

# The Reverend Walter E. Copeland

## Class of 1964 Berry Academy

## Class of 1971 Berry College

It's been great to read your emails and see a few pictures! The memories come rushing back. Some of you talk of being at Berry for one or two years. It took me ten years to get through! Sloooow. It was the last three years at the academy, two at the college, followed by another two after three years with Uncle Sam. So I started in '61 and finished in '71. After two years of college, I had to have a break and take a couple of tours in Vietnam. Fun! After college I had to recuperate by going to the University of Hawaii. Works for me! I spent over seven years in Hawaii off and on, but have spent 25 of the last 35 years here in Japan. None of you guys seem to be close by. A few years ago, I did get to see Terry Rolan in Tokyo. In case you're wondering which one I am I was easy to miss back then. I lived over in the corner in that place called Meacham Hall. Starting in the 10th grade there, I wasn't yet five feet tall. I think it was Pooney (Charles Downey) who told me one hot day out in the fields



around the dairy that if I kept working hard, it'd make a man out of me. All of you who were fighting to drive should have helped me at the hog lot. I got to drive a tractor there often. The highlight was driving to lunch. Sorry you guys have to watch your language with me being on the email list, but someone needs to point you in the right direction! All joking aside, the one big regret I have about my time at Berry is that I hadn't yet connected with life. Finally at the age of 27, while in Hawaii, I did connect. Now I understand why Martha Berry gave herself to help those boys back in the hills. I don't think it's because someday part of Highway 27 would be named after her. She obviously had connected with my best Friend in a real way. I do plan to be in America for 2 ½ months this summer. The summer of next year is a question mark. I will be in Thailand for a couple of weeks that July. If I can make it, I'll be there. Thanks to each one of you. Your friendship is most special.

Praising Jesus,

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Walter is married to LouAnne Copeland and has two daughters Christina (17) and Emily (15). He is employed by the Evangelical Alliance Mission in Japan. His fondest memories were the friendships that he developed. He worked at the Dairy, Poultry Farm and Hog Lot. His greatest professional achievement is: Servanthood to minister to others. Most rewarding personal accomplishment: Discovering Jesus Christ personally.

I think I envied Walter more than any other student because he got to drive the tractor up from the Hog Farm each day for lunch. At least that the way I remember it. A tragedy happened to Walter. His Father while driving up to Berry to pick him up had picked up a couple of hitch hikers that murdered his Father. Here are Walters own words describing what happen so many years ago. When my father was murdered, I was filled with hate. Yet when I got to know Christ personally, He changed my attitude. I have since come to divide between sin and the sinner. I will always hate their sin of murder with a passion. But I must deal with them differently as sinners. The two men were caught. They boasted of what they had done. My father was not tied to a tree but was tied with old coat hangers and left in an old abandoned house in mid-December. Both of them hit him over the head with a large board. It's said that even if he had survived, he would never have been mentally sound. He had crawled to the door after they left to try to get out but they had tied that as well. It was a week or two later when the body was found. We don't know how long he suffered before dying. I agree with 1 Corinthians 15:55 which says, "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting." Although physical dying is frightening, death is victory. Physical death for a believer is the time of leaving the womb of this world and being in the presence of Christ in heaven.

I have learned in Scripture that I am personally responsible for the death of Christ. My sins put Him on the cross. The Father chose to forgive me for the murder of His Son. Christ has now commanded me to love and forgive others as He has done. If God can forgive me for the murder of His sinless Son, in His power, should I not obey and forgive those who murdered my sinful father? Hate is not allowed to be a cancer in my heart. Both of the men were sentenced to death. One was able to leave prison after a few years and the other after over 25 years. They are walking around free today. I will always hate their sin with a passion, but it's my prayer that they too can find forgiveness in Christ and be my eternal brothers in glory. I still believe their sentence should have been death, yet I choose to love them and pray that they will be set free from the bondage of Satan like I have. If I've been forgiven, surely they can too if they have faith.

Keep searching for answers. In the days to come, the world will turn against Israel and the Church like never before. But greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world. Unspeakable glory is around the corner! May His joy be yours in full.

Praising Jesus,

Walter

You can take the boy out of Berry but you can't take Berry out of the boy.  
"Berry Academy 1964 to 2004 & 40 years later"

