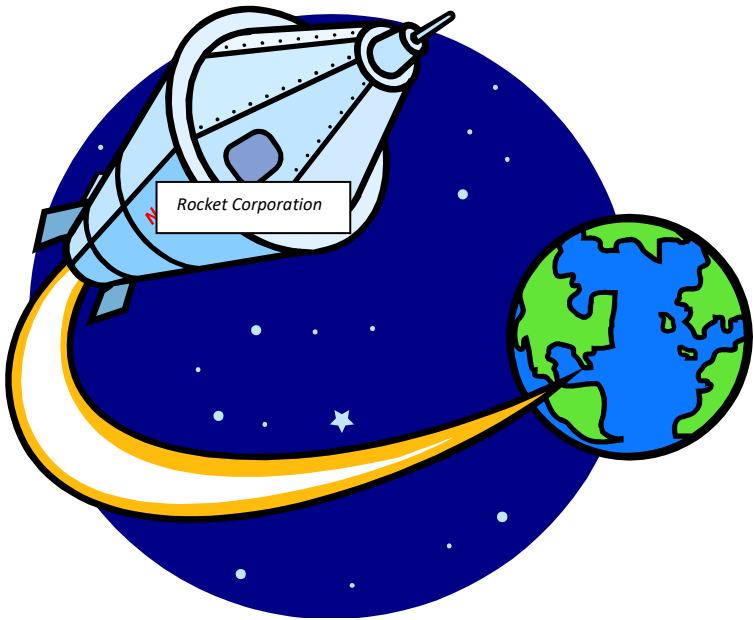


*Remnant:
On to Mars!
(Book 2)*



*“Going where no one has gone
before”*

A Christian Science Fiction Story

Edward R. Blankenship

***"And the remnant that is escaped...shall
yet again take root...and bear fruit."
2 Kings 19:30***

***What if the worst was going to happen?
Would you leave Earth, NEVER to
return?***

***And could you go to a place that is truly
hostile to humans if it was your best
hope?***

107 Pioneers are leaving Earth for Mars as a huge object is coming to annihilate all life on Earth! Another mission is also being tried to save Earth, but before the crew of Remnant can find out what happens to humanity, all communications are lost with Earth.

The Remnant Pioneers face one adventure after another as they approach the red planet. And what will they find there? Will they find water, essential for life? And what about the ability to grow food? Is that even possible? Can they truly make it a home? Only God knows for sure! But with a true pioneer spirit they sure aim to try!



Ed Blankenship grew up wondering if God really exists. He majored in Physics, studied Einstein's Theory of Relativity, and has been an avid amateur astronomer. He saw the last Space Shuttle Launch, STS-135 and vividly remembers seeing live Neil Armstrong's "One small step for (a) man, one giant leap for mankind". His latest interest is in the commercial space industry following their success. That gave him the idea for this book. Ed is also a Believer in God, and shares his life-changing experience with others. He was employed as an Operations Research Analyst for the United States Marine Corps and worked at the Pentagon. He and his wife Janice live in Stafford, Virginia, and have three grown children and ten terrific grandchildren!

Remnant:
On to Mars!
Book 2

*“Going where no one
has gone before”*

A Christian Science Fiction Story

Dedicated to

*Kids and Grandkids everywhere
who will be the Pioneers of the
future! May you always have one
foot on Earth and another in the
Heavens!*

Scripture taken from:

The Holy Bible, New International Version. NIV.
Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible
Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All
Rights reserved.

The Holy Bible. New Living Translation NLT
Copyright© 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House
Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House
Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All
rights reserved.

Copyright 2014 by Edward R. Blankenship

Table of Contents

Cast of Characters	6
Chapter 1 Launch of Remnant-1	7
Chapter 2 Docking	11
Chapter 3 38% G is Better than None	14
Chapter 4 Trouble Shooting 101	17
Chapter 5 Losing “Comms” with Earth	20
Chapter 6 Why am I always Sick?	23
Chapter 7 Kids Playing	26
Chapter 8 Inner Space	28
Chapter 9 Spiritual Discussions	30
Chapter 10 Are We There Yet?	35
Chapter 11 It’s a Pioneer!	37
Chapter 12 Landing	43
Chapter 13 Finding a Cave	45
Chapter 14 Making it a “Home”	51
Chapter 15 Finding Water	55
Chapter 16 Final Set-Up and Planting	57
Chapter 17 A New Thanksgiving!	59
Copy of Pamphlets given to Bill Edwards	67
One Final Word	82

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Main Characters:

Colonel Bill Edwards –Remnant Commander, Astronaut

Joy Edwards – Colonel Edwards’ wife, Registered Nurse

Jake Edwards – The Edwards oldest son

Hope Edwards – Jake’s sister

Caleb Edwards – Hope and Jake’s younger brother

Scott Ray – Joy Edwards’ brother, Chief Tech of the Remnant Mission, employee of Rocket Corp.

Ali Ray – Scott’s wife, Chef, and Physical Trainer

Lexi Ray – Hope, Jake, and Caleb’s cousin

Cece Ray - Hope, Jake, and Caleb’s other cousin

Heather Cross – NASA Astronaut

Joseph Cross – Heather’s husband

Other Characters

Dr. Nyuin Nguru – Physician

Fred Sanchez, Houston Mission Control

ZNN Evening News, Betsy Bailey (Anchor)

Mark Sampson - Chemist

Chapter 1 –

Launch of Remnant-1

As Remnant-1 blasted off the launch pad little Caleb screamed, “Ahhhhhhh!”

Colonel Bill Edwards looked back at his young son and smiled. He had never expected to see his family going into space. But the coming of WD-JCole (better known as the “Doomsday Rock”) had changed all that. Now 107 people (called Pioneers) from all over the globe were going to Mars for a one-way trip to colonize it, to save the human race IF the rock could not be stopped.

A mission to save the Earth was also being prepared for launch, but the odds were so slim that the mission to Mars looked to be the best bet for humanity.

As Remnant-1 soared high into the stratosphere, all nine people aboard the capsule hung on for dear life.

After the second stage had finished its burn and separated, they were in Earth orbit. They would stay there for 90 minutes before starting the third stage to go to Mars.

Several of them released their seat belts and slowly lifted off their seats. Hope and Lexi thought this was super cool! So did Jake. He went over to a window and looked outside.

Below him the African coast was coming into view and he said, “Wow, Mom and Dad, you need to see this!”

His sister Hope flew over to see but ran into Jake and pushed him into the window. Hope just bounced off.

“Careful you two!” said their mother Joy.

Scott Ray, Joy’s brother then got up and went over by his daughter Lexi who by now was also looking out a window. The Earth was gorgeous, yet it also looked so fragile – like you could reach out and just grab part of a land mass.

The Doomsday Rock was scheduled to hit the Moon in several weeks and then send it into Earth destroying them both. Scott thought this can’t happen!

But even if it did they were safe from it. In Remnant-1 nine people were aboard, Colonel Bill Edwards and his wife Joy and their three children Jake, Hope and Caleb. And also Scott Ray, Joy’s brother and his wife Ali and their two girls Lexi and Cece were aboard, Cece being just six months old.

All the other Remnant craft had seven Pioneers but Scott had redone the interior of Remnant-1 so both families could be together.

By now everyone in Remnant-1 had unbuckled their belts, and were looking outside at the Earth spinning below them. Ali even held baby Cece in her arms to

see. They were over a storm in India that was evident in the cloud pattern.

Someone yelled, “Look at that flash, that must have been lightning!”

“Yes”, Bill said, “I’ve heard that this could delay the launch of Remnant-4 from China so they may have to revise the schedule in order to get all 15 ships off in the eight week launch window.

For a long time they just looked out at Earth. Hardly anyone said a thing. It was the last time they would ever be this close to the Earth!

Just then, breaking the spell, Fred Sanchez with Houston Mission Control said, “Remnant-1, better get back to your seats and prepare for Trans Martian Injection (or TMI) with the firing of the third stage.

