

Mrs. Daniels: I just said this by way of relating the clinic and the hospital so that you would realize that this wasn't just a job for Jon that year that he stayed at home and worked; the year between graduate school and seminary. He had been promised a job at an electrical place "to last as long as he would need to work before he went to seminary." And at Christmas time the job folded, because they got a machine to replace him, and so "Merry Christmas; We won't need you after the first of the year." So he started asking around for a job and literally there was nothing in Keene except this job in the hospital. He started working as an orderly, and about then they needed a replacement for their surgical technician. The current one was a Teachers College student but he was about to go out practice teaching. So quick in a hurry they trained Jon, and so he was promoted from being an orderly to being surgical technician which was like being the surgical nurse on the team. It was pretty much a twenty-four hour job, that is they had regular hours, but they were on call most of the time for emergency operations at night. Well, as I said, it was more than a job for Jon because his father had been a doctor; he'd been one of the original clinic doctors, and Jon had known most of the doctors either as family friends or a day surgeon or somebody who would have operated on him or somebody else in the family. So, he knew them all as personalities. Then all of a sudden

here he is working at the hospital and getting to know them in rather a different way. He enjoyed the work just as an orderly dealing with the patients and, as usual, getting involved in their problems and interested in them and their lives and what he could do to cheer them up and so on. And then all of a sudden he was transferred down to surgery, and that became his little world. He was on a pretty rigid schedule, and he got to know the doctors in a rather different way than he had before. Many of them still were old family friends, and I think it was very interesting for him in many ways to be in that job--a lot more interesting maybe than it would be to just anybody who happened to fall into that job.

S: Did he like it better than working at the electrical company?

Mrs. Daniels: Yes and No...It was a very responsible job. Anybody on a surgical team has things to do that are pretty important. Even scrub nurse...

S: Were there any stories to go along with it?

Mrs. Daniels: Lots. They were his stories. I guess anybody in the operating room could probably tell them...He was always pretty interested in medicine. The year before when he was in graduate school while he was still not sure, we took a wild weekend trip up to Rochester because Dr. Snowman wanted him to go out there and talk to some of his professors. He thought medicine

would maybe be the answer. So, this was planned ahead of time. Jon came home on a Friday and I know he was pretty upset. I sort of hated to see him go off alone. I didn't want to barge in if I wasn't wanted, but I said, "Would you like some company." ... "Well, yes, do you want to come?" So, of course I did. I went along and sat in the car and was a sounding board anyway. And he did meet some wonderful people out there, some of Dr. Snowman's professors. He was very much impressed with them, and, as I say, he really was awfully interested in medicine for so many reasons.

S: What do you think made him decide against going into medicine?

Mrs. Daniels: I think he probably...He did mention it...And also he was interested in the law. Mr. Thoran was always sort of presenting the law to him, and Jon did have a good mind. I think he would have done all right had he chosen law...because he was very analytical, and he really had pretty good insight. He was quite sharp in some of his memories of things. He would have been a good doctor...like his father. But, as he said, he would have been no good for general practice because he didn't have the patience. His father did. And Jon would have been much too impatient and much too easily irritated by much of the humdrum routine of the daily grind. Phil was able to take it but Jon never could have. He would have had to

specialize to protect himself, I'm sure, because he never could have taken that day-in and day-out routine. I don't think he had bitten off anything any easier by choosing the ministry. I don't mean that...

S: I wonder if the patience wouldn't have come as he went through medical school and had gotten older...

Mrs. Daniels: I don't think so. Not in that field. I think it was beginning to come in this field, but I doubt if it would have without that peculiar discipline in the ministry.....
I think if he could have done the teaching within the framework of the ministry, that is, on campus...as a maybe combination chaplain and faculty member somewhere or on a theological faculty, that would have been ideal. Temperamentally he would have been so happy in that. And yet, every time he would get fascinated with that, then his conscience would start prodding him about ...and I honestly don't know because many times he said that "one of these days I've just got to make that decision." I know what I hoped it would be, but that was selfish, and it wasn't for me to decide anyway. I don't know what it would have been. Of course, with all the Selma background...that might have influenced him anyway. I know that he was pulled both ways, because he would have liked nothing better than to be on a campus the rest of his life with a college library and all the facets of campus life and contacts. That would have been just ideal.

