

## ***Eugenia Price: The Buoyant Life***

Paraphrased and expanded by Dan Trygg from *They Found The Secret*, by V. Raymond Edman, with additional information from the *Annie Merner Pheiffer Library* of the West Virginia Wesleyan College, from *Wikipedia*, and from *The New Georgia Encyclopedia*

Eugenia Price (1916-1996) was a mid-twentieth-century miracle of God's grace.

From paganism, she came to full persuasion of Christian faith. From the broad way that leads to destruction of body and soul, she turned onto the narrow way that leads to life eternal. From a selfishly ambitious career in journalism and script writing for radio and television, she made a complete surrender of heart to the Savior. From self-centeredness and smug self-satisfaction, she became devoted to selfless service for the Crucified One.

She was born June 22, 1916 to a middle-class family in Charleston, West Virginia. Her father, Walter, was a dentist. **As a child, Genie wanted to be a writer.** Her mother, Anna, encouraged her in this passion. Genie even submitted a poem to her school's literary magazine. However, after graduating high school in 1932, she put writing aside to pursue a career in dentistry, like her father. When she left home to attend Ohio University, she also dismissed her family's Methodist background, declaring herself to be an atheist. After three years at the university, Genie became a student at Northwestern Dental School, the only woman student admitted that year. She studied dentistry for two years, but **eventually was drawn back to her first love, writing.** In 1939, she was hired by NBC as a writer for a serial radio drama, *In Care of Aggie Horn*. In 1944, Proctor and Gamble engaged her as a writer for another radio drama, *Joyce Jordan, M.D.* In 1945, she started her own television and radio production company, Eugenia Price Productions.

**In 1949, she underwent a radical life change. She jettisoned her college atheism and gave her life to Jesus Christ.** For a time, she considered even pursuing an entirely different career. *Nothing was off limits.* In spite of the success and reputation she had earned, the lifestyle she had been living was not fulfilling her on the inside. *She was willing to be entirely "remade", if necessary.* Instead, **God opened up an opportunity for her at WGN Radio as the writer, director and producer of the radio serial, *Unshackled*.** This show told the stories and testimonies of men and women who found Jesus Christ through the ministry of Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago, IL. This was exciting stuff! It was great to communicate the transforming love of God, week by week. And, she was doing something that was producing real, positive change in the lives of her listeners. The show was widely distributed, and wildly popular. **This opened up speaking engagements and lecturing opportunities** throughout the United States and Canada.

**In the early 1950's another career direction opened up, as well.** Zondervan Publishing Company approached her about writing a book about the experiences that had led up to her making a decision for Christ, and about her experiences as a new Christian. *Discoveries Made from Living My New Life* was published in 1953, and was well received. As a result, **in addition to her radio dramas, she became a popular inspirational writer.**

**In the 1960's, her career took yet another turn.** In a book-signing tour of St. Simon's Island, Georgia she was walking through a cemetery, and was intrigued by a gravestone for the Reverend Anson Dodge and his two wives. This motivated her to research the history of the area. Eventually, she moved there, and spent the remainder of her life **writing carefully researched historical novels, set in the American South and based upon real people.** In addition to her many radio dramas and articles, during her long and productive life Eugenia Price wrote fourteen novels, twenty-two inspirational books, and three autobiographies. Her books sold more than 40 million copies, and have been translated into over a dozen languages. **Most of her historical novels appeared on the *New York Times* best-seller list.**

If this did not keep her busy enough, **Genie devoted herself to the care and preservation of the local environment** from the effects of industrialization and increasing coastal development. **She also worked to preserve and develop local historical sites** in Georgia. She and her long-time secretary/researcher **founded the Eugenia Price-Joyce Blackburn Foundation to provide scholarships, grants and to create programs to promote excellence in writing.** In 1988, her many accomplishments were recognized when she was given a Governor's Award in the Humanities by the state of Georgia.

**When Genie Price was converted to Christ she was turned inside out --"a new creation in Christ Jesus"-- so much so that she hardly recognized herself!** Before long, as told so graphically in her autobiography, *The Burden Is Light*, she found that the nail-scarred hand of the Master was pointing her to fields of service that she would *never* have planned for herself. Wholeheartedly, she entered deeply into fellowship with God, and into helpfulness to her fellow men.