This was similar to what they did back in the late 60s and 70s when they went to the Moon, only they called it Trans Lunar Injection (or TLI).

The physics are pretty simple. To orbit the Earth you need to go about 18,000 miles per hour (or 29,000 kilometers per hour). But to leave Earth orbit and go into outer space, you had to go 25,000 mph (or 40,000 kph). The third stage rocket did that.

It took a while to get all the kids back in their seats and strapped in being in a weightless environment. But everyone helped, so it finally got done.

Bill thought about it. This would be the first time in history that humans had left Earth orbit for another planet. And his whole family was going. He just wished it didn't have to be for these reasons.

But maybe that's what it takes. Many people left Europe for North America because of persecution and the hope for a better life. This time it was leave Earth because destruction was coming and the hope of A life.

Fred counted, "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, ignition."

Immediately everyone felt the thrust push them back in their seats. This time it was Cece who was so surprised she cried.

The rocket burn lasted two minutes and it was enough to get them out of Earth orbit and onto a path that would get them to Mars nine months later.

When the engine stopped firing it was time for Bill to do one of the most important maneuvers of the whole trip. Something that had never been tried before.

The question is would it work?

But before that, everyone took off their bulky space suits. It was like "popping out of a toaster"! But that's another story!

Chapter 2 –

Docking

The idea was for the crew capsule to separate from the third stage, then turn around and dock with it again. Then it would capture a tether while docked and then slowly back away and pull out a 170 meter cable. Following that both the capsule and third stage would begin sideways thrusting (in opposite directions of course) to begin slowly spinning around the center of the tether. The idea was to create artificial gravity.

That was how it was supposed to work. The initial step, separation, went off without a hitch. So did the next step, turning the capsule around.

The problem was with docking.

Every time Bill tried to dock he couldn't get a "barber pole" capture as they say.

A "barber pole" is a fallback from the Gemini/Apollo era when two space craft dock and a picture of a barber pole appears as they get closer and eventually "grasp" on to each other the barber pole image gets complete.

The spacecraft would get close, even touch each other but not grasp as they were supposed to.

This was critical as they couldn't catch the tether until they were docked.

So Bill tried time and time again with no success.

So he contacted Mission Control asking them what to do. They said they would look into it and get back with them.

Those in the capsule were also asking what the problem was. Scott Ray, Chief Technician for Rocket Corp (and also on the flight) had an idea.

"Bill, I know these things contract when in the cold darkness of space. Then they expand when in the heat of sunlight. I suggest we try this in different dark/light conditions. Maybe one will work," said Scott.

All the while Joy was hearing all this and started to pray silently, "God, we need some gravity. Please let this idea of Scotts work. Let us be able to dock with the third stage!"

While she was praying her daughter asked, "Mommy, what are you doing?"

"I'm praying honey", Joy said.

"Can I pray too?" asked Hope.

"Sure, why don't you pray right now," said her Mom.

In a small voice Hope said, "God, help Daddy and Uncle Scott fix this. Thanks."

Then instead of saying "Amen", she told her Mom, "I know God will fix it."

Just then the barber pole lit up and Bill shouted, "Yes!"

They were finally docked! Everyone cheered!

Chapter 3 –

0.38 G is better than none!

The next step was to capture the tether while docked and then slowly back away.

Catching the tether was easy compared with the docking. It only took three tries for that to succeed!

Backing away and pulling out the tether was also very uneventful, but it did take a while. 170 meters remaining, 169, 168, etc. etc.

This was so time consuming that Bill wanted to somehow occupy the kids, so he decided to make a game of it.

When he finally got to 100 meters remaining he started singing, “99 meters to tether to go, 99 meters of tether, take one down and pass it around, 98 meters of tether to go,”

Sure enough, once he finished that line the others started to join in, “98 meters of tether to go, 98 meters of tether, take one down and pass it around, 97 meters of tether to go.”

As they sung they began pretending they were passing the tether around between them. Pretty soon all the kids were laughing!

This went on for a long time until they finally got to the last line (and the last meter of the tether), “One meter of tether to go , one meter of tether, take one down and pass it around, NO meters of tether to go.” The kids cheered this time!

Now it was time to create some artificial gravity. Bill instructed everyone to make sure their seatbelts were fastened. It took a while to make sure all the kids were fastened, but eventually Bill was ready for this maneuver.

It required him to start two thrusters simultaneously, one on the capsule, and the other on the third stage, now 170 meters away.

Mission Control having found out they were finally docked was eager to help with this. They gave a countdown and Bill and Scott then both simultaneously tripped two levers.

“On my mark, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, mark.”

Compared to the other rockets the thrusters were minimal, but two lights on the screen showed them both functioning normally.

It took a while for anyone to feel the artificial gravity, but eventually even Caleb said, "Daddy, I feel heavy again!"

Lexi said, "Me too!"

Finally they were spinning enough (two revolutions per minute) to make it feel like 38% of Earth's gravity which is the same as that of Mars.

Once that was achieved they unbuckled and while the kids learned how to "walk" in Marian gravity the parents began stowing the seats giving them some floor space.

While it was still relatively cramped, it almost seemed spacious as they all learned what it would be like to live in Martian gravity.

Jake got them all laughing when he took a little hop/skip and said, "Look, I'm doing the 'Mars' walk!" as Michael Jackson might have said!

Chapter 4 –

Troubleshooting 101

It was in the third week of their journey when they got an urgent call from mission control. Remnant-10 was having trouble. Their life support system was failing. The technician at Houston had tried to fix it, but they could not find a solution. It was getting critical as the R-10 pioneers were down to only 1 day of oxygen left!

Scott Ray began speaking to the R-10 pioneers, being patched through mission control. But soon it became apparent it would go much quicker “ship to ship”. So the modifications were made to the antennas on both ships for direct communication. Scott had literally “written the book” on troubleshooting the life support system so he knew it backwards and forwards.

He asked, “Are your oxygen fuel pumps turned on?”

The response from R-10 was “Affirmative, R-1.”

“How about your carbon packs?”

“Charged and at 100%.”

“What level is your BHP?”

“83%.”

“That’s fine. How about the O2 reading?”, Scott continued.

“65%...64%...63%...it’s dropping!”

“Try recycling off and on the O2 sesor switch.”

“OK. No change, it’s still dropping. Now 61%.”

Scott knew he had to try a different approach. He asked, “What were you doing when the life support system light first lit up?”

“We had just finished setting up our artificial gravity.”

“Did that go OK?”

“Yes, we’re at 0.38g. It’s great. The kids have even been playing soccer ball!”

Scott thought a minute. Then he asked, “Did any ball hit any of the computer equipment, displays, or switches?”

“Well, now that you mention it, in the beginning pne kick did go real wild and bounced all over the control panel.”

“OK, I’m thinking maybe that accidentally caused a problem. I’m going to ask you to do a ‘reboot’,” said Scott.

R-10 said , “OK, but won’t that take a while?”

“Only about a minute. Go to ‘Restart’ on the control panel and then press ‘Proceed’. It will ask you to confirm and so press ‘Confirm, Reset’.”

The next minute was the longest for both crews.

But as the R-10 computer came back online, the O2 level started to level off at 45%.

“R-1, our O2 is back up to 47% and climbing, so it looks like we may have solved it!”

“Let’s keep on the line until you’re back up to 100% and your life support light goes out. And let’s not play any more soccer, OK?”

“All the R-1 pioneers heard, “Awww!” over the loud speaker coming from the kids on R-10.

The only other technical problems during the trip were with Remnants-7 and 13. R-7 was unable to dock with the third stage and pull out the tether. As a result they were unable to produce any artificial gravity. All 7 of those Pioneers would need medical assistance to build themselves back when they were finally at Mars. R-13 had a problem with the second stage, but that was corrected with no complications.

Overall, things went well for the trip.

Chapter 5 –

Losing “Comms” with Earth

After several months all of the Remnant pioneer ships had taken off from Earth and were on their way to Mars. Also, all but one of the supply ships had launched successfully.