...Having done his field work in Providence in that slum church, he knew he spoke...I have no idea what it would finally have been. And, as I said to him so many times, each new experience that you have is going to open up new horizons for you, and it's no telling where it's going to lead. Any one of them can be the one that's going to influence you in the big decisions. And it was true. Each year something more opened up. His field work in Providence was one very interesting experience, to say the least, and it certainly gave him a lot of first-hand experience which certainly tied in with Selma. On the other hand, I know that there were a great many fascinating openings that he had, at least, dreamed about for this coming year after graduation. I don't know which one would have won out. And I suppose that wherever his lot might have fallen, wherever he did his curacy, that too it might either have soured him on some aspect of it or just fascinated him to the point where he wanted to go on and do more of that, because there were all sorts of places where he would have loved to do his...,,...one or two years as a curate either in a city assignment like in New York or maybe on some campus. There were a couple of very interesting possibilities that he had learned about. And after he had been over to the youth group conference over at Winnipiesaukee in June after he finished his papers, he met a number of the New Hampshire clergy over there, and I think he enjoyed meeting them. He thought it would be wonderful to have a year or two in New Hampshire and get

to know them better and maybe have an assignment here, because New Hampshire isn't big enough to take care of too many recent graduates. The bishop might have to parcel some of them out elsewhere. So, there were lots of possibilities. That's one of the things I feel so badly about, because there were so many things that sounded exciting for next year...

...That from the minute Jon was in the house until he left at any vacation this house was just filled with music. At any feast time of the year there was The Messiah going full blast--you could hear it all over the house. He wasn't satisfied with any undertones. You had to be able to hear it wherever you were in the house. I'll dig out some of his favorite albums for you. I can't even remember them all because I don't know music as well as he did, but I'll find some of them.

S: If you were going to prepare a favorite meal, what would you prepare?

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Mrs. Daniels: He was a real gourmet, you know. Those darn kids of ours from the time they were old enough to go out to eat, nothing would do but lobster, of course, if we went anywhere. They weren't satisfied with any little child's portion of anything. And he liked nothing better than to go and get lobsters and cook them at home. And there was a favorite shrimp dish. I made it first and then he sort of took over, and I haven't been able to bear to make it since. This we had every time he came home.

The Easter of that year when he was at home, he did duckling with orange sauce, and it was the most super, scrumptious orange sauce anybody ever tasted. It was so rich we could hardly eat it when it finally was served, but oh! Was it good.

And he liked roast lamb with slivers of garlic and he didn't go much for canapes and hors d'oeuvres and things like that, but whenever I would come home from school all tired out, he would have a bloody mary or some martini ready for me like the one I made for you last Fall. That year that he and John Potter had the apartment, because they were both pretty unhappy with everything...So they sort of supplemented everything in music and their marketing and their gourmet cooking. And he said how often they would get this--oh, just unbelievably--delectable meal together, and it would be so rich that they would both be sick. They would both lavish the wine, hors d'oeuvres

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and the garlic, and it really was out of this world. I had dinner with them two or three times that year, and it was a real feast.

The year that he was at home he and I took turns cooking and then Emily was home briefly with us. So the three of us took turns. We each had our own favorite style of cooking. I would look forward to each of their weeks, because, for one thing, it was a treat to feel I didn't have to get it, much as I love to cook. It was very nice to just be served. They both did such a beautiful job with it, and so differently. Emily would do her marketing a couple of days in advance, and menus were all made out days ahead. She knew exactly how much of what she wanted. Jon would go dashing out at the last minute or maybe when he started something, he'd decide he had to have some new ingredient. So, he'd go tearing downtown, and that would hold everything up for another hour or so. And the kitchen would be just strewn with dishes. There wouldn't be a place to put anything down. There wouldn't be a clean dish to use when he got through, but it was worth it. And, of course, with him it just went on for two or three hours. And we really relaxed and ate very leisurely. While with Emily, dinner was served at 6:00 and we were through so the dishes were done, and she could go on to whatever was next on her program. Of course, Jon always had other things on his program, but they had to be delayed accordingly...Everything

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in its proper place...So, we would be gourmets for several hours, and then we'd all pitch in and make up for lost time.

