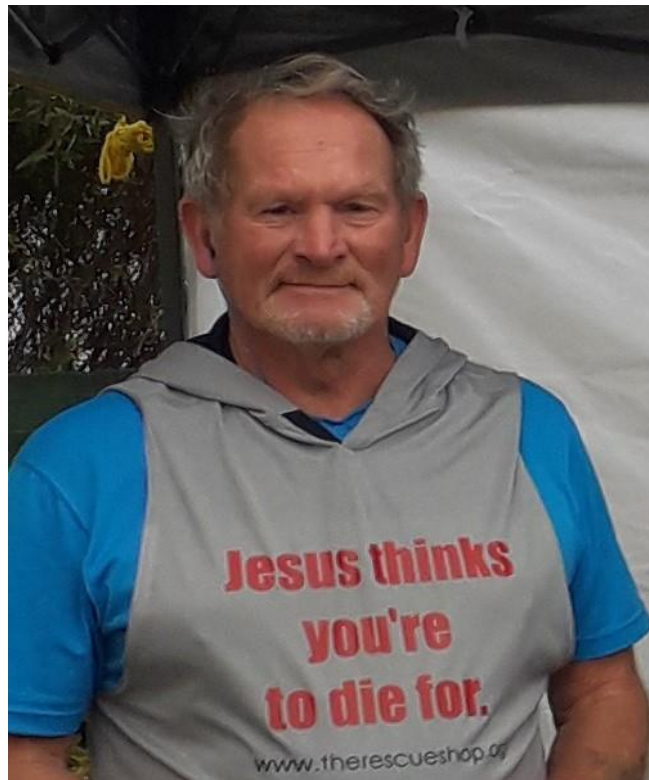


Testimony Series #1

A Fool for Christ



A Testimony of the Grace of God in my life.

Brother Kevin
www.therescueshop.org

'And expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.' Acts 18:26.

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'For you see your calling, brethren how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His Presence.' (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

'Jesters do oft prove Prophets.' William Shakespeare.

1.

Introduction

None of us ever planned to become a Christian. It wasn't a gradual, well-rehearsed event, that was staged at the most appropriate moment for us. It came out of the blue. A spur-of-the-moment decision that we felt we *had* to make at that particular time and place. But, looking back through our lives, up to that point, we realise that it wasn't like that at all. It was the culmination of a string of events where the Hand of the Master had been reaching down to touch our lives at various times since our birth. And, *that* hour was our response to it, when we reached up to grasp the Hand, and be lifted above the world of human greed, selfishness, and natural things; into the world of love, self-sacrifice, and the Supernatural Power of God being revealed through us.

We never intended that to happen, any more than a caterpillar intends to change into a butterfly. But it did, and it changes us. And, as we walk with the Master and witness His miraculous power around us, it leaves us with a tale to tell. This is mine, told with a few of the miracles that He has graciously allowed me to be present and witness.

I was serving a Prison sentence for growing dope at the time. And, I went to the Bible Study in the Chapel on that night as I did every other Wednesday night. But I left the Chapel changed, with a new life, new desires, and a new direction for my life.

The Bible promises '*Whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved.*' (Acts 2:21). So, *that* event, and *that* change are freely offered to everyone at this moment.

2.

Beginnings

I wasn't born into a Christian home. My parents weren't atheists, but they didn't know the Lord, so they were undecided. My brother Bob, who was born about seventeen months after me, had a prolapsed bowel; and when he went to the toilet, some of his bowel would come out of his exhaust. The doctor said nothing could be done about it until Bob was two years old, when they could operate. So, Mum resigned herself to put up with it for the next two years.

My grandmother had been raised as a Methodist, and she believed the Bible. So, when she heard about someone who prayed for the sick, she took Bob to him. He said "Take

the baby home and tell his mother to pray these words over him and he'll be healed." So, Mum did as she was told to do, and Bob began to improve that day, and within a week he was completely normal.

Mum kept a Bible beside her bed, and I picked it up when I was seven, and began to read it. Bob would lie on his bed and read comics, and I'd lie on my bed reading the Bible. Mum once commented, "I don't know what you find in there, because I can't find anything. "I couldn't find anything, but for some reason it attracted me.

At Intermediate school, I sat in a group with a Dutch girl. During a conversation with her about Adam and Eve, I said "I don't know if Adam and Eve really existed?" "What? You don't believe in Adam and Eve?" She was horrified. "Then you don't believe...the Bible!" She made it sound as if I'd just strangled the Teacher in the store-room. It wasn't that I didn't believe the Bible. I didn't know what to believe, because, she was the only Christian I met, before I was eighteen years old.

At sixteen, I played the guitar in a band, and we began to write our own songs. I remembered that Pete Seeger had got the words for 'Turn, Turn, Turn,' from Ecclesiastes chapter three in the Bible. So, I took my mother's Bible, and said, "I'm going to take some words from the Bible for a song." I opened the Bible at Revelation 22:19, which reads, *'If any man shall take from the words of this book.'* At that moment I felt something move in the room, a Presence, that I now know as the Spirit of God. Out loud I exclaimed "The Bible is different than any other book!" And I decided to find out for myself, if there really *is* a God.

So, the following weekend, I took my mother's Bible and stayed in a hut in the Bush. When I got there, I wondered, "How do I find if there's a God or not?" I hadn't planned that far ahead. But I knew it had something to do with the Bible, so I began to read. I was led to the story of Gideon and the fleece, and, I decided to do the same thing.

So, that first evening, I laid my mother's Bible in the middle of a clearing by the hut, and said, "If there really is a God; in the morning let all this grass be soaked with dew, but let the Bible be dry." I barely slept that night, and in the morning, I was up as soon as it was light enough to see. The grass was soaking wet, but the Bible was dry. Not one single drop of dew was on it. So, I knew there was a God. I knew it for about six hours, because, at lunch time I thought, "Maybe that was just a coincidence?"

So, the second evening, I placed the Bible in the clearing again and said "I'm sorry, but I really do want to know the answer to this. If there is a God, this time let the grass be dry, but let the Bible be soaked with dew." I spent a second semi-sleepless night and I was up at dawn again. The grass everywhere around the Bible was dry. Not one drop of dew anywhere. But the Bible was so wet I could have wrung the water from it. And from that day to this, I have never once wavered in my conviction, that there is a God.

Because of the experience I had more than forty years later, where an 'Angel' placed five gold coins in my hands, representing my talents or gifts, I believe I have been given five talents for use in the Lord's Service.

The first is an ability to take a complex subject, break it down, and explain it simply,

and briefly. As the Victorians would never use one word where six would suffice, so, I never use six words where one will suffice.