The time had finally come for the “Doomsday Rock” to enter the Earth-Moon system. Hopefully it would pass between the two bodies and cause no damage. The chances of that happening had increased to 25% due to the success of the Rescue Mission. The four rockets were still thrusting when they were on the “north” and “west” side of the rotating object, called the WD-JCole or the Doomsday Rock.

As they all awoke that morning on Remnant-1 they began listening to news reports as they were streamed live via satellite from mission control. There was now a 5 minute delay in transmission due to the distance from Earth.

All the Remnant crews had closed shutters on the capsule windows as it became unnerving to continually have the stars go by and then the sun, as the capsule and third stages spun on their tethers.

So when the rock finally came by the Moon no one from any Remnant ships were directly watching, they were only listening to broadcasts via satellite. The R-1 pioneers heard the news like this:

“This is Betsy Bailey of ZNN News reporting on the fate of the Earth as the Doomsday Rock approaches the Moon. Scientists say the Rescue Rockets have done all they can and now they give Earth a 45% chance of survival. That’s still not great, but up significantly from 15% several months ago. And we all want to thank NASA for what they’ve done, regardless of the outcome, as we had virtually no chance for survival before. Now it’s about 50-50.”

Betsy’s voice broke up as the emotion got to her, but then she continued, “So here’s hoping and praying!”

“We also want to thank and wish them all well to the 15 Remnant pioneer ships who are now well on their way to Mars to colonize it, again regardless of what happens to Earth today. The lead ship, Remnant 1 is now 56 million miles from Earth and has another 7 months on its journey to Mars. All 107 pioneers aboard the 15 ships from all over the world carry our genes to populate a new world. They will carry on for us, regardless.”

At that point Betsy got choked up again.

“I’m sorry ladies and gentlemen, but this is a hard news cast to give. Please forgive me!”

She composed herself some more and then went on, "The object is now approaching the Moon. You can even see it in the sky now if you live in Austrailia. We have a live feed from there. It is huge, ladies and gentlemen, almost half the size of the Moon. Will it miss? Oh God, please make it miss!"

A short moment later she said, Ladies and gentlemen, it looks like it's going in front of the Moon, hopefully it will miss entirely." But then her tone changed as she said, "Oh no! We're getting reports from orbiting satellites that it has in fact hit the Moon. They see a sizeable chunk of something. And oh, there's now some sort of dust and debris forming around the object as it continues to pass by the Moon. It must be scraping it! And there appears to be what looks like a "shock-wave" expanding rapidly from the Moon that is coming towards Earth! Ladies and gentlemen, this may be the en..."

At that point the transmission from Earth ceased.

After that last newscast, the Remnant pioneers opened their shutters and tried to look back at the Earth and Moon. But all they could see was a huge cloud of debris! They never heard anything else from Earth. They were now definitely on their own!

Chapter 6 –

Why am I always Sick?

The other NASA astronaut that got to go on Remnant was Heather Cross with her husband Joe. They had been married two years now and had no children. They were on R-2, Heather being the Commander of that ship.

Around one month into the mission Heather started feeling nauseated. She figured it was coming from the rotation of the Remnant capsule on the tether, but none of the other pioneers had this issue.

So Heather radio'd Joy Edwards who was a registered nurse to see what she thought her nausea could be from.

To Heather's surprise, Joy's first words were, "Why don't you get out one of the pregnancy test kits and see what it shows?"

"Oh no", Heather said, "That can't be, we don't want to have a child now. Maybe not even never. And we definitely don't want a child now here...on this ship! What else can we check for?"

Joy was quiet and then said, "Let's rule this out, OK. I know it's not what you want right now, so let's do the test and that will give me time to think of what else we can check for next. If need be, I'll contact Dr. Nguru on Remnant-8."

Heather finally agreed and reluctantly took the pregnancy test. Doing it on the ship involved using the portable toilet enclosure which all were still getting used to. It was really weird in 0.38g, but we won't go there!

As she conducted the test the unit said,
"Congratulations, you are pregnant!"

She didn't want to hear that and so she reset it and tried again. For the second time the machine repeated,
"Congratulations, you are pregnant!"

So she ran the unit through its diagnostics, and it said,
"Unit is functioning normally."

She then turned it off and reset it to factory specs. Then she tried it again. She got the same result a third time!

Heather panicked! What would she and Joe do? She realized that by now she must be around two months pregnant because there had been no room for sex in the capsule!

Then it hit her! Their baby was going to be born in space before they landed on Mars! She panicked again! Maybe there was some way to delay birth? But that would mean she would have to land the ship being at least 10 months pregnant! That wasn't possible, either. Oh God, what was she going to do?

Chapter 7 –

Kids Playing

After word got out about Hether's condition, everyone was thrilled and very supportive. Joy Edwards and Dr. Nguru talked with Heather at length and he prescribed some medicine that helped with the nausea.

(Fortunately each ship had a med pack!) She even started taking pre-natal vitamins they had on board. It sure was great Rocket Corp. had thought of that and that there was room enough on the ships for that!

As the kids on Remnant-2 saw Heather's stomach get bigger they would pat it as they "Mars-walked" by!

Kids on the other ships wished her well too and started choosing names for the baby and would pass it on to Heather and Joe to think about.

It was sure good that there were kids on every ship. That ultimately made the time go by faster – for the adults at least!

Soccer was now banned on all ships after the Remnant-10 episode, but there were other games.

The girls especially liked a form of hopscotch because when you jumped you stayed up for a bit before coming down.

Boys liked to see how high they could jump from a standing position.

And the littlest kids like to walk around squatting, but the adults had to be careful so they didn't step on them! It was all different, but definitely very fun!

Chapter 8 –

Inner Space

It was certainly not easy being cooped up in a tin can for nine months with six to eight others! The capsule was made as spacious as possible with the seats removed and a net was suspended near what was called the “ceiling” for resting, sitting, and sleeping. Everyone slept at the same time and they had adopted the Martian day light schedule at the location they will be landing at in a few months. They also continued to listen for broadcasts from Earth and occasionally sent back mission updates, but they had heard nothing now from Earth for months.

As mentioned earlier, there was a portable toilet with a wrap around enclosure for privacy. There was also a portable shower also with a wraparound enclosure. It recycled the water and purified it for the next user. There was also a fold-up chairs and table set for eating.

There were no books on board, they were in the supply ships, but everybody over age three had a tablet with all the reading materials they liked and had picked out earlier. Everything ever written, photographed, or video'd on Earth had been digitized and put into each of the supply ships. So they had the entire knowledge,

technology, and history of all of Earth's civilizations once they got there. What they wished they could have brought along was the other eight billion people!

Chapter 9 –

Spiritual Discussions

Roughly half of the 107 pioneers had turned to Christianity before they launched. The rest were of different religions or were atheists.

Joy had talked to her husband Bill about God and Jesus and at first he had been slow to accept God would allow all this. But when he saw the change in Joy's life his heart softened. She was so much more loving and understanding and accepting than before. Plus she seemed to have an inner peace. Bill liked being around her now. Which was great because they were together 24/7!

One day Bill had asked Joy, "Honey, what do I need to do to have what you have?"

Joy responded, "Bill it's not me, it's Jesus. You need to realize that you've done things wrong and those things are called sin, and they separate you from God. You need forgiveness and Jesus, God's Son died to bring you and God together. To pay for your sins by dieing on the cross for you. He's alive Bill even though we can't see Him. But I can sense Him and He's knocking at everybody's heart, wanting to become part of their life. Do you sense Him knocking now, Bill?"

"I think so", he said.

"Well, do you want to have Him be part of your life?" she said.

He answered, "Yes, I sure want what you have and I'm concerned about going to Mars. It will be pretty austere and so I need all the help I can get!"

Joy said, "That's great, honey! Why don't we pray together and you can ask Jesus to be part of your life."

"Will you help me pray", he said?

