

# Naomi Farrel 1922–2011



**Naomi Farrel and her husband Ed were pioneer missionaries to Colombia and Chile from 1942 to 1962 and continued their missionary endeavors in their later years. Those whom they led to Christ in those two countries became the foundation for the ongoing work through their daughter and son-in-law, Sharon and Pastor Raul Ries from Calvary Chapel Golden Springs.**

*Editor's Note: Naomi recently passed away. We decided to amend and republish her personal testimony, originally printed in 2004, for all our new readers. Please consider that the preceding story on the Whosoever's featured Naomi's grandson, Ryan Ries.*

Story by Vanessa Craver

“There was blood on the floor of the plane. I stared at it and then back again at my two little girls, Shirley and Sharon. The colonel cursed savagely, threatening to pluck my husband Eddie’s eyes out. Opponents of the new government had most likely shot the other pilot as he attempted to land. The finger of blame was pointed at us, the new scapegoats—the Christians.

“Soldiers scoured the jungle. There would be revenge for the killings. The evil colonel, who had been trained in the tactics of torture in Spain, would see to that. Machine guns prodded us through the raging storm, forcing us onto the benches of the DC3 before taking off. It was the only time in my life I ever wanted to die. Lord, maybe it’s

time to let us die in a plane crash. This is a good ending to the story. Martyrs for Your name, Lord.

“I kept praying for the Lord to cover us with the blood of Jesus. The girls did not cry. They just stared and got very still. The propellers were so loud that I couldn’t hear the birds. Nor could I see the mission anymore, the jungle, or the papaya and mango trees. The rain was too heavy. I could not see the children of the school either, but I knew they were safe at El Secreto—The Secret Place.

“God’s hand was lifting us higher, beyond the scraping brush that threatened to bring down the plane. I didn’t know what was

going to happen, but I knew He was right there with us. At one point the colonel screamed violently, ‘Tomorrow morning, I’m going to burn down your Secret Place!’ Could this really be happening? Would our whole ministry burn, cascading down in a tumult of brick and stone?

“The land, which had been given to us, was thick with persecution. The new government regime was staunchly opposed to Protestant missionaries, casting us as agents of the devil. The awful turmoil that began in Colombia in those years would degenerate as the battle between Communist insurgents and the paramilitary continues today. But students had come to us anyway, gradually, through the work of the Holy Spirit. A foundation

had been laid in the jungles of El Secreto. All my life had been for this one purpose—to share the love of Jesus Christ with Colombia and with its people. I had a call that was singular, focused, and all consuming. That call would never depart from me.”

Naomi Farrel had sat upright in a comfortable rocking chair at her home in Baldwin Park, CA, as she relayed her memories to her granddaughter. She lived another seven years and died at the age of 88. Her husband, Ed, went to be with the Lord in 1993. The DC3 airplane the Farrel family had flown on that dark night five decades earlier made it out of the squall. They landed in the midst of another storm—one that would see Ed paraded through the town as a criminal. He languished with deadly yellow jaundice and was later incarcerated for six weeks.

“As a missionary, you knew that you could die at any time, and at that time it seemed even worse. You think about your dedication and call, you think about the Word of God and the Scriptures, ‘I count not my life dear ...’ like Paul and the different ones who suffered and were martyred. We never went back to El Secreto as a family. We went home to California. Eddie and I wondered where we would go since we knew we would be executed if we went back to Colombia.

“We had godly parents, however, that were always behind us. They never told us once to stay in America. They prayed and helped us until finally a door opened to work with a missionary in Chile, starting a Bible school. We still felt led to the South American people, so we left in October of 1952 and stayed for almost 10 years. We had a day school and a Bible school called the Interdenominational Bible Seminary. My children grew up in Chile.

“On our journey, we sailed past the coast of Colombia, and my heart wept, yet I knew we would be back someday. We had no idea that the work God had begun through us would extend down through generations and become a full-blown ministry under Calvary Chapel Golden Springs. We just obeyed God. The Lord saw to it that our children would carry on. Never once did we insist that Shirley or Sharon go into the mission field. It was God who laid a burden on Sharon’s heart to go back to Chile many years later.” But now Pastor Raul and Sharon Ries have continued the ministry in Colombia with



**Ed and Naomi Farrel and their baby, Shirley, arrive home on furlough in 1947 to Los Angeles, CA, after five years in Colombia.**

Hector and Hallie Martinez and many others. The charred remains of El Secreto were rebuilt and now houses Calvary Chapel Bible College, Colombia. There is a Bible school in Santiago, Chile, under CC Golden Springs.

“Many people from America have supported the work and gone on trips as they continue to build in Colombia, Chile, and now other regions of South America. The call was always there ... it never left. The Lord gave me dreams about the future of El Secreto in Colombia. I saw young men and women

working together rebuilding the place. I have seen God bring His promise to pass—decades later.”

*Ed and Naomi eventually returned to Colombia as Calvary Chapel missionaries in 1981, sent out from CC Golden Springs. They began free English classes in Villavicencio that was followed by a Bible study. One of their students and early converts was Hector Martinez, who now oversees the mission work in Colombia with CC Golden Springs.*

*“All my life had been for this one purpose—to share the love of Jesus Christ with Colombia and with its people.... That call would never depart from me.” Naomi Farrel*



**Naomi poses for a photo with Colombian soldiers, 1949, in El Secreto.**



**Naomi Farrel with daughters Sharon and Shirley.**