

## LETTERS FROM GRANDPA # 193

Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with the late Wesley Tuttle. Tuttle was a country and western singer who came to Christ in 1957. He was a child star who has his own radio program at 14. He did the yodeling on the original sound track of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in 1937. He was one of the first three recording artists signed by the Capitol Record Company. In the 1940's his song, "Detour There's a Muddy Road Ahead" sold over a million copies.

I first met Wesley in Caldwell, Idaho where we worked together a two week revival. Some time later we spent another two weeks together in another two week meeting. We were constantly together during these four weeks and I listened with great interest to his stories of Hollywood, movies, and professional music.

Tuttle came to Christ in the wake of the untimely death of his five year old daughter. Suddenly the value of earthly things vanished like a vapor. He not only gave his heart to Christ but immediately cancelled his contract with Capitol Records, Las Vegas, and his booking agent. This, he explained, was before Tennessee Ernie Ford recorded Gospel music that made money for Capitol Records. The point is, Wesley Tuttle decided to seek first the Kingdom of God and trusted Christ to care for his physical needs.

One of his fellow country singers was Stuart Hamblen. Hamblen was an alcoholic who found out by personal experience that those who tarry long at the wine find woe, sorrow, strife, complaints, needless bruises and bloodshot eyes (Prov. 23:29). Many times he wound up in jail for public brawling and other drunken behavior. Because he was a popular radio host, however, his sponsors regularly bailed him out of jail. All of this changed in 1949, however, when he gave his heart to Christ at a Billy Graham Crusade in Los Angeles.

Hamblen was also serious about his commitment to Christ. He was even fired by the radio station for refusing to run beer commercials. Graham considers Hamblen's conversion the turning point in his ministry. Before his conversion his crowds were small. After Hamblen appeared with Graham, however, the crowds grew. Hamblen even sang and shared his faith on Graham's first coast to coast television broadcast.

When declining whiskey from his old drinking buddy, John Wayne, he explained "It is no secret what God can do". Wayne said that was a catchy title and said that he ought to write a song about it. He did! When Hamblen sat down at the piano he composed the entire song in only 17 minutes. It was the first song to be # 1 in all three categories of Gospel, Country, and Pop Ballad.

Tuttle told me many stories about the late Eroll Flynn. Flynn bought 11.5 acres on Mulholland Dr. and built a mansion which he called his "sin house". The mansion featured secret passages, two way mirrors, and hidden listening devices. Flynn died of "old age" when he was only 50. Hamblen and his wife moved into the "sin house" and lived there for 20 years. When the new

residents moved in, however, the “sin house” was transformed. Alcoholic beverages were removed from Flynn’s elaborate bar and replaced with Gospel music. What happened to the “sin house” is a beautiful illustration of what can happen to “sinful persons”. When we invite Jesus in, everything is changed for the better.

Another great musical hit by Hamblen was “This Ole House”. He composed the song after finding a corpse in an abandoned shack in the High Sierras. How true:

Ain't gonna need this house no longer  
Ain't gonna need this house no more  
Ain't got time to fix the shingles  
Ain't got time to fix the floor  
Ain't got time to oil the hinges  
Nor to mend the window pane  
Ain't gonna need this house no longer  
I'm getting ready to meet the saints

Both Tuttle and Hamblen have passed away. Fortunately, they were wise indeed to give up the things they couldn’t keep to gain the things they couldn’t use. Let’s do the same!

I love you,

Grandpa Boyce