S: How about theater and drama?

Mrs. Daniels: Oh, yes. He loved that. Of course, both the kids were always very good at dramatics. I don't know that they ever could have made the big time, but they had enough talent so they did very well.

S: Did Jon do any acting in, say, school productions?

Mrs. Daniels: Yes. Always. In high school plays, dramatic club. That's why I wanted you to talk to Mrs. Collins, because she was the coach. We had a summer theater here.

S: How about just going to the theater?

Mrs. Daniels: Whenever we got a chance. Of course, we always went to summer theater. That's about all there is to do here. Whenever we got a chance, we went to Boston or New York.

S: Were there any plays that you recall that made any particular impression?

Mrs. Daniels: Oh, I don't know about that really. No. Just theater in general, I guess.

S: Because I know there were certain plays that I saw that really made an impression...trying to tact the part...

Mrs. Daniels: Well, Jon probably could have told you. I can't say offhand any that made any particular impression. Maybe Mrs. Collins would have some ideas. As far as I know he was just crazy about the stage. We all were.

S: Did he like drama better than musicals, or didn't it matter?

Mrs. Daniels: You mean musical plays?

S: Yes, like Shakespeare over against Carousel.

Mrs. Daniels: Oh, yes. I would think so probably. And I don't know how he would have chosen between drama and music... I don't mean musicals.

S: Did he ever play the piano? He played a lot of instruments.

Mrs. Daniels: Well, he took music lessons. I know he played a lot of instruments. This was amazing. He struggled through piano for a number of years, and I think Mummy worked a lot harder than he did. In fact, this was quite a form of contention, and he was very unpopular with his music teachers...as well as with many of his high school teachers. Because he wouldn't work at it. But he often said later...finally we called it quits because literally I was doing the work. We were paying for it and I was putting in the time. He wasn't. So, we decided after awhile that we might as well face reality. But he often said later that he hoped to seriously pick that up again sometime. I think he might have, because he was just

full of music. Of course, he loved to sing. He had a good voice. And he had played all these instruments. I don't know how. Because he never had any lessons. I was always just dumbfounded that he could pick up a completely strange instrument and within a week he could play it...not as an artist, but enough to play in the band or what-have-you. He was crazy about music. He said one of the things that he would always have to have would be some ready source of music, like the hi-fi. And it had to be none but the best. It wasn't going to be something that was periodically interrupted with commercials. It was going to be something that he could turn on and just soak his soul in. That was a very important part of his life. He had it always going in his room at school. Well, it was the same here. In fact this is his radio. He left it here for the summer. And I had planned that when he graduated that would be something that I would see that he had because I knew that would mean a lot to him.

Almost always when I would go down a weekend or part of a weekend--squeezed inbetween the end of my school week and his field work--we'd quite often see a show if there was anything there. But I don't remember that there was anything that good or that important. Just we always did it if we could.

S: Jon really did have a flair for the dramatic. Just generally speaking, and it was an enthusiastic kind of flair, because he

caught other people up into it too.

Mrs. Daniels: Well, it was. And I've thought of that so often because the things that people have said to me have made me realize that it wasn't just my reaction, but it seemed to me... Of course, he was...whatever he was enthused about, he was just all out for. We used to sort of laugh about his enthusiasms because they were so many and so varied. And they would come so fast, one on the heels of the other. But, as he grew older and became more selective, it did seem that anything that he was enthusiastic about or was terribly interested in, it took on a new fascination for other people, where it might not have had he not been so enthused about it. It just seemed that anything that he was all steamed up about immediately became of prime importance to other people too. I don't think it was just I who felt that way. But I was quite conscious of it. I was sort of interested and amused at it...some things that I'm sure I never would have been interested in on my own. But, because he was, all of a sudden I really was too. It wasn't just a passing fancy I'm sure.