The second is an ability to discern the 'truth' from the 'untrue.' For this reason, I can rarely read fiction, because to me it's like 'battling against the tide.' I am trying to believe something which is untrue, and therefore unbelievable, except to those who are deceived by it. I also know, without a doubt, when anyone is lying to me. Does that make me infallible? Never. There is only One who is perfect, and therefore infallible, the Lord Jesus.

When I had this first experience with the Risen Lord Jesus, a well-meaning German workmate gave me a copy of the Book of Mormon, which had been given to him by Mormons peddling their wares door-to-door. I had read the Bible for some years, and always found it easy reading, including the Old Testament, which I had read through more than once. But, as I read the Book of Mormon, it was what I called 'hard-ploughing.' I really battled, just to read it. And, when I had gotten half way through, after a lot of effort, I stopped, and remarked to myself, "This is fiction!" I realised that's why I had so much trouble reading it. It was untrue. It was lies. Joseph Smith made it all up.

3.

Searching

Now that I knew there was a God, I wanted to find out *who* He was. So, I bought myself a Bible and I read it continuously for the next eight years. I read it from cover to cover and back again. It became my favourite book. I also read any other book that mentioned a God, a Creator, or a Supreme Being. I read books from the Cults, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Adventists, Catholics etc., and a myriad of Eastern religions. But, none of it brought me any closer to finding out *who* this Being was, who answered me at the hut.

Over those eight years I also had many Supernatural experiences, and after a while I noticed that they always had something to do with the Bible. This is one of them;

It was in 1975, when I was trapping 'possums and cutting scrub with a friend named Pete. We were staying fifty kilometres from town, so we would hitchhike there. One afternoon we got a ride back with two old farmers. They had a crate of beer in the boot, and when we got our packs out, Pete bought a couple of bottles off them, and we walked along the road drinking a bottle of beer each. Pete had been raised as a Catholic, but had totally rejected it. But, because of his upbringing he was a very religious person, but religious in the sense that he was very *superstitious*. And anytime something was offered to us that we thought was wrong, Pete would say, "God put it there to tempt

us, and see if we'd take it." And God must've tempted us a lot, because that was Pete's favourite saying.

As we walked along, I thought, "I'm going to take a page out of Pete's book and say to him what he always says to me." So, I said, "You know what Pete? God put that beer there to tempt us and see if we'd take it." As soon as I said that, a Voice spoke out. It was a male Voice, and it was very stern. It was coming from about four metres to my left. He said *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."*

I thought there was a Shepherd or fencer sitting on the side of the road having his afternoon tea, and he'd heard our conversation and was commenting on it. I started to laugh and turned. I was going to say, "You're dead right mate." But when I looked, there was some thin scrub, and a fence, then grass to the top of the hill. There was no one there. I couldn't believe it. "Did you hear that?" I said. "Hear what?" Pete asked. "Didn't you hear that voice?" "What voice?" He replied. "You mean you didn't hear that Man who was talking to us?" "What man?" he asked, agitated. I thought I'd better shut up then, so I did.

As we walked along, I pondered this, and I was sure I had read words similar to those in the Bible somewhere. So that night I searched through the Bible and found it in James 1:13-15. But I've always wondered why Pete could say "God did that to tempt us," so many times a day, and he never got told off; but, the first time I say it, a Voice speaks out of nowhere and says "That's a lie. That wasn't God, it was your own lust."

In 1976 I was cutting scrub and trapping possums with an Aussie mate named George. A guy came hitchhiking through where we were staying, and we gave him a bed for the night. He had a match box full of dope seeds that he didn't want to be carrying around, so he gave them to us. George and myself had planned to go to Aussie and work, so we decided to plant the seeds, and the crop would finance our trip. I had half the plants growing in the scrub near my house, and George had the other half growing inside his house.

A policeman came visiting on an unrelated matter, and as he passed George's cottage, he looked inside, and saw the jungle. So, he returned a week later with some guys from the Drug Squad. They went to George's house first and collected his plants, then they searched around my house and found mine. George was away at the time, so I told them all the plants were mine. One of the policemen contacted me a couple of weeks later, and said people had been telling them that half the plants belonged to my mate George. Then he warned me. With my own plants I would only get a fine, but, with both lots together I'd go to prison.

Because George was a Kangaroo, if he had a drug conviction he'd be deported. But he was my best friend, and there's nothing you don't do for your best friend. So, I told him all the plants were mine. I took the rap for George and went to prison for growing

dope.

4.

Set Free

There was a Presbyterian minister named Bob, who held a Bible study in the prison on Wednesday nights. I always attended, because it was one of the few events that broke the boredom of prison life. On one occasion there was Bob, myself, and another prisoner named Burt at the study. When it had finished Bob was praying. As he prayed, I felt Jesus come into the room, from the direction of the door. He passed around the room and stopped beside me. He was talking to me, but for some reason, I couldn't understand what He was saying.

I thought, "That's Jesus talking to me." Then I thought, "No, it can't be. He's been dead for two thousand years." Again, I thought, "Yes, it is, I know it's Him!" I decided that I'd better keep it under my hat, because I imagined that Bob and Burt both believed Jesus was dead too, and if I told them He was speaking to me, they'd think I was crazy.

Even though I had read the Bible so often, I didn't understand a single word of it. It had merely become a 'good philosophy' to me. I believed Jesus had lived and died, but I didn't know that He had raised from the dead. When Bob finished praying, we said our goodbyes, and I told them I wanted to stay in the chapel for a while, and they left. But, a minute later, Burt was back. He handed me a tract called the Four Spiritual Laws, and said, "We felt what was going on in here tonight, and this will help you."

I read the tract, and it explained sin, and forgiveness, and then I understood that was what Jesus had been saying to me earlier. Out loud I exclaimed "I've been looking for this all my life!" I didn't know I'd been looking for it until then. So, I got down on my knees and began to pray the Sinners prayer, to ask forgiveness and surrender my life to Him. As I prayed, I saw two things before me.

The first was a Vision of two men standing there. They were the Ghosts of Christmas past, because, about five years before that, I was living and working in Auckland, and I did one of those really stupid things that I can happily do without anybody else's help, and I became a member of a motorbike gang. Every Friday night those two men ran a youth group at a hall up the road from the gang headquarters. They would have games, then show a short film about something in the Bible, and give a talk about it. I went every Friday night with my girlfriend, because I liked those guys. They didn't care how I was dressed. They didn't care that I had hair half way to my waist. They seemed to take special delight in talking to me. I hadn't thought about them in the five intervening years, but here they were before me.