"Sure, I'll pray first, then you can pray either what I prayed or use your own words"

Joy then said, "God, we thank you for keeping us together and safe here. We thank you for forgiving our sins. We thank you for Jesus and for Him coming into our life if we ask Him. I did that and now Bill wants to ask you into His heart too."

Joy paused and looked at Bill.

Bill then prayed, "God, I've never done this before, but I sure agree with Joy. I do sense You knocking on my life. I don't know exactly what it means, but I want Jesus in my life the same way Joy does!"

They hugged one another, and Joy showed Bill some things she had on her tablet. She had a Bible, the pamphlet her friend Liz had given her on Earth about

receiving God's gift, and also another one on how to spend time with God daily. She told Bill that when people speak, words come out.

Bill said, "Sure, of course."

Joy continued, "Well when God speaks words come out too. And His words are written down in the Bible. As we read it, God 'talks to us' from it."

"How", asked Bill?

"Well let's look at one of the Psalms in the Bible, Psalm 23."

Joy found Psalm 23 and read from it.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I will not want."

"What do you think God might be saying to us in our situation from that verse, Bill?"

Bill said, "Well could he be saying that He will provide for us on Mars?"

"Yes, I think so", said Joy. And also that He is our shepherd. A shepherd takes care of and watches out for his sheep. So God will take care of us and watch out for us too, even on Mars!"

"Let's read some more", said Joy.

"He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."

“What do you think God could be saying to you through that, Bill?”

“Well, maybe He’s saying we’ll make a go of it on Mars. We need to grow some crops, find some still water, which will probably be ice. But what does ‘He restores my soul mean?’”

“Well, I think it means that He can speak to us everyday and make us feel happy spiritually, like we do now!”

“That’s kind of cool”, said Bill.

“Joy replied, Yes, you know how you and I like to talk and how we feel better when we do? Well, in the same way we’ll feel better spiritually, so to speak, as we talk with Him daily.”

“I see”, said Bill. “Can you give me your Bible?”

She touched her tablet to his and he had it. She also gave him the two pamphlets she had.

She then said, “You know how when we were first dating you saved all my love letters and e-mails? Well I saved yours too! Well those things God says to you as you read His Word is His love letters to you, so to speak. So one thing I do is keep a journal of what stands out to me when I read and talk with Him. Let me show you how. We just read Psalm 23:1-2 and the thing that stood out to me the most was that God helps me relax in the midst of all this.” And as she said it, she pointed

down to all the commotion on the floor below. “That’s important to me, she said, so I put that verse here in my journal. Then I record my thought on that verse. Finally I make a prayer out of it or sometime I think of something I should do. Then I talk with God about what He just showed me.”

“Kind of 2-way communication, huh?” said Bill.

“That’s right! Then after talking with God about what He’s showed me, then I talk with Him about other things. By the way, talking with God is called prayer.

Here’s what it all looked like:

Date: Today What I read: Psalms 23 Best Verse: 1-2

What it said: God leads me beside still water.

How it impressed me: God helps me relax in the midst of commotion.

My response: Lord, help me relax in you! Thank you for your peace!

“I’ve kept these now since I started doing this after I became a Christian before we left for Mars. I want to do it every day so I don’t miss what God has to tell me.”

“That’s a great idea,” said Bill. Why don’t I do it too and then we can get together once a day and share what God has shown us?”

“That’s great, Bill! Let’s make it a date!”

Chapter 10 –

Are We There Yet?

Some things never change. On any trip the kids eventually get restless.

This finally happened one day on the nine month journey to Mars.

Lexi Ray started it. She got up from her sleep and was eating. You could tell something was bothering her. Her mom said, “What’s wrong, honey? Something bothering you?”

“No, I’m just bored.”

“But you have your sister and cousins to play with all day. And you have your studies too.”

“I know, but it’s the same thing day in and day out! Why aren’t we there yet? It’s been too long!”

Ali replied, “No, we’re not there yet, but we’re getting there. We still have a little less than a month. Tell you what, let’s ask the other kids if they are having fun, OK?”

“All right,” said Lexi.

So they asked Jacob, “Are you having fun, Jacob?”

He said, “Somewhat. Are we there yet?”

“See!” said Lexi.

They asked Hope, “Are you having fun?”

Hope said, “I guess. Are we there yet?”

Lexi again said, “See what I mean!”

They asked Caleb, “Caleb are you having fun?”

He said, “Yes, but are we there yet?”

Ali said, “I see a pattern here.”

Lexi again said, “See what I mean! We’re all bored!”

While Cece couldn’t answer you could tell that sometimes she got bored too!

In fact, now that you mention it, Ali was bored too. Her mind screamed out in her head, “Are we there yet?”

It was getting to all of them!

Chapter 11 –

It's a Pioneer!

The next day was anything but boring on several of the spaceships. Heather Cross the astronaut on Remnant-2 woke up that morning and was shuffling about the capsule. Being almost nine months pregnant was no fun, but she was so glad to have the morning sickness behind her.

She had gained forty-five pounds and that extra weight and girth made it almost impossible to move about with six others in their cramped quarters.

She had enjoyed the conversation with Joy Edwards, her nurse, on R-1, and Dr. Nguru on Remnant –8, and also Ali Ray on R-1 who had given her some exercises to help her keep in shape.

As an aside, exercise was a problem in simulated Martian gravity for everyone. So Ali had come up with a workout plan all followed. She had to modify it for those on Remnant-7 who didn't have any gravity. And she was putting together something to help those Pioneers when they got to Mars. It would be especially tough on them!

Anyway, back to Heather. She was doing her exercises after breakfast.

“One, two, three”, as she lifted her hand weights. Then, “four, five, six” as she put her arm out straight. Then she said, “seven, eight, nine” as she lifted them completely overhead.

It was then that she said, “Oh, that hurts!” to her husband Joe.

He said, “Sure that’s what exercises do – they hurt some!”

“No, I mean I feel a cramp in my lower abdomen. I think I better sit down.”

By now, Joe was getting a little concerned and he said, “Are you OK?”

Heather replied, “I’m not sure, I’ve never had anything hurt like that. But it seems to have gone away now that I’m sitting. Must have pulled a muscle I guess.

Joe went back to what he was doing, but in a couple of minutes he saw Heather double over and moan.

“Oh”, she said again, “That really hurts!”

“Oh my”, Joe said, “Could you be having contractions?”

Between breaths she said, “I don’t know. Maybe..”

“Why don’t you sit down here and let me contact Dr. Nguru or Joy.

“OK!” she said, between clenched teeth.

The comm. Link didn’t work with R-8 where Dr.Nguru was, for some reason, but Joe contacted Joy on R-1.

Joy said, “What’s up, Joe? Something wrong with Heather?”

“Yeah, she’s doubled over and said it hurts real bad! It started a few minutes ago, and then it stopped. Then it happened again. She’s sitting down now and maybe getting better. We couldn’t talk to the Doc so we called you!”

“Oh no, there she’s in pain again!”

“Joe, I’m going to time this. Tell me when she stops having pain and then also if she starts having it again, OK?”

“Sure”, Joe said. By now the other Pioneers aboard R-2 were all gathered around Heather. Joe told Joy, “I think the pain has stopped again because she’s looking better. Maybe it’s just a bug, huh?”

“I don’t think so Joe, but let’s see. Tell me if she has any more pain as soon as it starts again.”

Just then Heather cried out, “Ohhh”, and really doubled over this time.

Joe didn't have to tell Joy, she heard that. Joy said, "That's three minutes between contractions, I bet she's trying to have the baby Joe!"

Joe said again, "Oh my, what do I do?"

Joe said, "Lay her down and get some water on a rag for her forehead. What is she wearing?"

"Sweats."

"Great! She probably needs some privacy. Can you ask someone to put up some portable curtains?"

Joe said, "Can someone help us? We need some privacy, OK?"

Before long the curtsain was up and Heather was lying down. The other woman, Sue, was at her head using the wet rag on her forehead. Heather was really sweating.

"What happened to the temperature in here? We're burning up! Are we facing the sun or something?"

