

Helen Jean (Bond) Parks
(January 4, 1928 – September 13, 2021)
Missionary



Helen Jean (Bond) Parks was born January 4, 1928, in Abilene, Texas, to W. D. and Lula Mae (Brunson) Bond. She graduated from Abilene High School where she worked on the student newspaper.

Helen Jean graduated *magna cum laude* from Hardin-Simmons in 1948 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and a minor in journalism. While at HSU, she worked on the Brand (the college newspaper) and as a part-time reporter for the Abilene Reporter News. She was a member of Alpha Chi, was selected to be included in Who's Who Among American Students, was elected Senior Favorite, and was a member of the A Cappella Choir and the University Chorus.

After leaving HSU in 1948, Helen Jean served in various ministry roles: as Baptist campus minister for the three colleges in Springfield, Missouri; as Baptist campus minister at Sam Houston University in Huntsville, Texas, and at Rice University and Baylor University College of Medicine at Houston; as youth and music director at First Baptist Church in Henrietta, Texas.

Helen Jean earned a Masters of Religious Education in 1951 from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. In her second year of seminary Helen Jean accepted God's call to foreign missions.

In 1952, Helen Jean married Keith Parks, and in 1954 shortly after the birth of their first son, Helen Jean and Keith were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board (Southern Baptist Convention) as missionaries to Indonesia. During their 14 years in Indonesia, while Keith served on the faculty of the Baptist Theological Seminary of Indonesia, Helen Jean taught music and religious education at the seminary, led the Indonesian seminary choir, worked in small churches training Indonesians as teachers, and held conversational English classes with Muslim faculty wives of the Diponegoro State University.

Helen Jean and Keith returned to the U.S. in 1968 when Keith was asked to be on the Mission Board staff, first as Area Director for Southeast Asia and then as President. She continued in her mission role as she spoke in churches and various conferences on missions, prayer, and the Christian life in the United States and around the world. She visited countries around the world to meet local Christian leaders and people, and to encourage missionary families. In 1983, she authored a valuable book on intercessory prayer for global missions entitled *Holding the Ropes* .

In 1994, she and Keith moved to Atlanta to help start the mission program for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

In 1987, Helen Jean was awarded the HSU Distinguished Alumni Award, and in 2007, she was honored by the Logsdon School of Theology with the Jesse C. Fletcher Award for Distinguished Service in Missions. Her investment in serving the peoples of the world globally is continued through her children, their spouses, her grandchildren and spouses and many others whom she has impacted through the years.

She is survived by Robert Keith Parks, her husband of sixty-nine years; her four children (and spouses): Randall (and Nancy) Parks, Kent (and Erika) Parks, Eloise Parks, Stan (and Kay) Parks; her seven grandchildren (and spouses): Jenny Parks (and Kevin Gregson), Jeff (and Hannah) Parks; Katy (and Keith) Leech, Lindsay Parks, Noël Parks (and Anil Rajvaidya), Kaleb (and Whitney) Parks, Seth Parks; and her three great-grandchildren: Sterling Parks, Lewis Gregson, and Joy Leech; and by other much-loved extended family.

Helen Jean Parks was a very gifted person who could have pursued a variety of careers. She chose to serve her Lord Jesus and His peoples of the world as an intercessor, a missionary and an equipper/encourager of missionaries. A quote by C.T. Studd captures well her life-long attitude:

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.*

Helen Jean Parks sought to do the will of God in everything in her life. On September 13, 2021, she passed from this life and entered into the Lord's heavenly presence! She is now experiencing her "forever life!" While she was not perfect, she definitely gave it her all. We are excited for her as she is more vibrantly alive than she has ever been. She is in the presence of her beloved Savior, Jesus Christ, along with beloved family members as well as people who are there because she was used to bring them to Jesus. What a reunion and celebration she is experiencing with them as they worship Jesus together!

We believe that like the two servants who were given 5 talents and two talents, she has now been greeted with these words: *'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'* (Matthew 25: 21, 23).

The family suggest donations to share the Gospel where it has not been heard can be given through BEYOND (beyond.org) in lieu of flowers.

About four years ago, she sent the following thoughts to all of her kids and grandkids:

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE by Helen Jean Parks

As a freshman in college while pondering what to do with my life, I heard a visiting lecturer make this statement: "I cannot make a measurable impression upon eternity."

And it resonated that he was right! Most of us want to feel we matter. And many of us want to accomplish something significant...and trust that we will never be forgotten.

We hear it said at funerals, "We will never forget him/her" and we have the best of intentions. But even famous and important people as well as those we love deeply can fade gradually, even quickly, from our consciousness. Will it matter then that **we** have lived?

Scripture expresses our thoughts. "Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered and that my life is fleeing away....An entire lifetime is just a moment to you; human existence is as frail as breath....For I am your guest—a traveler passing through, as my ancestors were before me." Psalm 39:4-5, 12.

While I was still contemplating where I fit in this great big confusing world, another chapel speaker outlined the three questions a thinking person asks himself in life if he thinks profoundly enough about his existence:

- Where did I from come?
- Why am I here?
- Where am I going?

I realized my Christian faith was the only worldview that answered all three to my satisfaction.

Finally, I found the following scripture, "For the world offers only the lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and the pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves. **But if you do the will of God, you will live forever.**" I John 2:16-17.

I am reassured as a Christ-follower.

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DOING GOD'S WILL: Someone asked Martha Franks who served as a missionary in China and Taiwan, "Miss Martha, don't you realize that what you were able to do among those millions of Chinese was merely 'a drop in the bucket?!"

"You're right," she replied, "but it was all 'in the bucket!'"

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