For over thirty years I wondered why I saw them at that time. And early one morning

when I was in prayer, I asked the Lord why they were there. He told me, "The reason you were saved at that particular time, was because of the prayers of those two men." That taught me a valuable lesson. If you are praying for someone and you don't see a result this week, next week, next year, or even in your own lifetime; don't ever give up, because the Lord has heard your prayer, and He will answer at the best possible time.

The second Vision I saw was of myself. I could see myself kneeling on the floor, and I had a boulder the size of a house perched on my shoulders. For some reason this didn't seem strange to me, but I wondered, "Have I been carting that thing around *all* my life?" When I asked for forgiveness, I saw the boulder fall off and roll away, and it was gone. I felt so light that I jumped up off the floor. The prison walls were twelve feet high but I knew I could go outside and leap over them and escape if I wanted to. But I didn't want to. I didn't understand what Grace was, but I began to sing "Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." I sang it day and night for the next three weeks.

That was the beginning of my Christian walk with the Lord Jesus. I have let him down many times since then, but He has never once let me down. I love Him with all my heart, and I know He loves me even more. Calvary proves that.

Shortly after this, I read the passage in Acts 2:38-39, on the day of Pentecost where Peter said, "*Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*" I knew I was 'afar' off, and the Lord had called me, so I felt I must be obedient, and be baptised.

When I was released, I talked to a friend about it, whom I considered to be a 'Christian' because he went to 'Church'. I realise now, he was a 'Christian' in name only, but he told me it had all changed, and no-one baptised that way any longer. I told him that didn't seem right, but he replied, "That's just the way it is," and that was the end of the matter for me, feeling somewhat confused.

5.

Walking with Jesus

When I became a Christian, I held the naive assumption that all 'Churches' believed and taught the same things. But, as I read much, attended different Churches, and had people such as Jehovah's Witnesses coming to my door, I realised they all taught things differently from each other; from minor differences, to complete opposites. I had

enough common sense to know, when two people said the opposite to each other, they couldn't both be right. And I had to admit it would be that way with these 'Church' teachings. I wanted to find a Church the Lord used, and Spoke-through today. So, it seemed to me, either one of these Churches was right, and the others wrong, or it could be they were all wrong, and something else was 'true'.

So, I began a quest. There were a group of pine trees about 500 metres from my home, with no houses near them, and I went there every night, asking the Lord to show me which, among all these myriad 'Churches' was from Him, and waited hours for His answer. He never answered me until six months later. On that night, I didn't hear a Voice, but after I asked my question, I 'knew' He was going to show me. I had such assurance, that I couldn't doubt it.

Several days later, I met a man named 'Doc' who lived down the road from me. When our talk turned to Christianity, he told me about a man named William Branham, whom he believed fulfilled Malachi 4:5-6, which reads, *'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.'*

He explained how, when the Angel spoke with Zacharias in the temple, about his coming son, John (the Baptist), he said, *"And he shall go before Him (Jesus Christ), in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* (Luke 1:17). John was to fulfil the first part of Malachi's prophecy, and prepare the people for the Lord's coming Ministry.

He added, when the Lord told His disciples about His coming death and resurrection, they asked, *'Why then say the Scribes that Elias must come first? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall come first, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.'* (Matthew 17:10-13). Jesus had also separated the prophecy into two parts; the *future* Ministry, *'Elias truly shall first come and restore all things,'* (before the atomic holocaust at the end of the age), and the *past* Ministry fulfilled by John, who was dead by then.

He explained supernatural events from William Branham's life, including a time when he was baptising a large group of people, before about 4000 onlookers, when a light came 'whirling down out of Heaven,' and hung over his head. A Voice spoke out of the light, and said, *"As John the Baptist was sent to forerun the first coming of Jesus Christ, so you are sent with a Message, to forerun His second coming."* This event was reported around the world. He then offered me some sermon booklets to read and consider of which I chose six. One was titled, The Name of Jesus, the others I can't recollect. This was a week before Easter of 1978.

Over the next few days, I read the booklets, but couldn't see anything different in them, and I remarked, "this isn't it." Because of the assurance I felt when praying at the pines, I was convinced I would recognise what the Lord showed me, when I saw it. After a week I got the books ready to return them. I flipped one open, and there was a paragraph which was not in bold, or highlighted in any way, but it stood out on the page. "That is so true!" I exclaimed, and wondered why I hadn't noticed it the first time I read it. Then I flipped to another page, and the same thing happened. Then another, and another. With all the other booklets the same thing happened. I knew from these 'revelations,' this was it.

I returned the booklets to Doc, and admitted this man William Branham, was just what he had explained to me, the Elijah of Malachi 4. A few months later, in July of 1978, I was baptised in a very small, very cold stream, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and received the Spirit of God into my life.

William Branham's Message, was to 'restore' the end-time Church to the purity of the teachings of the 1st century Church, given by Divine Revelation to St Paul and other Apostles. This was to prepare us for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus is returning to take a Bride, '*without spot or wrinkle*' (Ephesians 5:27), a Church unsullied by anything which is not of God, and not according to His Holy Word, the Bible. There are many good Servants of the Lord, who are teaching their congregations how to, '*live Godly in this present world*', as Paul put it in Titus 2:12, but they don't have a Message to prepare their people for the Lord's return.

William Branham said "Thus Saith the Lord," many thousands of times, and never once did it fail, because it wasn't a man speaking, it was the Lord Speaking through him, giving a Message of Restoration for His own people. Unfortunately, there are some who have taken this Message, and made a cult of it, as if Brother Branham had all the answers, and no-one else had any.

But that isn't true, because Brother Branham had the profoundest respect for all other Servants of the Lord. There are things which he never taught on, because it wasn't his calling to do so, and others taught and teach on them. As with all things Scriptural, we must find a balance in this. But it is important that each of us consider the Message personally, if we are truly waiting anxiously for our Lord's Return.

I left there, and travelled around working, eventually arriving at a farm near a small town called Glen Afton. The manager's wife had an uncle named Laurie Nelson. I met him several times and liked him. One morning on my way to work, I met the manager at a gateway. He told me that Laurie woke his wife in the night, and asked her to call an ambulance, and he was taken to hospital. I thought, "Well, old people do that, then they come home a couple of days later and it's business as usual." So, I didn't take much notice of what he said.

At 11.45 I was tacking a batten on to a fence. I had just put the first staple in, when

the Lord said "Pray for Laurie Nelson." I wanted to put three more staples in before I let go of the batten, so I replied "Yes, I will, as soon as I finish tacking this batten on." "Pray for him now!" He replied urgently. I let go of the batten, and asked, "What do you want me to say?" He replied, "*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*" I recognised that as a Scripture, so I said, "Yes, I can say that." And I remembered things Laurie had done to try being helpful. They weren't big things, but the Lord noticed them, and He wanted them remembered in His Presence before Laurie died.