"No, it's just you!" said Sue. Just try to relax.

Just then Heather yelled, "Ahhhh!" She grabbed Joe's hand real hard!

"Ouch", he said as he tried to get loose.

Joy said, "Joe, take off Heather's pants and underwear and then prop up her feet like you've seen in movies

when women have babies and then put a sheet over her, OK?”

“Yeah. Someone just gave me one!”

Heather bent down between contractions and took off her clothes. Joy then asked Joe to look under the sheet.

“Oh my, she’s huge!”

“Calm down Joe, that’s normal. She’s getting ready for the baby to come out.”

Then Joy asked, “Heather, can you hear me?”

“Yes”, said Heather.

“Heather, the next time it starts I want you to push real hard, OK?”

“Yes, I’ll do it!”

Just then another contraction started and Heather bore down and pushed with her muscles. She said, “Uhhhh!” Joe said, “I see a head!”

“Great! You’re doing good Heather! Keep at it! Joe, you watch the baby’s head.”

Joe put his hand there and gently held the baby’s head.

On the next contraction Heather bore down again and got the baby’s shoulders out. Joe continued to hold the

head. Sue kept reassuring Heather she was doing real good and holding her hand.

On the final contraction, Heather bore down real hard and screamed really loud and very quickly the baby came out completely into Joe's hands.

He said, "Oh wow, it's a boy!" and he really did 'beam' if you could ever do that, he was so proud!

Joy said, "Joe, lay the baby in Heather's arms and wrap him up with the sheet."

"What about all this other stuff?" he said. "Don't worry about that yet, let's just get mommy and the baby together, OK?"

"Heather, are you doing OK?"

"Yes, I'm so happy!" and she started to cry. "He's beautiful!" Heather said. Let's name him Edward Joseph after my father.

"Yes. Hello little guy! You're super!" said Joe.

"I agree, congratulations you two!" said Sue.

"Yes, congratulations to both of you!" said Joy. "You've just had the first outer space baby in history!"

"Oh no, I don't want him to be known by that", Heather said. "Let's just say he's 'Pioneer Ed!'"

!

Chapter 12 – Landing

Little “Pioneer Ed” actually started being called “Pi” for short!

They were all true Pioneers, all 108 of them now. And the most crucial part of their journey was upon them – landing!

As each Remnant ship got within 10,000 kilometers of Mars they released their tethers and sent their third stages into Martian orbit.

The capsules would come in at mach 6 and utilize “aero-braking” in the Martian atmosphere as well as use retro rockets to slow down.

At an altitude of one mile the commander of each ship will utilize cameras to determine the best landing site. All 15 ships are to land within a one mile radius of the supply ships that landed first. All the supply ships were within a few kilometers of the Vastitis Borealis Plain and the known crater with ice. It would take five weeks for all 15 Remnant ships to land.

Remant-1 was first. Nine months to the day from leaving Earth, preparations were taken to begin to land. Colonel Bill Edwards got up early that morning and made sure everything was nominal (normal) with the

ship. He then began firing the thrusters on the capsule and third stage in the opposite direction from what they were rotating. This would stop their rotation, but would also stop their artificial gravity.

He then ordered all the Pioneers aboard his Remnant ship (namely his family and his wife's brother's family) to begin putting their seats back into place so they could be strapped in.

With gravity beginning to be reduced, that made it easier to get each of the seats out of storage and into their locks on the floor. In addition to the adults, all of the kids were able to help as well, except for one-year old Cece, although she sure tried. "I get it, Mommy", she said.

"Thanks Honey for your help. I'll give you a hand", her Mom said.

After everyone was buckled in and the rotation stopped, Colonel Edwards released the tether and sent the third stage into Martian orbit. Then he turned the capsule around so the heat shield would absorb the friction from aero-braking into the thin Martian atmosphere.

At 10 miles up he also fired the retro rockets which further slowed them down.

It was very turbulent coming through the Martian atmosphere at this speed. Lexi tried to talk, but her

words stuttered out, “Bbbeee cccareffff Uncccle
Bbbilll!”

Cece started crying and so did Caleb.

Hope and Jake were concerned, but didn’t say anything.
Hope gripped her armrest real hard!

At one mile up Bill turned on the cameras and saw that
all four supply ships were all on the surface and in good
condition, close to their planned landing spot!

He took hold of the stick and flew over one spot
between two of them. Dust went up as he got close to
the surface, and as a result of training he said, “100
meters, 75 meters, 50 meters, seeing more dust, 25
meters, revising attitude (tilt of the ship), increasing
thrust slightly, 10 meters, 7 meters, 3 meters, 2, 1,
touchdown!”

Everyone realized they had been holding their breath.
They all collectively took a big breath and cheered.

“Yeahhhh!” Jake said.

“Good job honey!” cried Joy.

“Super, Bill!” said Scott.

“Do it again Daddy!” said Caleb. “Do it again!”

Everyone laughed!

Chapter 13 –

Finding a Cave

As they had several days before Remnant-2 landed some of them decided to get out and explore a bit.

Before they did, however, Bill first sent a message to Earth (even though they didn't know if anyone was left to receive it).

“Houston, and all of Earth, this is Remnant-1 speaking to you from the surface of Mars. We have landed and all 9 Pioneers aboard are doing well! Further updates will follow.”

After getting the message away, Bill discussed with the others in the ship and it was decided that first no children should go outside. Ali would stay inside with their kids and also watch the Edwards' children as Joy also wanted to go out.

So Scott, Joy, and Bill would be the first humans to set foot on Mars. That was the plan.

But Jake was now almost 13 years old and he asked his Dad, “Why can't I go? I'm as big as a man! Plus I've always wanted to be the first person to set foot on another planet!”

Bill realized Jake certainly was as tall now as Joy, that he really wanted to go, and that he knew a lot about science. It did make some sense to bring him along. Plus he could help them look for a cave to live in. (That was one of Jake's interests – spelunking!)

So Bill said it was OK with him. They all got into their spacesuits and sure enough Jake was first into the airlock and out the door.

He jumped out and when he landed, red dust flew up and hid him from view of the others for a minute.

Then as the dust started to settle and the view cleared up he looked kind of like Darth Vader rising up from a fog! Then Jake said, "That's one jump for a boy, one giant leap for people everywhere."

The others groaned, but they did all realize as they came out the seriousness of this moment as they looked around and realized two things:

1) They literally were on the very surface of Mars!

2) This was to be their new home!

Both realizations were Earth-shattering to say the least!

The view of the surface of Mars was stark but awesome. The sky had a reddish cast to it from the dust that's in the Martian atmosphere. The sun was high overhead and the surface looked like desert with mountains in the distance. There was huge crater in front of them

and they could all feel a slight pressure pushing them to one side as there was a decent (50 mph) wind blowing at the moment.

It truly was alien in every imagination of the word!

They set off towards the crater looking for an opening of some sort. Something like a cave or what is called a “lava tube” that the Pioneers could live in.

They found one opening and went inside, but it was large enough for only one or two families at most. Jake liked it so he took a paint marker he had and painted “Jake’s Cave” on it, the first graffiti on Mars!

They went on and found what must have been a lava tube. It should be big enough inside, but the opening had been damaged so they couldn’t get in. They would need excavation equipment for that. Bill marked this with an “X” using fluorescent marker paint.

As they continued they went down in the crater when Scott said, “Hey guys, what’s that over there?”

It was a huge boulder and what looked like an opening beside it.

They went over and it was definitely an opening big enough for them to go inside.

Bill suggested that he and Jake go in first and Joy and Scott wait outside.

Bill said, "That way if anything happens and we're not back in 20 minutes, you can radio back to the ship and get some additional lights."

Joy was a little reluctant, but Bill's plan made sense. The kids would need her, and a rescue mission if needed would need Scott.

So Jake and his Dad went in. It went slowly downhill at first, then got a little tight after the first 30 meters. But then to their surprise it opened up into a tremendous cavern.