**Then came a period of concern and confusion, because of darkness, bewilderment, and dismay.**

Genie Price was being crowded into a corner, apparently by circumstances beyond her control. Not until she had thereby been brought to a *crisis* did she realize that **her Lord was using this to lead her to the end of herself.** In her excellent statement, *He Is My Victorious Life*, she recalls:

"I had been a believer in Jesus Christ for something more than five years, when **a situation arose which sent me plummeting into a kind of darkness which was new, even to one who had lived in darkness** for such a long time! For once, so far as I could honestly see, *I* had not caused this trouble. I felt *a victim*. I hurled *questions* at God up through my darkness. *The questions turned to rebellion*, ...and for two weeks during the month of September, 1954, I sat and stared at the floor. There were three weeks left before my fall schedule of speaking dates began, but I still had to write and direct a dramatic radio program once a week. Other than that, I sat in my close, lightless despair and *suffered a depression I would not attempt to describe ....* "

This darkness and depression came *after* Genie had written her autobiography, *The Burden Is Light*. **Up until this time she had not fully learned that our warfare is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces of wickedness. It is not uncommon after someone has given testimony for Christ, there comes a deep testing of one's faith.** That was her situation.

But let her tell her own story:

"My friend and associate, Ellen Riley, tried to maneuver a telephone conversation with the one person whom she knew could reach me --our dear friend, Anna Mow. I *avoided* her. I couldn't imagine *actually discussing it with anyone*. Then one day I answered the telephone 'by mistake.' It was Anna. I had dedicated my daily devotional book, *Share My Pleasant Stones*, to her for what she has meant to me spiritually, ...and her influence was climaxed by what she said to me that day. I told her I was *horrified* at *myself*. I fairly yelled into the telephone: 'How could *this* be the writer of *Unshackled* and *Discoveries* and *The Burden Is Light*? None of it must be true! If it *is* -- *why* am I like this?'

"Anna Mow had a marvelous laugh. She laughed, and it made me angry, ...but it stopped me long enough for her to say:

"Of course, the things you've written are *all* true. You weren't witnessing to *Eugenia Price*, were you? When you've stood on all those platforms speaking, have you been witnessing to *you*? You certainly have *not*. You've been witnessing to *Jesus Christ*. And NOTHING CHANGES HIM!"

"I had to force her to more specifics.

"But, Anna, I *feel* so pagan!"

"She laughed again.

"Well, go on and *act* pagan! *That* won't *change* Jesus Christ either.'

"This stopped me. Then I started again.

"But what if I say *I have stopped believing*?"

"There was just a moment's silence, and no laugh this time. Just a very, very quiet steady voice with a suggestion of pain:

"Well, *that* wouldn't change *Him* either. He'd be there *waiting for you* to get through doubting.'

"Saying nothing more that I remember, we hung up. *My darkness lifted*. But it didn't leave *light*. It left everything *gray*. And yet in the grayness, there *seemed to be movement* of some kind. Another day passed, and the morning mail brought a card from Anna, which said simply: 'The Lord is risen!'

"I *stopped complaining* and became a little more livable. But *nothing* was changed in the bad *situation*, ...and *nothing* seemed really changed *in me*.

"I *set up a prayer time each afternoon*, during which I *battered* at God with every prayer technique about which I had ever read. He just *had* to do something about my problem! *Nothing happened* at all! I ran out of 'techniques'. Then **I finally told Him I was tired of talking. He seemed to say 'Good.'**

"And hearing no voices, *I was suddenly convinced that He cared more about the whole mess than I did!* So, I began to *go on*, in and out of one day, and then another, ...and even though nothing happened at all, I *didn't complain* and I *stopped trying to get people to defend Jesus Christ!* I stopped turning this direction and that, spitting my questions at mere human beings who already had enough troubles of their own!"

"I hated doing it, but *I kept on getting up at 6:30 A.M. for my hour with the Lord*. I got *nothing* out of it, and I *told* Him so. But I got up *anyway*, ...and now I know that *every syllable* of the Word of God which we drop into our subconscious minds *stays there* and *becomes a usable part of us!* *Even if* we don't seem to 'get it' with our conscious minds.