On my way home, I met the manager at a gateway again. "Laurie Nelson died," he told me. "When was that?" I asked, sorry to hear it as I liked him. "At 11.45," he replied. That was when the Lord asked me to pray for him, and I remembered that Jesus had said, "*If anyone gives you a cup of water, they won't lose their reward.*" But He also said, "*If anyone offends you, it would be better that a millstone were hung about his neck and he was drowned in the depths of the Sea.*" I have seen both happen, and I can only confirm that God's Word is Truth. The Lord identifies Himself with His people.

One night after work, I felt impressed that a friend needed prayer. I'd had a hard day fencing, and was feeling so worn out, that I was too weary even to pray, so I went to bed. But there, I tossed and turned for an hour, until I finally decided I *had* to pray. I went outside, and spent a short while in prayer for him, then went back to bed, and fell asleep immediately. When the Lord impresses on you, that something needs doing *now*, it's always best to be obedient. Nothing is more important, than His Will.

As a young Christian, I had many dreams, which I felt were from the Lord. Some were warnings, while others taught me Spiritual Truths. One began with me wanting to trap possums in the bush where I had grown up, and trapped as a boy and teenager. I laid cyanide through the bush one night, and the next morning in the dream, I took Kim and Chris, a couple of brothers whom I knew from my youth, to skin them with me. When we walked into the bush, the floor of the bush was completely carpeted with possums, thousands of them. Most were dead, but some were rolling around, the poison not killing them outright. I said to Kim and Chris, "Finish off the ones that aren't dead yet, so we don't lose any." Then I woke up.

The next night, the dream continued, as soon as I fell asleep. This time, I had a group of people who wanted eels. I told them I knew of a creek that abounded with eels, so I took them to it. When I looked over the bank, the creek was solid eels, from bank to bank, there were so many that I couldn't see any water. I gaffed out eels, onto the bank, until we had as many as we could carry. Then I awoke.

The third night it continued again. This time, I had a crowd of people who wanted venison. I assured them I knew of a clearing on a mountain that always had a herd of deer grazing it. We tramped to the top of the mountain, and there was indeed a huge herd of deer in the clearing. I shot one, and the herd just milled around. So, I shot

another, and another, and on, until we had all we could carry. Then I awoke.

On the fourth night, a group of people wanted ducks, and I assured them I knew of a lake that teemed with them. But, when we arrived at the lake, there wasn't a single duck there, the lake was barren. I couldn't believe that, after such bounty as we'd had. I looked to the sky, and said, "Lord, the bush was full of possums, the river was full of eels, the hills were full of deer, and now this? What's going on?" He replied, "We walk by faith, not by sight, and we stand on the Word."

That lesson seemed to be lost at the time, on such a young Christian as myself, because I didn't understand what it meant, until many years later. If we can only believe the Lord is with us, when we see Him answering our prayers, and blessing us, then we are 'walking by sight,' which does not please Him. But, when we can pray for something, and, without seeing our prayers answered, can 'stand on the Word,' and believe, like Abraham, that what God has promised, He is also able to perform; then we are 'walking by faith,' and that pleases Him immensely. 'Seeing is believing,' is for unbelievers, not for Christians.

After that lesson, it seemed that the Lord in his goodness, was pleased to display His care for me in ways that could be easily recognised, to encourage me to believe His Word.

I had a good friend, Brother Derrick, who Pastored a large Church in Auckland. He was a popular preacher, and had always wanted to have meetings further south, so people from all over the central North Island, could attend. So, one day I did my old party trick, and I opened my mouth, and put my foot in it, by suggesting he could have meetings at our home. He was elated. "That would be great, Brother," he said, adding, "You organise the meetings, and lead the singing, and I'll preach for you." What? Me lead the singing? "No, no, no!" I refused. "Brother Larry, (his worship leader), can lead the singing." There's no way I would. "You lead the singing, you'll be fine," he assured me. "No, I can't, Brother Larry can do it," I told him. "You'll be fine," he assured me again, then slapped me on the back, and drove away.

Oh panic! The last time I had spoken publicly was at Intermediate School. The teacher noticed I read a lot, so he asked me to speak on some subject I was familiar with. I stood to my feet, announced the subject I would talk on, then my heart began thumping through my shirt, my face went red, my mind went blank, and that was the end of that.

I didn't intend to do a repeat performance, so I needed a way out of this predicament. For the next two days I couldn't sleep. I imagined the whole world would arrive at my home to witness the performance. I finally decided to move my family to the South Island, at least I knew then, I would be safely far enough away, so as not to endanger myself with this.

Then I had a dream. I dreamed my stepfather Dave, and Pat, the shepherd from the farm next to where I lived, were trying to get a big mob of cattle through a gate. Each time they chased the cattle to the gate, they would run past it. Then, they would chase

them back, and ditto. I was standing about fifty metres out from the gate, and as the cattle rushed past the Lord said, "You chase them through." I told Him I couldn't. The next time they ran past, He told me again to chase them through. This time I waved my arms and yelled, and to my surprise, the cattle all turned, and ran through the gate. Dave and Pat cheered, and the Lord said, "There, I told you to do it," and I awoke.

I knew the dream was about the Worship leading. And I realised, it wasn't Brother Derrick who wanted me to lead the Worship, it was the Lord. So, I trusted Him to enable me. And, when the first meeting was held, and I stood before the people crowded into the sitting room, and looking in from the bedroom, the kitchen, and the hallway; there was no thumping heart, or blank mind; only liberty. If the Lord sends us, He will supply all we need for the journey, whatever it may be, and I did a lot of Worship leading over the next thirty years, because the Lord promised, '*My strength is made perfect in weakness.*' (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Sometime after that, I was fencing on a small block, and needed posts for the fence, so I went in to Huntly to buy them. When I drove into the car park at the bank, there was a Land Rover with the name of a farm I didn't recognise, on the door. "I've never seen that Land Rover before," I thought. "Stop and ask him if he has any fencing," the Lord said. I thought, "That's just my imagination," so I carried on. I drove down to Dalgety's, and got my posts. As I was driving out, the Land Rover was parked out the front. "There's that Land Rover again," I thought. "Stop and ask him if he has any fencing," the Lord said again. It was about lunchtime then, in midsummer, and the car was like an oven. The sweat was pouring off me. I recognised the Voice, but I was so uncomfortable that I said "I can't be bothered."

