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Journey to the BIS program at Ferris State University

I am very excited to be taking my first class at Ferris State University after many years of not taking formal classes. I first attended Ferris directly out of high school, in 1984. I did fairly well, but changed my major often. I went from Accounting, to Nursing to Secondary Education in Mathematics. As I read through both of the poems, I relate best to "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost. In my life, I often want to do a little bit of everything, go everywhere, and have trouble choosing just one path. When he says, "being one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could", I can relate to standing at a fork in the road and trying to decide which way best suits what I want to do.

I met my husband, Dan, at Ferris and we married just before his graduation with an Electrical Electronics BS. After he graduated, we moved to Grand Rapids for his new job and I thought I would go back later and finish up my degree, as I still needed about 12 credits to finish. He did very well at his job and I found a job in a doctor's office which I thoroughly enjoyed and learned about a field called medical transcription.

A few years later, when we were expecting our first child, I decided to continue medical transcription, working from home. At that point, computers were not very fast and our first one had about 64 MB of memory. There were three doctors who were willing to let me try to do transcription from home. Three times a week, I drove into Grand Rapids, dropped off the finished dictation and received new tapes from doctors. Through word of mouth, more doctors started calling for services and I took on a partner, also a young mom. We took turns driving the

finished work to the various offices. As more and more doctors called for transcription services, we started down the road of business management.

In 2002, our family went on a church missions trip to Poland, teaching English in a family camp. It was an interesting and rewarding experience and made us fall in love with the Polish people and life in Europe. Later on that year, our family decided to move to Poland to live there. We sold our house, two cars and most of our belongings. We did ship a small crate of personal things that would help make our house a home for our daughters. For about two years, I worked dramatically less as we adjusted to life in Poland and learned the language. However, as we adjusted, I missed working in management and returned to increased management duties and reviewing dictation again. We moved within Poland to a town that was once a German military town, then a Russian military town, and finally liberated approximately eighteen years ago for settlement by Polish people. We absolutely loved living in this very small town. We quickly discovered that many of the teenagers came from dysfunctional families. We were able to invite them into our home and provide a stable home life for them. We walked to the store for groceries almost every day and the town had one small restaurant. Amazingly, we had high speed internet so I could work every morning, but we could not order a pizza!

My husband contemplated returning to school for his Masters of Divinity and as we looked into various programs for him, we realized the cost in the States was astronomical. We then turned to European schools, which are limited in number, but far less expensive. We finally settled on a small school, Tyndale Theological Seminary just outside of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. To us, it just made sense to stay in Europe since we are well established here. Our daughters were not as exuberant about this move, but as a family we relocated. Amsterdam is a very unique city and there are things we love and things we hate about the city. Our family

quickly adjusted to the great biking and now we no longer have a vehicle at all. Just a few days ago, I rode my bike home from a store, with my sixteen year old daughter sitting sidesaddle on the back, neon green saddlebags bulging with fresh groceries. As we passed a neighbor's house and saw her in the window, I even removed my hand from the handlebar for a second to toss her a quick wave. To me, our life in Europe has been the road less traveled.

Medical transcription has been great fun over the past eighteen years! I absolutely love management and working with many different people. Everyone works from their own homes so it can be a bit challenging, but it has allowed me to combine being a stay at home mom with the challenge of the business world. At one point, I also used my mathematics to create a billing program that we input information into and it customizes the payroll and the bills for the various offices. I also use my one year of nursing knowledge on a daily basis as I review all of the dictation for any errors. I never thought medical transcription would still be a viable business. Over the years, I have stated time and time again that I expect electronic medical records to replace my job "in the next few years". At this point, due to new regulations in the health care system, it will be true by 2012.

For over a year now, I have contemplated what I would like to do if I no longer am able to be involved in medical transcription. The staff and professors at Tyndale Theological Seminary have encouraged me to take some classes with my husband, Dan. The cost would be minimal for me to attend classes. I just could not bring myself to put that much work into the classes just to audit them. Again and again, I returned to the thought of researching what it would take to complete my Bachelors degree. Upon calling Ferris, I found that it might not take as much time as I originally anticipated, and I decided to pursue it further.

The BIS seems to be a great fit for me putting together my management skills, previous mathematics, nursing and English skills. Also, being able to complete my degree while still living in Europe is very important as we need to stay in the Netherlands for at least another year. When I have completed my BIS, I hope to take some classes towards my Masters of Divinity.

We are contemplating relocating to the island of Malta after our time in the Netherlands is complete, so I am not sure what challenges we will face in yet another new country. Eventually, I would like to write about our experiences living in Europe and raising our daughters in a different country. Our daughters have become "world citizens" and are very aware of world affairs and the complexity of life in different cultures.

In conclusion, I am hopeful that the BIS degree will allow me to pursue either a writing career in the future or to continue on with studies towards my Masters Degree in ministry or missions. I enjoy meeting with people, learning about their culture and taking a piece of their culture with me. As we continue in the somewhat crazy lifestyle of adapting to different cultures and allowing them to shape us, I hope that I will always take the road less traveled. By taking the road less traveled, I hope that I will make a difference in those with whom I cross paths.