"This will be perfect", Bill shouted! "We'll be shielded from the solar radiation and we can seal everything to make this airtight. We can widen the entrance to get the equipment we need in and then put a door on the outside with an airlock. Maybe even bust up that boulder and use it somehow. What do you think Jake?"

Jake said, "Dad, this would be big enough for almost a village here. I like it!"

They went out and were surprised to find Joy and Scott off looking elsewhere. They radio'd to them and they returned.

Bill said, "Hey, we found what could be our new home. Would you like to see it?"

Only if you promise to carry me over the threshold dear," said Joy jokingly.

So they all went in (everyone walking on their own) and after getting through the one tight spot they all stood in the huge cavern.

“This is awesome!” said Joy.

“Perfect!” said Scott.

“I think we can make separate houses for every family, Mom. What do you think?” asked Jake.

“Well maybe not houses exactly, but there’s definitely enough room for cottages, and a hospital and even a school.”

“Aw Mom! Now you’ve ruined it!”

They all laughed!

Chapter 14 –

Making it a “Home”

After they got back and told the others aboard the ship they all went outside to “stretch” their legs and look around.

Remnant-2 landed a couple of days later, and Remnants 3-5 a few days after that.

Once they had enough men to do some heavy lifting they took a party and went to one of the Supply Ships to get some gear. Joy went with them to get everything on video.

Each Supply Ship carried the following:

- Seeds
- Fish eggs
- Freeze Dried Foods
- Soil
- Water
- Plants
- Lights
- Rover Vehicle
- Truck
- Spacesuits
- Solar Panels
- Batteries

- Greenhouse
- Manufacturing Equipment
- Backhoe
- Sealant
- Building Materials
- Air Tanks
- Miscellaneous Supplies

After getting the supplies they needed, they went to the cave.

After they went in, two men stayed at the entrance and enlarged it slightly so it was easier to get in.

The rest went into the cave. They all agreed that it was definitely going to be big enough!

They decided to put sealant on the inside of the ceiling and walls of the cavern. This would allow it to keep an Earth atmosphere. As a nice touch it was a sky blue color.

So six men went to work and within two days they had the entire cavern sealed.

At the same time two men found that there was a second entrance to the cave on the opposite side from the original opening.

This second entrance was much bigger than the first, big enough to bring in bigger gear.

So it was decided to build doors and an air lock for both entrances.

It took a week to build the doors and airlocks, but after that they began pumping air into the cavern.

They also brought in plants and artificial lighting to make even more oxygen and to scrub the air of carbon dioxide. It took another two days for the air to be breathable such that the men and Joy could finally take off their spacesuits.

“What a relief!” exclaimed Scott.

“Hey, this isn’t half bad!” said Bill.

Joy took tons of pictures and videos to bring back and show the others. She also got an idea.

“Do we have any white paint?” she asked.

“What for?” answered Scott.

“To paint some fluffy clouds so the kids feel more at home.”

Bill overheard and said, “Hey, that’s a great idea! I wonder if we could also intersperse it with some stars that would only show in the dark?”

“If we could do that we should try to make the star patterns as realistic as possible. Jake can help us with that.”

Good idea, But let's do the clouds for now."

So after finishing everything they went and got the rest of the Pioneers who had arrived so far. By now Remnants 6, 7, and 8 had landed so the population of the colony was already over 60!

All of them, once they had gotten inside, removed their space suits and were amazed!

"This is wonderful" said Ali! "I didn't expect anything like this!" And she started to cry.

Scott went over to her and gave her a hug. "I hope you really do like it Hon" he said.

"It reminds me of Earth. Its home! I didn't expect that!" And she continued to cry.

Chapter 15 –

Finding Water

But they weren't done yet! They had some water, but would need more to survive long-term. The men put on their suits and went out the airlock and got in the trucks they had. They went toward the ice field at the bottom of the crater. It was rocky and occasionally they would slide a bit, but with three trucks now they could pull one another out if they got stuck.

They got down to the bottom and were thrilled that it sure enough was ice! It was dry ice as they had expected, but they bore down into it hoping there might be water ice down below.

Technically, scientists on Earth had told them there should be water ice below, but no one could be 100% sure. They said the crucial thing was to make sure they drilled down deep enough!

Their first hole yielded no water ice, just dry ice. Same with their second, third, fourth, and fifth holes.

But the plug from the sixth hole, which was from much deeper, started looking different.

Mark Sampson, a chemist said, "That looks like that could contain some water ice to me!"

"You're the expert Mark, but I think you're right! said Bill Edwards real excitedly.

"Hallelujah!" said Scott Ray.

So they dug down and brought back literally a ton of what looked like water ice.

Sam, who was from Minnesota said, "Best ice fishing I've ever done!"

All of them laughed!

Chapter 16 –

Final Set Up and Planting

When they got back they melted the ice, purified it, and then did two things with it.

First, they filled up their water tank which would give the colony drinking water for seven days!

Second, they also made a small fish pond. Then they got some fish eggs out of storage and put them in the water. They also put in some aquatic plants.

Within a week they had some small fish! It would take a while, but eventually they would have meat to eat as well as vegetables, all grown on Mars!

Some of the colony went about making individual shelters or cottages for each family. They weren't huge, basically one room for each, but it was a start. Privacy would be nice after nine months in a tin can.

They also build a small hospital and brought in the medical supplies. Dr. Nguru and Joy Edwards were in charge of that.

In spite of wild protests from Jake and a few other kids, they also built a one-room school house. This would give the kids something to do every day.

One group of Pioneers set up an outside greenhouse and established it with a variety of plants. All may not grow, but it was hoped that some of them would.

Another group also went out and set up a windmill and some solar arrays for power. They would need that, especially during winter months when it would get down to a miserable 200 degrees below zero Fahrenheit!

Inside, someone even painted some stars on the ceiling of the cave in fluorescent paint so they looked like the night sky for the little kids when they went to sleep.

Even the adults appreciated that. Nice!

Chapter 17 –

A New Thanksgiving!

By now, summer was coming to a close and the outside temperature was dropping.

All the Pioneers had landed now and the items from the four Supply Ships were outside the cave. They even had hollowed out a garage for the vehicles.

Each day everyone had tasks to do, including the children.

Jake – Lay out all school supplies each morning.

Hope – Lay out all kid's clothes each night.

Caleb – Sweep up around the cottages.

Lexi – Pick up any trash laying around.

Cece – Make sure the fish are wiggling!

The other 57 children in the colony also had tasks to do along with tasks for every adult. No one “sat on their hands”, that was for sure

One group of adults led by Scott Ray worked on all their equipment. They had to repair everything, so they had

rigged up a “machine shop”. Scott was the Service Manager, so to speak.

Another group lead by Ali Ray prepared all the meals for the group. She also helped Joy and Dr. Nguru at the hospital. The Pioneers from Remnant 7 that didn’t have any artificial gravity were still in physical therapy, but they were all doing much better.

And Bill Edward was the defacto leader of the colony. Besides talking with people and helping with the myriad of hard decisions, he also kept going back to the ship and sent word to Earth regularly as to their progress. And hopefully, to hear something back from Earth. He had it set up to automatically record anything that was received. But unfortunately nothing had come.

One day, as he walked back to the cave he remembered that today was designated as the first official holiday for the colony – Thanksgiving! Bill was excited, so he hurried back.

Ali, with help from others, had made a wonderful meal of vegetables and even their first few fish!

Each family sat on a blanket in a portion of the cave affectionately called “The Park” where they had made a raised bed with some soil from Earth and had planted some hearty drought-resistant grass. The kids loved to play there!

Once they were all sitting down, Bill Edwards got up.

He said, “This is a monumental day! It is the first time that people from Earth have had a holiday on Mars! And it’s particularly appropriate that it should be called ‘A New Thanksgiving!’