As I drove up to an intersection, I remembered I needed milk, and there was a Dairy there, so I stopped. There were three people waiting to be served, so I waited in line. "You wouldn't go to him, so I brought him to you, now ask him if he has any fencing," the Lord said. The bell rang on the door behind me, and a farm manager I'd worked for several years earlier entered. He recognised me and we began talking. "Do you have a Land Rover with (I named the farm) on it?" I asked. "Yes, I'm managing it now," He replied. "Well, if you have any fencing let me know?" I asked him. "As a matter of fact," he said, "We've got a lot of fencing,"

So, I began fencing for him shortly after this, which I did for about seven years. Just after I began, he came to see me one day, and told me he had been asked to get a fencer in when he started there; but he put it off, and put it off, until six months later he couldn't put it off one more day. "The day you walked into that dairy," he said, "You walked in there just at the *right* time." Yes, I know it was, because it was God's time.

In 1982 I was erecting a fence through the middle of a gully on this farm. It was a still, sunny, Autumn-day. A Voice spoke as I was working. He said "You're on!" I looked around. I could see the tops of the hills all around me, and there was no one anywhere.

But the Voice had spoken from closer than that. It was the same Angel who had spoken to me from the side of the road seven years earlier. "You're on." To me, it sounded like an actor being called on stage to play his part in a production. I didn't know it at the time, but it was my calling into Service.

I was invited to speak at a local church shortly after this. I spoke on the subject of *'See you make it according to the pattern,'* as Moses was commanded by the Lord, taking God's Word to be the pattern for us today. It was the first time I preached, and it went a hundred times better than I expected, the Lord being in it. One of my friends told me he would never preach again, after hearing me, because I had something he didn't have. That was an Anointing for service.

Shortly after this, I had an urgent need to go away one weekend. This was in the days before the-hole-in-the-wall, where we could get cash from our account, in any town, at any time. I urgently needed petrol money, as I had no cash at home. So, I went to my place of prayer in the pines, and invited the Lord to supply my need, if He wanted me to go.

As soon as I finished praying, I began to get a headache, which became worse, and worse, until I had to go home for painkillers. There was nothing in the bathroom cabinet, but I knew there were some in an emergency kit I took hunting. When I opened the lid of the tin, there was a \$20 note on the top. I remembered that I didn't want to take my wallet, the last time I went hunting, so I took that \$20, in case I got a puncture. So, now I had the cash for my trip, but I also had a terrible headache, which did not go away, until I had taken the painkillers.

A few months after this I was to speak at the same local Church. I opened my Bible and tried to say, "Hello everyone," but found I couldn't speak. I tried again several times, but couldn't utter a sound. People were looking at me, and each other. I think they imagined I was choking. Inside I prayed "Lord I'm here to share your Word but I can't talk. What can I do?" He replied, *"Open your mouth and I will fill it."* I remembered that as Scripture, so I said, "Yes, I can do that." I opened my mouth, and Words flowed out. I had no control over what I was saying, but the Words were smooth and sweet, like honey. I felt as though I was in a different dimension. I couldn't feel my body at all. All I could feel was a sensation of inexpressible Joy. The front of the Church was one big stained-glass window. It changed into a Vision, as I was speaking, but for some reason I thought "The spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet," and I shook my head, and the Vision went away. I think that was a mistake. I was aware of the presence of many Angels in the church.

After about an hour, I closed my mouth, and I knew I could speak again. I made a few comments and closed the meeting, but I did not mention what had happened. There was one deeply spiritual Sister in the congregation, named Dorothy. She came to me afterwards, and told me, she had felt the Presence of the Lord many times before in

fellowship; but, she said, she had never felt it in that intensity before. I thought, "Praise the Lord," at least someone else felt what was going on. But, the rest of the congregation didn't seem to be aware that anything unusual had happened. I remembered when Jesus went to the pool of Siloam, He told one cripple to take up his bed and walk. Then He left. The rest of the crowd never knew that God had passed through the midst of them. Sometimes, it can be just like that in a Church.

This farm I was fencing on was on a metal road, and my windscreen got covered with a thin film of dust. My wipers had stopped working, but it was Summer at this time, so I thought I'd leave fixing them until Autumn. The dust didn't affect my vision, until I drove straight into the sun, when I couldn't see anything.

I was on my way to work one morning at daybreak, singing happily as I drove up a hill. The sun was rising before me, and I couldn't see anything, but I knew the road was straight and there wasn't any other traffic; so, I carried on singing away. Just after that, I felt as if a tub of ice water had been tipped over me. It was the coldest, harshest sensation I had ever felt. A Voice screamed out, from the back seat of the station wagon. "Turn! Turn!" I turned the steering wheel hard to the right, and jammed the brakes on. The car skidded up the road, and came to rest across it. I got out, shaking badly, and studied the road. It wasn't straight as I thought. There was a corner where I had stopped, and if I carried on, I would've gone over the side, and down to the creek a hundred metres below, and I may not have survived that. I knew then, that Angel was with me all the time, as the Bible tells us.

When my son Paul was born, my wife went into labour in the evening. We arrived at the hospital near midnight, and after examination, the doctor said we didn't have long to wait until the birth. I felt that I should lay hands on Helen and pray, but instead I prayed without touching her. We waited for hours. Every now and then, I would feel that I should lay hands on her and pray, but each time I prayed again, without touching her. Finally, at about five or six am, she said, "I'm so tired, I just want to go to sleep."

The contractions had slowed right down by then. I felt again that I should lay hands on her and pray, so I told her so; I laid my hands on her, and prayed, "Lord, let it be over quickly, and let it be easy for Helen." She screamed, "Ring the bell!" "What?" I asked. "Ring the bell!" She screamed again. So, I rang it, and the Doctor came running in, just in time to catch Paul as he was born. I realised then, that the Lord had been waiting for the past six hours, for me to be obedient. It doesn't make any difference to me, if I lay hands on someone and pray, or if I pray without touching them. But, if the Lord asks us to do something a certain way, He has a reason for doing it that way, and the blessing will not come until we are obedient.

One of my young nephews had pills that he had to take every day, and his younger brother, who was only a toddler, always wanted them; but of course, he wasn't allowed

any. One day, when my sister-in-law was out in the garden, young Tony got up on a chair, and got up into the cupboard, and into the pills. My sister-in-law came in to find him convulsing on the floor. She rushed him into hospital and a blood sample was taken. The doctor told her straight, "Four hundred milligrams per litre of blood was a fatal dose, and he had six hundred, so there was nothing they could do, he was going to die." She phoned my mother immediately, and I'm sure my mother remembered the miracle with Bob as a baby. So, she phoned me, and said, "Tony's in intensive care, and he's going to die. Pray for Tony."