"**Then the 'crisis' time arrived**, and no one was more surprised than I. On September 24, 1954, at 9 A.M.

"My friend Ellen had been awake late the night before and asked me to let her sleep until 9. I had been reading more or less at random and with little or no understanding, here and there in the New Testament. Then I noticed my watch. It was five minutes until 9. I remembered my promise to waken her.

"Let her have another five minutes,' I thought. And then I recall sitting there with no particular direction to my thinking. I was asking God for nothing. I was still in the grayness, and I still felt empty and very unspiritual. As our thoughts do, when we are wool-gathering, mine flew to the big heartbreaking problem in my life at that time. Then I found myself looking at the entire period of my Christian life. **Suddenly aloud to the Lord, I said, 'What does it mean to have a new life? What does it really mean?'**

"Here I make no effort to explain anything. I received no direct 'answer' as such. But for what could have been any length of time in my judgment, **there began a 'leading' by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures**, to one surprising spot and then another, some of which I couldn't have found otherwise without my concordance. He (the Holy Spirit) had to begin where He began. I shall simply list the Scriptures and add what they meant to me on that morning:

**1. Acts 4:31.** 'And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and *they were all filled* with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.'" Nothing 'shook' for me. **I believe I was directed to this verse so that I could see that the believers had been filled again with the Spirit.** A marginal note said something about one baptism and *many fillings*. This opened my limited experiential understanding to *the potential of more and more access to more of God*. I had opened myself in obedience to the Spirit as far as I understood up to that time. *This seemed suddenly to fill me with a new eagerness and expectation!* The 'movement' I had felt in the grayness speeded up. I felt very excited as I seemed compelled to turn to:

"2. **The 14th chapter of John.** The entire chapter seemed to be there *just for me* at that moment. I had read and reread it before, but Jesus was real in a *new way*, ...and **I seemed aware that HE had said 'I will come to you'!** The next verse I recall was:

"3. **John 15:5.** 'I am the Vine, you are the branches; **the one who abides in Me, and I in him**, he brings forth, etc.' I stopped with 'and I in him'! Then, I didn't seem at all surprised to find myself quickly flipping the pages of the Bible to:

"4. **II Corinthians 5:17.** 'Therefore if any man be *in Christ*, he *is a new creature*; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' I had used this verse over and over in writing 'conversion scenes' on *Unshackled*. Here it was NEW to me. **Everything pointed to 'newness'**. I hurried to the next verse as I followed directions of the Spirit, ...not being aware that He was directing me at all..., just following quickly, almost tearing the pages of my Bible in my haste.

"5. **Romans 6:13.** 'Do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but *yield yourselves unto God*, etc.' Hadn't I *done* this? As far as I understood, up to that moment. Somehow **only then did I realize about the NECESSITY of yielding my NEW self unto God!** Christ Himself had come to live *within me*. He was changing *me*. But I needed to yield ALL *NEW THINGS* TO Him. No words describe it. But I understood about the word 'new.' **There was to be a continued newness, or it would be old again! Then, the 'yielding' was transacted.** Calmly. No dramatics. No struggle. My troubled heart was sick of trouble. My NEED was great enough so **I made a simple transaction on the grounds of the Redemption of Christ, and was specific on points about which only He and I knew!** And then I kept on flipping pages and there was a Psalm and a verse I would not have been able to locate at all.

"6. **Psalm 73:25.** 'Whom have I in heaven *but You?* and there is no one upon earth that I desire *besides You.*' In an almost matter of fact way, I said aloud: 'Oh, yes. *You.*' **Suddenly, I understood simplicity.**

"Then I remembered the time! It could have been noon! And I had promised Ellen I'd waken her at 9! I looked at my watch. It was exactly nine o'clock. *All this had taken place in five minutes of earth-time.* When she was awake enough to talk, I told her. It seemed in the telling as though nothing more than a 'creative quiet time' had taken place. But she began to notice (and *still* insists) that *I have been much easier to live with* since that morning.

