinese, had been published. They started out with several thousand books packed in large cardboard boxes strapped to the outside of the car. During the first service in Phoenix, Arizona, some hoodlums stole all the books. The police searched for weeks but no trace! Heartsick about this, Aaron never attempted a second printing. A few copies are still in the family.

Unable to return to China where they had planned to start a mission in Tsingtao, Aaron accepted an appointment as District Superintendent for the Nazarene Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. After about one year in Canada, the family was so unhappy that Aaron resigned and moved to Salem, Oregon in 1931. Leon Paul was born while in Salem. Aaron engaged in writing and evangelistic work until 1939 when he accepted the Presidency of Intercession City Biblical College, Intercession City, Florida. The 1946-47 school year was spent as President of Kingswood College near Morristown, Tennessee. From 1947 to 1949 Aaron was Dean of Peoples Bible School, Greensboro, North

Carolina. During the summer of 1949 Aaron fulfilled a dream of forming an expedition to search for Noah's Ark in Eastern Turkey. After many delays in obtaining the proper visas, Aaron and his three team members searched the area around Mount Ararat, Turkey. This search was documented in his book, On the Mountains of Ararat in Search of Noah's Ark. Although the ark was not found, this expedition led the way for many future expeditions. Aaron and Emma returned to Intercession City, Florida, in 1950 to assist in establishing the Southern Wesleyan Biblical College. They returned to their home in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1952 when Aaron was diagnosed with cancer. Although he continued many of his activities of speaking, writing and preaching, he later became bedridden and passed away November 9, 1960. Emma continued living at the home place until 1966 when she moved to a nursing home operated by a friend at Intercession City, Florida. Emma passed away on March 17, 1972 and is buried alongside Aaron in the Grace Baptist Church Cemetery, Greensboro, North Carolina. Although they never had much earthly treasures, their lives were dedicated to serving Jesus Christ and helping prepare others for lives of service to their Lord. They are now enjoying the mansions that were prepared for them in Heaven.

-by Ardon Smith

Children: Lois Hester born December 9, 1916	Morristown MN
Gordon Hanley born December 9, 1916	Morristown MN
Bethel Marie born March 27, 1922	Tamingfu, China
Miriam Gloria born May 25, 1923	Tamingfu, China
Ardon Wesley born August 10, 1928	Stockton CA
Leon Ellis Paul born December 5, 1932	Salem, Oregon

#### LOIS HESTER SMITH BINFORD

Born December 9, 1916 Morristown, Minnesota  
 Married Eugene Gordon Binford April 19, 1947 Pasadena CA  
 Chapel of the Roses; divorced December 30, 1962  
 Eugene born May 5, 1917 Greenleaf, Idaho Died October 1990

At age three (November 1920) Lois sailed with her parents to China where they were missionaries with the Church of the Nazarene at Tamingfu, Hebei (now Daming). They stayed seven years and she spoke Mandarin fluently. Lois graduated from Pasadena Nazarene College in 1940, Magna Cum Laude, with a major in Music-Piano. She worked as a dental assistant for three years, then as a secretary at California Institute of Technology and, just before marriage, at Foothill Motors in Pasadena. Lois and Gene moved to San Francisco where Gene was in training as a wholesale drug salesman. Lois was a secretary for Tidewater Associated Oil Company. They moved to Visalia, California, in 1948 and later to West Covina, California. Lois has been active teaching piano for many years as well as taking part in Little Theater in West Covina. Lois and son, Ron, moved to