I had a little place in the pines nearby where I prayed, so I went there, and prayed for Tony. "*They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover,*" a Voice said. I thought it was my imagination and ignored it. "*They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover,*" He said again. Still, I ignored it. The third time I heard it, I recognised the Voice, and went down to the house to get my family, and leave for the hospital. When we arrived, the waiting room was full of my relations, and my sister-in-law was in the Intensive Care room, with Tony. She came out later, and said, "If anyone else wants to go in, they could." I said, "I will," and went in with my wife.

Tony was under an oxygen tent. He had a tube coming out of him, into a dialysis machine, to clean his blood. They had to knock him out because he wouldn't stop convulsing, and he had a tube in his nose for oxygen, and a drip in his arm. There were wires taped to him, leading to machines that monitored him. I looked at him and my heart broke. Inside I wept, "Lord he's only a little baby."

There were two nurses working at a bench behind me. I knew they wouldn't let me lift the cover and touch him, because of all the wires and tubes, so I prayed inside, "Lord if you want me to lay hands on Tony, you need to take these nurses out of here." I turned to look at the nurses, and they both turned to look at me. One of them glanced at the clock on the wall, and said "I think I'll go to another Ward for half an hour." The other one said "Yes I will too." "You can stay as long as you like," they said, and left.

When that happened, I knew the Lord was in control of the situation; and I was confident that if Tony died, I could call him back to life. So, I lifted the cover, laid my hands on him, and prayed, "Lord, let Tony completely recover from this." That's what I had driven 130 kilometres to say. Jesus said "When you pray, don't use vain repetitions as the hypocrites do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking." You can pray all night for something, and if you don't believe it will happen, it *won't*. But if you say two words, trusting the Lord completely, it *will* happen. That was what I wanted for Tony, and I didn't think there was anything else I could add, but then out of my mouth came the words "And don't let him have any brain damage." I didn't intend to say that, the words seemed to come out of their own volition. But the Lord put words in the mouth of Balaam's ass once, and He had just put words in the mouth of another ass.

We went back to the waiting room, and later the doctor came in. He told us he had taken another blood sample, and it was down to 200 milligrams per litre of blood, and

Tony was still alive, so he would live after all. But, because he'd had so much chemical in his system, he would have major brain damage, and he'd be a vegetable for the rest of his life. Inside, I thought, "Praise the Lord, He knows all things." The doctor said "He can stay here for a week," then he told my sister-in-law, "You'll have to take him home after that, and look after him yourself." He presumed Tony would be a vegetable. Two days later, the Hospital phoned my sister-in-law, and said "Can you please come and get this child, we can't control him." He was completely normal. You don't have to be great for the Lord to use you, or perfect, you only have to be available. He does extraordinary things every day, through ordinary people.

I went hunting with a friend named Steve, at Matawai, near Gisborne. From the ridge of the range we were hunting, we could see some old logging clearings, about one kilometre below us, so we decided to hunt there. After making our way down through the Bush, we began stalking a clearing together. When we came to a place where the clearing separated into the two, Steve went left, while I went straight ahead. I had gone about 50 metres, when I saw the biggest Stag, I had ever seen, standing at the edge of the Bush ahead of me. I had always been strictly a meat hunter, just wanting to feed my family, but when I saw this Stag, I wanted him. He could obviously hear Steve, because he was looking to his right, toward where Steve was. I crept forward, until I was about a hundred metres from him, and took a steady rest on an old stump. Aiming carefully at his lungs, I squeezed the trigger, and he fell.

As I walked toward him, I took out my knife in anticipation, but when I got to where he was, he wasn't. I couldn't believe it. Looking around, I assured myself this was the spot, but I noticed tracks, where he had jumped down into a dry creek bed behind where I had seen him. Steve arrived, and followed the tracks for several hundred metres, but couldn't find any blood. I had missed! I was annoyed believing the Lord *would* have, and *should* have, given me that stag. In anger I blurted out, "I really *wanted* that stag, Lord!" And He replied, "Your sights are set too low." I had only recently bought the rifle, and was assured it was sighted perfectly at one hundred yards. But I found out later it was shooting so low, that I would've shot under the stag.

Spiritually, I was going to Church, and fulfilling all my duties, but I was overwhelmed with the cares of the world, and feeding my growing family, and my heart wasn't in it. I realised then, the Lord had used that stag to teach me that lesson, and that made me even angrier, so I blurted out, "Why couldn't you teach me that some other way? I *wanted* that stag!" But he knows what will get our attention, and what we will learn from, and I have always felt, that was an expensive lesson to learn.

I went hunting with Steve, again at Matawai. We arrived at our campsite at midday, and set up our tents. It was 1 o'clock by then and Steve said "I'm going hunting." It was one of those still July days, when the sun is not hot, and not cold, just perfect. We had four hours until dark. "I'm going to sit here and enjoy this perfect day the Lord's given

us," I said, adding, "We'll get more in five minutes *with* the Lord's blessing, than we will in four hours *without* it." Steve agreed, and we sat together, and talked about the 'things of the Lord,' for the next hour. "I'm going hunting now," Steve said. "I will too," I replied, feeling good after our talk.

I crossed the clearing in front of our camp, and went into the bush by a hill I had never hunted before. As I followed a deer trail along the base of it, a spiker jumped up, and ran up the hill. When he passed between two trees, I shot him. I looked at my watch. I'd been hunting for four and a half minutes. I meant what I said to Steve, and I felt the Lord gave me that deer as if to say, "Yes you will always get more *with* my blessing, than you will *without* it."

I went hunting with another Christian brother named Dave, in the Ruahines. The night before we went in, we listened to the weather forecast, and it predicted snow down to four hundred metres. I knew we were going higher than that, but Dave wasn't concerned by it, and he'd been there several times before, so I thought it must be ok. It was a six hour walk in over the tops, with only a steel pole every few hundred metres to mark the trail. Saturday was perfect, and we both hunted, until it began to rain in the afternoon. When we woke Sunday morning, the wind was howling around the hut, but at least we couldn't hear the rain. When we went outside, cloud had come right down to the hut, and there was nearly 300mm of snow covering everything. We couldn't go back the way we came in, because we wouldn't find the track markers in the cloud. So, we opted to head in the opposite direction, and find a way out that way.

All went well for the first two hours, then we walked out of the bush and into the scrub. "Let's build a shelter here and get into our sleeping bags and wait it out," I suggested, as it was bitterly cold. "No," Dave replied. "My wife will call Search and Rescue if we don't come out today, we have to go on."

The snow was coming in horizontally, because of the gale, and as we stood there talking, my face went numb. "We are in a bad place," I thought. We tried pushing our way through the scrub, but the three-metre-high scrub, was bowed down to two metres, by the weight of the snow piled on it. As we pushed in, it built up on our packs and shoulders until we shook it off, to thump on the ground. After battling through ten metres of this we were exhausted, and after attempts in several directions, we were back where we started.