"Personally, I simply *felt settled.* And *rested.* I still had all my troubles, but **one glorious fact had become clear to me out of the grayness which I had fought:**

**"In Jesus Christ Himself was EVERYTHING I NEEDED for EVERYTHING in my life!"**

**And what did this gracious crisis experience mean to God's servant? As a result, there were many things made new in her life:**

*There was a new level of identification with the Savior, a complete willingness to let Him be Himself in her life.* Her testimony was more about *the Savior* than about His *salvation*. She has said: "I did not consciously feel proud. But *I felt secure and simplified.* I didn't need to label what had happened to me theologically. I wouldn't have known how anyway.

*There was a new insight into the Word of God,* and thereby into the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*There were new fields of service, and new energy and strength for the demands made upon her.*

*There was a greater capacity for God in her life.* She described it, "I made room for Him. ...*He* knew where I was in the entangling process of September 24, 1954. Only *He* knew exactly *how much* had been re-created in my depths."

*There was newness of understanding,* for Genie learned that she found the Savior *in reality* in the fiery furnace of affliction and testing. **She found the Savior to be with her in every testing,** just as truly as the three young Hebrews experienced the Presence with them in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace (Dan. 3). As the furnace roared around her, through prayer and tears she completed her book of daily devotional readings: *Share My Pleasant Stones.*

Likewise *she learned that no one is a "special case" to the Lord, and that nothing is too hard for Him.*

**And best of all, she found that the Lord Jesus Himself is her victory, ...for victory is Somebody, not some thing.**

That awareness and assurance did *not* come *instantly* and *automatically* to her, ...but was learned in the *daily walk and talk with Him.* On that September morning He had "settled" her, established her in Himself, ...so that she could say: "**My experience of the next three years caused me to be 'at home' with Christ and with Christians as I had never been.** He *spoiled* the thought of life without Him even for *one hour.* He *used* those three years, ...and particularly did He *use* the new darkness and the new rebellion of this year to show me that:

- 1.) HE MEANT IT WHEN HE SAID HE'D BE WITH ME ALWAYS;
- 2.) I NEED TO BE MELTED INTO BEING WILLING TO BE VICTORIOUS;
- 3.) MY NEED IS THE MOST GLORIOUS POSSESSION I HAVE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST HIMSELF;
- 4.) HIS LOVE IS SO MUCH GREATER AND SO MUCH MORE RE-CREATIVE THAN WE CAN POSSIBLY CONCEIVE, ...AND WE EXPERIENCE IT WHEN WE STOP RESISTING."

Other testings came to Eugenia Price since the crisis of the deeper life, but the Holy Spirit continued to show her the reality that "in all these things *we are more than conquerors* through *Him* that loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

Such is *the buoyant life*: out of bewilderment and blackness into the blessing of moment-by-moment fellowship with the strong Son of God! After her death on May 26, 1996, she was buried just yard away from Reverend Dodge's gravesite. The epitaph on her tombstone reads "After her conversion to Jesus Christ, October 2, 1949, she wrote, '**Light...and eternity and love and all are mine at last.**'"

## Observations From Eugenia Price's Life:

She had been a Christian for some time.

She encountered a crisis that drove her to despair. (Edman saw this as spiritual warfare.)

She was *horrified* at her sinful attitudes and behaviors.

She was assured that though *her experiences*,  
and even she *herself*, may change,

Jesus was *unchangeable*.

She committed herself to daily prayer and Bible study, even though she seemed to get little from it.

Experienced a "revelation" from the Holy Spirit that took 5 minutes, but radically changed her life.

Saw that she needed to commit her *new* self to Him.

Her life became *settled, secure* and *simplified*. She felt as though she had been made *new*.

The *fruit*, both in her *inner experience*, and her *outward behavior*, bore testimony that she *was* changed.

## God Hunt 6: A Battle For Your Devotion Is To Be Expected

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."  
Gal. 5:16,17

"And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.'  
Lk. 9:23

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly desires, which wage war against the soul."  
I Pet. 2:11

"Therefore, ...let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us..."  
Heb. 12:1

"Do not love (choose to prefer) the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love (preference) of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world, the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its desires; but the one who does the will of God abides forever."  
I John 2:15-17

"I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ."  
II Cor. 11:3

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, <sup>13</sup> and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present (yield) yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."  
Romans 6:12-13

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and dedicated sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable response of service."  
Romans 12:1

"Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. <sup>9</sup> But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. <sup>10</sup> After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. <sup>11</sup> To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen"  
I Pet. 5:8-11