(Mrs. Weaver) She and Jon used to have some good talks, I know.

Mrs. Weaver: Well, I do think I feel so thankful that he had that time at home reading for the two papers that he... remained to be written and then writing the papers.

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S: Did you have any time to talk to him about those papers at the time?

Mrs. Weaver: Well, not in detail, because he had to apply himself. He really couldn't take much time to discuss them on the side because he had to do the reading for them and then write them. And then he was going to this group conference at Geneva Point, and he had to get them done in time to go there. At that time, on his way to Geneva Point, my son and his wife live in Meredith, and he stopped and saw them. And that time did mean so much to all of us.

S: Were you there at the time?

Mrs. Weaver: Not there, no. I stayed here. I was saying how Jon stopped in Meredith...But we did have good talks at the table many times. There were many things that I had in mind to talk further with him about...

S: All of use were kind of caught short. I think that was the first...my first reaction when I was able to react in a conscious fashion was that we had so many plans, and so many things that we had already indicated to one another that..."We'll talk about that in the Fall." Then, of course, we couldn't do it. I think that's really one of the tough parts of the whole business.

Mrs. Daniels: Well, with the little background I gave you about what a really surprising child he was turning out to be. He had been a good student always in the grades, and, of course, the teachers knew that he could do everything. So I suspect that he probably got grades he maybe hadn't earned. When he hit junior high school, he began getting exactly what he earned and no more. And it was a terrible, terrible blow. Plus which he had a complete personality change. He, who had always been sweet and loving and affectionate and obedient...and, well, he just never had been a problem, because if there was anything you wanted him to do, if you told him why, he'd do it, and there was never any argument. And suddenly he became argumentative and rebellious and defiant and sneaky...and...

S: My children have started that already.

Mrs. Daniels: So, when he got to high school, of course, he already had begun to distinguish himself as an actor, a singer, and a boy who was very much interested in church--in religious things too. So, oddly enough, while he would go all out for these various activities, really the report cards he brought home were just awful--unbelievably bad. And we talked to various teachers and, of course, everybody knew he could do most anything if he put his mind to it, but he just wouldn't...

Well, he had this pal who was kind of a disreputable kid.

In fact, he was very busy collecting disreputable friends about that point. And, we encouraged him to bring them. We, too each other, deplored the fact that he seemed to have to have such a concentration of that kind of people, but we still see that it was better for him to bring them home so we could meet them and see what made them tick, if we could, and maybe--just perhaps--give them a little better slant on things.

Anyway, this one boy used to come home with him a lot, and he came from kind of a mixed up home in lots of ways. He was an awfully good-looking boy and very assured, but he wasn't nearly as nice as he looked. And somehow he had gotten the car, and he had worked on it. Of course, he never studied either, but he put all his time on the car. And it seemed that at midnight of a night in November, the insurance would become effective on the car. Well, that was the night of a community concert. And, of course, Jon never missed a concert. We usually--the whole family--went. This night we did go, and somebody came home with us afterwards for coffee. I've forgotten now who it was or much of anything about it. But, the kids went to bed. I went up and said goodnight to Jon and came back down. And our friends stayed for awhile and that was it.

Well, the next morning, Phil had either gotten an early call or else he had to be at the hospital or something. He was up early, and he became aware of some very odd sounds emanating from out in the direction of Jon's room. He went out to

investigate and found Emily all upset. And it seemed that Jon had waked her up at maybe 4:30 or 5:00, that he couldn't stand it any longer, that he was in awful agony, and would she please go down and get him some orange juice. And he had told her the whole story but sworn her to secrecy. It seems that after the "goodnights" had been said the night before that, per agreement, this Bill had come over and gotten a ladder up out of our garage and put it up to the flat roof across which Jon would walk from his window, and they would go out and try out the car. So they did, and I guess they went somewhere and had coffee or something and probably weren't gone too long. But, it was an awfully cold November, and he had to go over a slanting roof part of the way before he got to the flat roof. And all those shingles were covered with moss, and the moss was covered with frost. So, when he came back up the ladder, he got up to the last rung, and he sort of reached up to get a grasp on those shingles, and he lost his grip and he plunged to the ground. The ground was frozen and hard. And, of course, he just hit with a terrific thud. And his head wasn't that much from the concrete walk that led up to the steps. But he just missed it. Well, everything on the left side of him--it was as if a line had been drawn right down the middle of him. What wasn't broken was sprained, bruised, strained, pulled. There wasn't any part of him that didn't hurt terribly. And how he ever got back up that ladder, even with Bill's help, and across the roof again,