I looked at Dave, and saw that he was worried. I knew then, that our next move would either be the right one, or the wrong one. Either we would get out safely, or we would perish in the storm. "Let's pray again," I suggested. "Yes, you pray please Brother," Dave replied.

I was the coldest I'd ever felt in my life. I had a raincoat and leggings on, with woollens and thermals underneath, but I was freezing. Everything in my pack was soaked through, and my \$1,500 camera was ruined. So, I prayed, "Lord, let this storm cease, and let us walk out of here in sunshine." That's what I wanted. To be warm and dry, and

standing in the sun, out of that terrible snow-storm. As soon as I spoke that, the clouds parted above us, the sun shone through, and we were standing in the centre of a two hundred metre circle of brilliant sunshine, in the midst of the storm. In jubilation I raised my right arm and yelled, "Praise the Lord!" Then, the cloud closed up, and we were back in the storm again. But the Lord didn't want to stop the storm for us. He wanted us to trust Him, to lead us through the storm, to safety.

When the sun shone, I had noticed a break in the scrub, about a hundred metres below us, and I found a way to it. It was only a deer trail but we followed it, and four hours later we were safely back at the car. We all like to take the shortcut, the quick fix, the easy way out. But the Lord doesn't want to stop the storms for us; He wants us to trust Him, to lead us through the storms of life, whatever those storms may be, to safety.

I kept my favourite books on a bookshelf above my desk, so little fingers couldn't reach them. One day, I decided to read a book called Marriage and Divorce; so, I went to get it, but it wasn't there. I thought I must've lent it to someone, although I couldn't remember doing that, so, I chose another book to read. But as I walked to the couch with it, I said, "Lord I really wanted to read Marriage and Divorce today."

The three girls were playing in the next room, and Cassia left her toys and came into my office. She stood on my chair and got about eight books down, then sat under my desk, and began shuffling through them, as if she was looking for something, even though she couldn't read yet. I thought, "Why is she touching those books? She knows she isn't allowed to." She stopped at one book, reached up and put it on my desk, then put the others away, and went back to her toys. I thought I should put that book away too, but carried on reading. I looked at it several times, then finally, decided I had to put it away to get it off my mind. It was Marriage and Divorce. You are never too young, or too old, to serve the Lord, as, long as you are willing to be used by Him.

I arrived at Whangamata several years later, a solo parent, with two, four, and six-year-old daughters, and an eleven-year-old son, and I couldn't always afford the things we needed. One cold winter's day, the gas heater which warmed the house, sputtered and died, running out of gas. "Oh no!" I said, knowing how cold it would be for the children, and not having any money to buy more gas. The night before, I read a story to the girls about a grandma, who had run out of food, but she was inspired to bang three times on her flour barrel, and there was enough meal in there to bake bread for a day. She did the same thing the next day, and the next, and the next, and as long as she did it, there was always enough meal in there for the day's needs.

As I sat before the heater, the Lord asked me, "Are those stories just entertainment for you, or are they examples?" I thought about that story, and answered, "Examples." Then, I knew what I had to do. I banged three times on the heater with my fist, and lit it. It burned all day, and that night I told my daughters what the Lord had done for us.

And when the heater began to sputter and go out, over the next month or two, my

daughter Cassia, who was a little girl with big faith, would thump on the heater, and announce, "There's more gas in there now!" And the Lord always honoured her Faith, and there was. After some time, I had the money to buy more gas, and when the heater sputtered and died, I knew it was my turn to fill it.

Several years later, I gave my testimony at an AOG church, and I mentioned 'the gas bottle.' When I got home, I lit the heater, and it burned for a while, then died. "Oh no!" I said, it being a cold winter's day. Then I thought, "Come on buddy, you testified today about how the Lord filled an empty gas bottle." So, I knew what I had to do. I thumped three times on top of it, and lit it. It burned all day, and the next, and on, and on. It was a different heater and gas bottle, than the original ones, but the Lord was Jehovah Jireh to us for the first one, and He was still Jehovah Jireh with the second. Praise His Name.

I had a twenty-two-kilometre mountain bike circuit, in the forest behind Whangamata, that I rode every morning between five o'clock, and seven thirty. Along one track, there was a place I named, 'the Cathedral,' because the pines arched high overhead, reminding me of an ancient arched Cathedral, and, I always felt a sense of awe, as I rode through it. One morning, I arrived there at seven, and decided to walk the bike through it, and enjoy the atmosphere.

As I pushed my bike along, the Lord spoke to me. "Come with me," He said, "I want to show you something," adding, "And bring your bike." I wondered to myself, "What does he care about my bike?" But I've learned since, that anything that's important to us, is important to Him.

I glanced up to the ridge above, and knew I should go up to two trees, on the brow of it, so I pushed my bike up there. There were two bushes beside the trees where I hid my bike, knowing it couldn't be seen from the track below. An old logging track wound upward, and I knew that was my path to follow. Further up the trail, there was a knoll, which I felt was my destination, so I climbed to the top of it.

The sun was just rising, and I thought the Lord was going to paint a beautiful sunrise, and He wanted someone to enjoy it. But, instead, He spoke to me again. He told me about other Christians I knew in Whangamata, and how they had struggled, and studied hard, to learn the things they know Spiritually. But He said it had not been so with me. He told me He had raised me as a *'calf of the stall.'* I found out later, that a calf in a stall, (or a pen), has all its food brought to it, and all it has to do is eat.

That's what I believe about Spiritual Truths. As Jesus said to Peter, "*Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but my Father in Heaven hath revealed it.*" We have Spiritual Truths revealed to us, by the Spirit of God, we don't have to figure it all out with our own intelligence. This is what Watchman Nee referred to as 'intuition.' Or, as I term it *'Knowing it, without learning it.'*

Then, He told me what I was in Whangamata for, and He told me to come to that place, to pray for Whangamata. As He was speaking, I had the thought, that if I had left my bike on the track below, I would be fretting for it now, and worrying that someone

would steal it, which was why He told me to “bring my bike.”

The next morning, I was back there at seven, but this time I went around the other side of the knoll, and found a cave, so, that’s where I went to pray. And whenever the Lord wanted to speak to me, He would say, “Go to the cave” and I would go back there; and He would meet with me.

When I began Managing the Deer farm, I would do a complete circuit of it every fortnight, to note how everything was. As I rode the circuit, I would have a ‘revelation’ of something in the Bible. It was a revelation of something I hadn’t even thought about, but now I could understand it clearly, (knowing it, without learning it). It took some time, but I finally realised, it always happened at exactly the same place; as I rode between a handful of pines, and the pine forest next door. That spot obviously meant something to the Lord, so it became my place of prayer instead of the cave. Roman’s 8:28 tells us, *‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’* The Lord created each one of us individually, and He wants us to be sensitive to the leading of His Spirit, so He can direct us individually.

