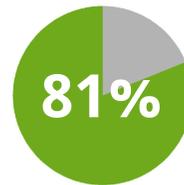


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## Christmas Loss



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MCCURDY



SUPPORT PLEDGED



COSTA RICA

On New Year's Day, I received a phone call from my father about the passing of my grandfather whom we affectionately called Papa. He was in his fourth bout of pneumonia already this winter and was 96 years old. I was aware that this might happen but after considering things, we decided to return to Costa Rica as scheduled. We have a few things in our schedule that we had to be back in Costa Rica. It is hard not being in the states for this event but God is faithful. We have been sick and are recovering while prepping for some important things next week.

Rene McCurdy, my Papa, was born Feb. 3, 1920, in France to my great-grandfather, Joseph McCurdy and my French great-grandmother, Yoland de Boisferon McCurdy. He married my grandmother, Jesse Tomlin McCurdy in Sept. 3, 1949. Giving us a heritage of Scottish, Irish, French, and American Indian (Cherokee). They went on to have 7 children, Yolande, Anne Mare, Paul (my dad), Suzanne, Guy, Brigitte, John, and Sarah, 21 grandchildren, and 34 great grandchildren.

[There will be an obituary to fill-in the rest of the details about the family so the following is going to be my memories of Papa and my effort to honor him. \(click here to view the obituary\)](#) One of my favorite memories of my grandparents is centered around thanksgiving. It was basically a family reunion every year. The extended family would all descend upon their house in Hummelstown PA and a lot of years my great uncle would also come with his family as well. As a kid, what I liked best was playing with my cousins and running around their big house, playing monopoly, going to the movies, and of course eating an awesome meal.

One year, my cousin Jason and I got into a little tussle and he pushed me down the stairs as I was trying to get away from him and my knee went through the wall at the landing of the stairs. My grandfather lost his temper with us and said some really mean things, however, Jason and I were also required to pay for the damages we made. It was a tough lesson, but not only did I learn responsibility but also I learned forgiveness.

The next summer, my grandparents came to Ridgway to take me to Hummelstown to spend a week with them. I saved up the money to pay off my debt and really didn't want to go. I was still hurt by his words and scared of his anger. Before we left, I made a choice to forgive him and make the best of the trip. It was probably my favorite summer with him. He had a trip to a steam engine train ride, a garden of gnomes, and time to play with my cousins who live near there. He let me go to the corner store and buy ice cream and root beer for floats in the evening. He never mentioned the hole in the wall that trip. I think that is the starting point for our relationship to change.

As I grew into an adult, my grandfather attended my high school graduation, and baby dedication of our second child, Nathaniel. He witnessed me in my calling as a pastor and made a friend with my father-in-law. This seemed to seal the relationship I had with him. I remember visiting him once and he complemented me with a slight dig, which was his nature, by saying, "Peter, I am proud of you and your profession as a Pastor, too bad you aren't Catholic." Another visit, he continued this banter by giving me a book, "The Idiot's Guide to Catholicism." I refused to let those digs offend me or bother me and played along. Sometimes, I would return the jab with one of my own and he would get a slight curl around the lips and pretend he didn't hear me.

This Christmas, I lost my grandfather on New Year's Day. I know that he was proud of me even if I am not a Catholic. I have cried quite a few times over this loss and miss him. However, right before Christmas we got to visit him and I left with the sense that this was

goodbye. He seemed to sense it too. Scripture tells us to honor our parents and I think that includes our grandparents. Rene was a man with many different sides and sharp corners but he was loved. I won't make it back for the funeral but I can still picture him standing in the door saying goodbye to Sarah and me in December. Both of us just pausing saying nothing but not really wanting it to be our final goodbye and yet both knowing it was.

This will not be my last personal loss on the mission field, I am sure. The reality of distance, schedules, time, and money for the ability to travel back are real and at times heartbreaking. However, I grieve because I loved. I loved because I forgave. The loss hurts and over time it will heal. I am confident my grandfather is in heaven and I look forward to seeing him there. The lesson in this so far for me is to remember to forgive and not let hurts build in me and break relationships. People are more important than my pride. Thank you for your prayers for our family and love.