Because, I believe that we are all thankful. I know I certainly am. If you had known me before our journey you would have called me ‘an angry man’. I know my wife and kids probably thought that at times even if they didn’t say it. I was also a discouraged man. Discouraged because of what was going to happen to the world and I thought to me and my family. Yet here I am, and here are you! There was a different plan for all of us. As the ancient book of Jeremiah says, ‘I know the plans I have for you....plans to give you a future and a hope!’

Yes, if you had known me before I had no hope. But now I do. In fact I get some renewed hope every morning. First of all from all of you, and I thank you greatly for that. But I also get hope every morning from my Lord.

I know not all of you are Christians, and that’s OK, but I do know that coming here wasn’t easy and took real faith. Faith in yourself and I believe faith in a higher power. My faith journey started on the ship thanks to my wife, and it continues every day as God speaks to me.

So I'd like to close by reading from an ancient wisdom book that is revered by Muslims, Hebrews, and Christians. A book used by all the major religions in the world. I will be reading from Psalm 23, and I think you may have heard it before.

Verse 1 – 'The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.'

Yes, we do have all we need. Maybe not all we want, but all we need.

Verse 2 – 'He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,'

We do have a small grenn meadow that you're sitting on. And we do have some very still waters, both the frozen ice outside and our new fish pond inside.

Verse 3 – 'He refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.'

I believe we all feel renewed and refreshed when we came together here today. It really helps being together, especially here on Mars, doesn't it!

Verse 4 – 'Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;

your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.'

You see this place is like that. Mars can be kind of scary.
But we don't have to be afraid. For we're not alone
folks. I believe we aren't alone. God is here with us!

Verse 5 – 'You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.'

Here is our feast, thanks to Ali and the others. We may
not have a lot, but I think you'll all agree we have
enough.

Verse 6 – 'Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.'

I personally have found that God follows and pursues
me. His love is there and real. I hope you'll find the
same. If not, and you have questions, I'd love to talk
with you about it.

Finally, I believe that no matter where we go, yes, even
to Mars, God is with us. I would hate to think we're
here alone. I'm so glad we're not!

So before we get our food, let me thank God for it.

God, we thank you for this food, we thank you for your safety, and we thank you for bringing us here to celebrate this day. Amen.” Then Bill added, “In Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

After Bill finished, the food was served, they all ate, and they had a very good time.

But reality was about to set in. Winter on Mars was coming with temperatures outside of 200 below zero Fahrenheit and winds of 50 miles per hour. Could they survive to next summer? Only God would know.

And what about Earth? Was humanity truly gone, except for this small handful (a remnant) on this hostile planet? And would they ever know what finally happened to the others they knew and loved on that fateful day?

Later that day, the Pioneers placed a plaque on the wall of their cave in case they didn’t make it through their first Martian winter: They wanted a witness of who they were.

The plaque read:

**Near this spot people from planet Earth first set foot
on Mars as a colony to live. 108 Pioneers including
one born in route.**

We come to Mars as a “Remnant” from Earth!

From North America

Bill Edwards
Joy Edwards
Jake Edwards
Hope Edwards
Caleb Edwards
Scott Ray
Ali Ray
Lexi Ray
Cece Ray
Heather Cross
Joseph Cross
Edward Joseph Cross
Peter Young Sr.
Sue Young
Peter Young Jr.
Amanda Young
Evelyn Young

From Europe

Mark Sampson
Alastaire Lambert
Adalbjorg Lambert
Oleftina Lambert
Edward Walker
Mary Walker
Agnessa Walker
William Peterson

From Asia

Nuyin Nguru
Adrika Nguru
Abhimanyu Li
Bich Li
Abhimanyu Li
Abdulah Khanzada Rajput
Akari Park
Aido Mohammad
Obra Mohammad
Bold Mohammad
Abhyudita Mohammad
Abisneha Mohammad
Materasu Mohammad
Bedisa Mohammad
Aito Meng
Aishwarya Meng
Akiyoshi Meng
Aadideva Meng
Yame Meng
Aito Zhū
Abra Zhū
Aadi Zhū
Baojia Satō
Ayeme Satō
Agrata Satō
Amaterasu Satō
Sato Gupta

Mary Peterson
Alexander Peterson
Helen Peterson
Abigail Mayer
Alice Rossi
Betty White

From South America

Adelmo Araújo Sr.
Abilena Araújo
Adelmo Araújo Jr.
Diego Araújo
Jahida Araújo
Adelgonda Araújo
Ciano Araújo
Aciano Ortiz
Abrille Ortiz
Mia Ortiz
Aloma Ortiz
Abelino Ortiz
Jose Ortiz
Pedro Ortiz

From Australia, New Zealand, Oceania

Bernard White
Adaline White
Ysha White
Audrianna White
Aiden White
Bethany Paige
Noartina Ailen

Iriiha Gupta
Bishamon Gupta
Peter Klein
Betty Klein
Abigail Klein
Binh Wáng
Abhijishya Wáng
Keno Wáng
Agendra Thakur
Asami Thakur
Aroon Thakur
Aito Suleymanov
Linah Suleymanov
Benjirou Dewan
Bayarmaa Matsumoto

From Africa

Prince Fahib
Abasha Fahib
Yedosh Fahib
Alaeisha Fahib
Kantook Fahib
Pantook Fahib
Balott Fahib
Ambonisye Onwuatiegwu
Asmahani Onwuatiegwu
Abeeku Onwuatiegwu
Akin Onwuatiegwu
Ambonisye Onwuatiegwu
Asali Onwuatiegwu
Amne Onwuatiegwu

To be continued in Book 3
Remnant: Decision Point

Pamphlets given to Bill Edwards

*Are You Firmly Rooted in
Life?*



*Able to Withstand Life's
Storms?*

We all have difficult times that come into our lives!

Things like Demanding Work, a Stressful Marriage, Rebellious Teens, Health Issues, Money Problems, Time Management, etc. You may have experienced some of these.

What is the secret to coping? Some try drinking or drugs – things that numb the mind and make them go away for a few minutes or hours. Others try getting another partner, but the new partner eventually causes stress too! Others go heavily into debt, but that raises its own problems. What's a person to do?

What can you build your life on to withstand the storms of life?

Jesus said 2,000 years ago that we need to build our house (our life if you will) upon the rock, not upon sand. He said that if you build your life on the rock, then when the rain and the storms and the winds of life come and beat down, you will not fall because you are on a solid foundation – a rock!

That rock is Jesus Christ. (See Matthew 7:24-27)

Being Firmly Rooted in Christ!

But how do we build our house upon Jesus and get firmly rooted in Him? Is it hard to do that? Wouldn't it be nice if it was easy, like getting a gift? Well it is! God wants to give us a gift, the G-I-F-T of Salvation. You see the Christian life is the most rewarding experience possible, because it is a relationship with a person, the person of Jesus Christ. Biblical Christianity is God reaching down to us, caring for us, and accepting us just the way we are. It's a G-I-F-T, not something we earn.

G - God Loves Us and Has a Wonderful Plan

Some people say God couldn't possibly be concerned about them. But look at 1 Peter 5:7 and John 3:16. They say God does love us and has a wonderful plan for us – eternal life.

1 Peter 5:7 - Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

John 3:16- God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

I – I Sin (Do Things Wrong) - We all Do in Fact

But there is a problem. The Bible says all people have something in common. Instead of the life God intended, we mess it up, and there is an awful result. Look at Romans 3:23 and Romans 5:12. Our sin separates us from God. Some people think the way to win favor with God is to be a good person and do good works. But look at what the Bible says in Ephesians 2:8, 9. We simply can't earn our way to heaven!

Romans 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 5:12 - Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--

Ephesians 2:8, 9 - It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast

F – Forgiveness is through Christ

With people in such a helpless situation, God didn't just leave us hanging. He sent Jesus for us. See Romans 5:8. To those who say there are many ways to heaven, the

Bible differs. John 14:6 says there is only one way.
Jesus paid the penalty for us.

Romans 5:8 - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

John 14:6 - Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- **Do you believe in Christ?**

T – Trust in Jesus

In John 6:29 Jesus says we must believe in Him to have the abundant life God intends. In Revelation 3:20 Jesus gives the promise he will come into our life if we ask. He wants to be part of everyone's life.