and up over the window sill, and down into the room...I'll show you the window if I think about it, because it really takes a little doing, even when you are feeling quite rugged. So, he got back into the room and, of course, he couldn't sleep, and I guess he was terribly sick from it, and he'd spent just an awful night, just awful, and then finally spoke to Emily in the morning. But he was still planning to top off and go to school as though nothing had happened. And, then, if he felt too badly, he would go to the nurse's office and ask to have his father call and see if Daddy thought anything needed to be done.

Well, of course, when Phil saw him and heard what happened, he told Jon there was no question of school that morning. So, he took him to the hospital and had him x-rayed and had the orthopedic man look at him.

At that time, Tommy, the orthopedist thought that probably he could come home just as well and be taken care of here, but he didn't want Jon to exert himself in any way. And Tom is a big powerful fellow. And I remember, it's as if it was happening now, he brought Jon up in his car--he wouldn't let me bring him home--and Jon musn't step a foot on his own two feet--so Tom just picked him up, like this--and here's great, long, stringy Jon with all these arms and legs hanging off (because I guess by then even he was taller than Dr. Lacy was). But Tom is just very powerful and muscular. So he brought this great, long drink of water into the house and deposited him on the couch.

Welch was over there then. And I spent the day back and

forth to the kitchen with hot water bags and drinks of water and aspirin. He just couldn't breathe without groaning. He hurt so all over. Well, I began to get kind of scared because he would ask me to help him change positions, and it was so excruciating that I got frightened, and I was afraid that I might do something to hurt him even worse...maybe pull something out of place. So, I got busy on the phone, and I talked to Phil and would he please talk to Dr. Lacy and see if he didn't think the hospital was the best place for Jon, because he was kind of critical to me. So, they finally decided that he should go to the hospital, and he did. And he was there until the day before christmas. And he didn't move around much. He had lots of hours to lie there and think, and he took an awful lot of kidding from the doctors and nurses about all his second-story exploits. And he was a good sport about it. He didn't get mad because he could see how funny it looked to other people, but it wasn't very funny to him. And he lay there long enough so that I think he got good and sick of all that had led up to it...that accident. And it seemed to me that that really was the turning point, because he did buckle down. I don't mean that he never fooled again or that he spent all his time studying--he certainly didn't--but he did begin to work, and from then on he at least did himself credit, and he did make the National Honor Society. I remember the morning that letter came. Would we please save a certain date to come

out to school because our son was being inducted into the Honor Society. I read it and showed it to Phil when he came home at lunch, and he wouldn't believe it. Because, well, honestly, you have no idea of what a really shoddy performance Jon put on for quite awhile there.

S: Did this accident happen in his senior year?

Mrs. Daniels: No, this was his junior year. So, you see he had another half-year and his whole senior year...That hospital room was really something, because it was...even in those days you were only supposed to have two visitors at a time. That room would be just full of people, all smoking, practicing songs for the christmas concert, making all kinds of whopee in there, just awful. And I don't know if you read the list of people of this committee that the dean has set up for the fund? Well, one of them is a man from Keene who is also a hospital trustee. And it happened that his room was right across the corridor from this bedlam, and I don't think he was pleased.

Well, Jon was kidded about that from then on. Nobody has ever forgotten it, and they've never let him forget it.

S: Which, maybe, one thing accounts for some people saying, "Jon a minister?"

Mrs. Daniels: Oh, yes. This was just typical of something that Jon would do. No, I think a great many people can hardly reconcile

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those two ideas.

S: Are these people that are on this list that the dean has compiled people that ought to be seen? Are they people who would have some insight, or are they interested for other reasons?