

“War of the Wills” Preview Pages #2
Written by Frederick Passmore Copyright Sheep Laughs Publications

Just then a series of explosions is heard, followed by a loud cracking sound. Everyone ducks a little at the sounds.)

Pamela: *(Straining to see what is taking place.)* Something's happening! It... it looks as if the church is splitting! Yes, the church has developed a large divide right down the middle, and it's falling apart!

(They cower in fear at the fearsome spectacle, with the sounds of timbers breaking, and the building collapses, with screams.)

Refugee #3: Oh, dear! I knew it was going to happen like this! I told everyone I knew that the church would be ripped apart by those trouble-makers! *(She manages to climb to her feet, almost pulling over Pamela as she grabs onto her for support.)* Well, nothing left to stay for now. Might as well move on and try to do some good somewhere else. It was time to go anyway, I didn't like the way the pastor had been preaching lately. Compromise is the coward's way. **Hallelujah!** *(She jerks, still holding onto Pamela and jerking her also.)* **Glory! I felt that!** *(She slowly walks away, singing "I Shall Not Be Moved." Pamela and Chuck watch her go, her voice fading out in the distance.)* I shall not be, I shall not be moved; I shall not be, I shall not be moved; Just like a tree that's planted by the waters, Lord, I shall not be moved!

Pamela: *(Looking back in the direction of the church.)* The volleys seem to have stopped for now... there's quiet on the battlefield. I wonder if it's over? And if so, who won?

(A man, The Pastor, is helped onto the stage, being supported by two others on either side. His head is bandaged, and an arm is tied up in a makeshift sling. Several others are slowly trailing behind them, in a group of refugees. All appear wounded and exhausted.)

Pamela: A party of survivors is making their way out of the war zone. Excuse me, Pamela Parfay, WWWW TV News. Who are you, and what side are you on?

Pastor: I'm the pastor. At least, I was.

Pamela: Well, then, Pastor, is the war over, and if so, who won?

Pastor: *(Wearily.)* Who won? Who won. I'll tell you who won. The powers behind this battle.

Pamela: You mean the people who wanted to replace the old carpet, pews and the songbooks?

Pastor: No, it wasn't them.

Pamela: Then you must mean those who wanted to keep the old ones.

Pastor: No, they didn't win, either. *Everyone* lost. Only the devil was the true winner. He's the one behind this conflict, and he's the only one that benefited from it.

Pamela: But I've been told the conflict came from a disagreement over replacing the carpet. Was there more to the story?

Pastor: The changes that were being discussed were trivial. But self-willful pride, backbiting and a desire for power blew it all out of proportion. I tried to keep the peace, but I ended up getting attacked from both sides, and was caught in the middle. Only a few were responsible

for the battle, everyone else became casualties of war.

Pamela: But this was a house of God, how could this happen? Aren't Christians supposed to love one another?

Pastor: Yes, you're right. It's how we're supposed to be known as Christians. A lack of love caused all this. The Bible says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." I'm sorry to say they my congregation didn't practice that. Even if it had been something important, like a disagreement over doctrine, it could still have been handled with love, mutual respect and maturity. But to see such a damaging squabble over inconsequential matters makes it even more tragic.

Pamela: What are your plans, now that the war is over?

Pastor: Plans? *(He almost laughs in a resigned way.)* Plans... The plans I had have been blown to smithereens, now.

(A little girl moves to him from among the group, and reaches for his hand.)

(Begin Track #4: (Emotional and inspirational music begins.)

Little Girl: Preacher... I miss my friends. Can we go back now? I'm not afraid....

(The Pastor looks down at her for a moment, smiling sadly. He squeezes her hand, then kneels down to give her a hug.)

Pastor: (He stands up, with renewed resolution.) I'll tell you what my plans are. What one does in any catastrophe. Rebuild. From the ruins of this destruction, I and the steadfast souls who remain, the church family, will start over and build it up again. We all have friends in this church, and we can't let fear of failure stop us from trying again.

(The group with him vocalizes their support for this.)

Group: *(Various voices, chiming in.)* Yes, Pastor, we're with you! Amen, we'll start again!

(The Pastor seems to gain strength from this, and he stands straighter. A small smile comes across his features.)

Pastor: Sometimes you come through a difficult time stronger than you were. With the Lord's help, we'll make it.

Group: *(All together.)* Yes we will! Praise the Lord! Bless us, Jesus!

Pastor: Friends, let's thank the Lord for sparing us, and ask for His blessings, and His help.

(All bow their heads, and several bend the knee as they pray. Pamela also bows her head in respect.)

Pastor: Heavenly Father, we come to you as we have so many times before, broken and defeated. We admit our part in the difficulties we have had. We repent of the words we have spoken that did not show your love. Help us to forgive, and help others to forgive us. We humbly bring to You the mess we've made, and ask You to take the broken pieces of our lives, and make of them something wonderful, and better than before. *(Continues...)*