John 6:29 - Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

Revelation 3:20 - Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

- **Is Jesus in your life? Would you like to ask Him in? You can invite Him in by praying:**
"Lord Jesus, I know I have done things wrong and I am sorry. I ask that you help me to turn from those things. I ask Jesus to come into my heart and life and save me."

What's Next?

Once you ask Jesus to come into your life you are now saved. The angels in heaven rejoice over that decision (Luke 15:7, 10)! You also should feel happier and sense that something good has happened. But don't base your salvation solely on feelings. Feelings are great but they change. So what should you base your salvation? On the Bible. His Word never changes! He also gives you promises that will help you in the tough times. **So get a modern translation of the Bible or New Testament and begin reading it daily. I suggest you start in Matthew or John in the New Testament. Take God at His Word.** The Bible gives us many promises:

1. **Once you've asked Him into your life He is there!**
Revelation 3:20 – Jesus says, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (He promises He came into you.)
2. **If you have Jesus in your life you have eternal life.**
1 John 5:11,12 – God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.
3. **With Christ in you, He makes you into a new person.**

2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

4. **Once you have Christ, you are on solid rock.**
Isaiah 33:6 - He (God) will be the stability of your times.

So What Else Should You Do?

Find a good church where Christ is preached, be baptized, and attend regularly. Join a small group where you can study the Bible together and develop Christian friendships. **And don't go it alone!** It is helpful to have someone help you grow in your knowledge of God. Jesus helped the 12 disciples after all! This could be in a small group or one on one.

Would you like help growing? Which of these resources interest you?

- ☐ **Investigations – Finding out if God is Real (8 chapters)** This book helps you learn more about God and will answer some of your questions. Contains an explanation of Biblical Christianity and challenges you to make your own spiritual quest reading the Bible.
- ☐ **Reflections – Spending Time with God (7 lesson study)** Explains how Jesus wants to meet with you daily through His Word and prayer. This is called the Quiet Time (QT). Lessons about salvation, prayer and the Bible, confession, and why we should spend time with God and an overview of the Bible.

- ❑ **Finances – More than Making Ends Meet (7 lesson study)** Explains Biblical principles on finances and provides guidance/projects on budgeting, saving, giving, and retirement. Also the daily Quiet Time.
- ❑ **Marriage & Family–Living/Leaving a Legacy (7 lessons)** Explains principles on marriage and raising a family from the Bible with helps/advice on dates, communication, sex, and other areas.

For resources e-mail ed.blankenship@hotmail.com

Copyright 2012 by Ed Blankenship

Connections



Keeping in Touch!

*What do you do to stay
connected?*

Skype? Text? Twitter? E-mail? Facebook?

The options are endless!

But how do you connect to God?

The Christian life is the most rewarding experience possible. Because it is a relationship with a person, the person of Jesus Christ. Biblical Christianity is God reaching down to us, caring for us, and accepting us just the way we are. **If you are a Christian you already know this.** (If not, then ask the person who gave you this about Christ.)

And how could you connect with Him each day?

As a Christian you should want to get to know Him better each day. Being part of a good church is important, and many Christians also are part of a small group that study the Bible regularly in homes during the week. **But is this enough?**

One thing that helps is having a daily time of Bible reading and prayer. But how?

Personal Worship (“Quiet Time”)

The author of this has his on the bus riding in to work each morning. It takes him about 15 minutes and is highly recommended. So get a modern translation of the Bible such as the New International Version (NIV) or the New Living Translation (NLT) or The Message paraphrase. Daily reading will boost your signal-strength with God, “so to speak”! Doing this helps build a deeper relationship with God. It is commonly called having a daily “quiet time” or simply “devotions”. This is a time of Bible reading and prayer where you quiet your heart before God and listen to him through his Word and then also talk with him in prayer. It may start out as 5 to 10 minutes at first, but will grow and mean more to you each day! Below are some reasons to do this.

WHY HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME?

First, God desires to meet with you daily! He died on the cross to make that a possibility. Each and every day, He is interested in your life, and having a daily quiet time is a wonderful way to commune with Christ. (Zephaniah 3:17)

Secondly, you need a daily quiet time. By doing so, you will get to know Jesus better. It will enrich your day. God will use it for cleansing and to guide you in everyday decisions. It will help in all areas of your life. Nothing is more important than spending time with Him! (Luke 10:38-42)

Third, it will give you something to share with others. A passage you read today may be just what someone else needs to hear. And keeping a journal is an excellent way to have those thoughts from God available for others. (Colossians 3:16)

HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

While there are many ways to have a quiet time with God, here is one that can often work best to get you started.

1. Find a quiet place, apart from distractions, where you can be alone. Many find the mornings to be best. (Psalm 5:3)

2. Pray, telling God you love Him, and ask for wisdom and for Him to speak to your heart. Also thank Him, and confess any sin that comes to your mind. (James 1:5 and 1 John 1:9)

3. Read a passage in the Bible. Start with a chapter, perhaps in the New Testament, particularly if the quiet time is a new concept. As you read, underline verses that stand out to you. Many people prefer a paperback

Bible for their quiet times so they feel “more free” to underline. (Proverbs 2:1-5 and Jeremiah 15:16)

4. When completed reading, go back and review the verses you underlined. Pick one underlined verse that impresses you. Fill out a journal entry on it. Write down in a journal what you read in the Bible, what verse stood out to you the most, what that verse said (paraphrase it or put down what it said verbatim), how it impressed you, and your response. An example:

Date: 12/4 What I read: Philippians 1 Best Verse: 25

What it said: Paul lived so he can help others grow and experience the joy of salvation.

How it impressed me: He was focused to help people grow more mature in Christ.

My response: Lord, help me (and use me) to help others grow and experience You daily!

5. Talk to God in prayer about this verse, how it impacts you, and how you want to respond as a result of it. Then go on to pray about other items from your prayer list(s). (Colossians 4:2)

READ THE BIBLE SEVERAL DAYS THIS WEEK! Commit to having a quiet time regularly. Start today. First, pray for guidance. Then read a chapter in the New Testament, underline it, and then fill out a journal entry on the next page.

QUIET TIME JOURNAL

Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

Date: _____ What I read: _____ Best Verse: _____

What it said: _____

How it impressed me: _____

My response: _____

So connect with God! It helps to have a partner to encourage you to do this. Would you like that? Ask who gave you this.

Here are some resources to help you:

- ❑ **Reflections – Spending Time with God (7 lesson study)** Explains how Jesus wants to meet with you daily through His Word and prayer (Quiet Time). Contains lessons about salvation, prayer and the Bible, confession, and why we should spend time with God. Also an overview of the Bible.

- ❑ **Finances – More than Making Ends Meet (7 lesson study)** Explains Biblical principles on finances and provides guidance/projects on budgeting, saving, giving, and retirement. Also continues the daily Quiet Time.

- ❑ **Marriage & Family–Living/Leaving a Legacy (7 lessons)** This study explains principles on marriage and raising a family from the Bible. Also has the Quiet Time.

Resources available from
ed.blankenship@hotmail.com Copyright 2012 by
Edward R. Blankenship

One Final Word

It's been several years now since I saw the last Space Shuttle launch (STS-135) with my daughter and their three children. I'll never forget the look on all our faces as that huge rocket took off with those astronauts on board. The sound was Earth-shaking!

Since then my rocket launches with my grandkids are of a much smaller kind: Estes Model Rockets. They make a "whoosh" and go up a couple hundred feet and then return on a parachute. I know that's as close as I'll ever get to space.

But I can get close to God everyday through reading His Word and prayer. Yes, a person can really know that God exists because you can speak with Him every day. He died to make that a reality for all of us.

And He wants to not only know you, but to spend time with you each and every day of your lives.

That is the biggest mystery in all the Universe! I hope it won't escape you. You don't want to be left on Earth without Him!

Ed Blankenship