My calling from the Lord is as a teacher. He called me to teach on Faith, Prayer, Free-will, our Personal Ministries, and End Time Events, among other things. I’ve majored on some, and minored on others. But I always taught in quite a legal and sterile manner, though inside my head, I *thought* differently than how I *taught*. In my first four years at Whangamata, I had a lot of time on my hands, so, I wrote eight books, which were all humorous. The first one was called Canterbury Draught. It was about a businessman from Auckland who was over-stressed, and always going ‘ape’ at his workers. So, they arranged for him to go on a month-long hunting trip, as far away as possible, which ended up being at Darfield, in Canterbury.

The owner of the hunting Safari was called Pirate, and his mate who helped him was called Trapper, because he was a trapper and gold Prospector. There was a teenager named Wart who helped them. They drove around in a Series 1 Land Rover named ‘Euphrates.’ The business owner hated Canterbury at first; the land and the people, but gradually grew to love them, eventually selling his business to buy a farm in Canterbury called Magpie Station, which was the title of the sequel.

I wrote a book about Whangamata, from the perspective of the two mobs of seagulls that ruled the skies over it, and two books of comic verse. The first was called ‘Satire and Random Shots,’ but I can’t recall the other, or the other books now, at all. I knew ‘Canterbury Draught’ would do well, because it was a long, complicated saga, which was interwoven with local history, and made fun of all the political intrigues of the time. Canterbury Draught, or CD, as it’s known, is also the local beer in Canterbury. One day I was at my desk, tidying up ‘Canterbury Draught’ before publication, when the Lord spoke to me. “I didn’t give you that gift to entertain the world with,” He said, “I gave it to you to use in My service; and if you will use it in My service I will bless it,” He

promised.

I knew what I had to do, but I couldn't decide immediately. It took me two or three weeks to decide, because 'Canterbury Draught' was, and still is, the best thing I had ever written. In the end, I had to concede that the things that will go on into Eternity, are far more important, than those things that will only last until fire burns them up on this earth. So, I gathered all my writings up into rubbish bags, and took them to the dump.

At that time, I was preparing to speak on Our Personal Ministries, at a Church in Tauranga, pastored by a friend, Brother Albert. And, as I thought about us being fore-ordained to our Ministries before Creation began; I had the thought that Noah's mother came home from the Supermarket when he was a boy, and Noah got the boxes the groceries had been in, and he laid them out in a line on the floor. He put the dog in one, he put the cat in one, he got the budgie down, and put it in one, and he sat in one himself. His father was sitting at the table, having a cup of coffee, watching this, and he asked, "What are you doing now?" "Daddy," Noah replied elated, "I made a big boat," holding his arms out wide. "Well don't!" his father commanded. "Why don't you pretend you're milking the cows, or doing something useful, instead of always pretending you're building big boats?" But Noah wasn't called to milk cows, he was called to build a boat for '*the saving of his house,*' as the Bible tells us. He was doing it when he was young, and he did it when he was old; because that's what he was called to do.

Is it scriptural? Yes, because, when Moses killed the Egyptian, he thought Israel would understand, '*how that God by his hand would deliver them.*' (Acts 7:25). And this was forty years before the Lord called him, at the burning bush, and told him what his Ministry was.

A lot of similar things flowed out of my pen as I prepared, and I really wondered how they would be received, because the Fellowship could be very formal. But they loved it. So, after that I always wrote or spoke what I *felt* I should, not what I *thought* I should, and the Lord has always blessed it. We are the only part of Creation that has imagination, and a sense of humour, both God given, and He expects us to use them.

6. Guidance

Over the next six months I had several experiences with guidance, which I will relate. I had been invited to speak at Brother Albert's Fellowship one weekend, but on the

Sunday morning, I awoke feeling terribly nauseous. It was so bad, that I could only move very slowly. I was convinced I would have to cancel my invitation; but I didn't want to let Albert down, so I packed and left. It was ninety kilometres away, and on the trip, I kept feeling that I would have to pull over, and put my finger down my throat, but I persevered, and arrived in one piece.

Throughout the Worship I was so nauseous, that I felt I would have to ask Albert to speak; but I survived and the time came for me to step behind the Pulpit. When I did so, I opened my Bible, and I felt perfectly normal. No giddiness, and no nauseous feelings. I knew then it was Satan trying to stop me from speaking, because he didn't want the fellowship to hear what I was going to say.

How often do Servants of the Lord get hindered from performing the Lord's Service, by a hurdle that Satan has put in their way? Too often, I'm sure. We have an enemy who hates all we stand for, and all we do, and we must walk close to the Lord, to be aware of his devices.

Being obedient to the Lord, also involves having the courage to say "No," when we are asked to do something that we know is outside His Will. Whenever the Lord has wanted me to speak in someone else's Church, He has always given me something to say, a few days before I get the invitation to come. So, I always know it is His Will, because He is working at both ends in unison. He has done this for over thirty years. There have been times when He has not given me anything to say for a year, and I have not received an invitation to speak over that year. There have also been times when He has given me something ten weeks in a row, and I have had an invitation every one of those weeks.

I dream every night, and most of my dreams are gone when I wake, except that I remember I was in a certain place, or with a certain person. But I do have dreams at times where I can remember every detail vividly. I feel that these dreams are from the Lord, because they are always warnings about something that is going to happen, that I need to prepare for, or, about a mistake I am going to make.

I had a dream on a Wednesday night that I had been invited to Brother Albert's Church to speak, and I went there, stood behind the pulpit, and opened my Bible. But, when I looked at the Congregation, I thought, "The Lord hasn't given me anything to say, and I'm not supposed to be here, someone else is supposed to be standing here." Then I woke. It's just a dream I thought.

The following Saturday night, at 10 pm, Brother Albert phoned me. He sounded desperate. "Brother, could you please come and preach for me tomorrow?" He asked. I was going to say "Yes sure!" as I always did; but I felt checked, and remembered the dream. I knew the Lord didn't want me to speak, He had something better planned. I didn't explain anything, but said, "I'm sorry Brother, but I'd better not," feeling sorry, because I'd never said no before, and I felt I was letting him down.

The following afternoon I phoned Albert, to find out how the morning went. "Perfect!" he said. "The Lord gave me something, and it has changed the lives of several people,

so, I knew it was the right thing to say." I still wasn't convinced that I hadn't let my friend down, so the following Sunday I went to this Church, just for fellowship. The first thing he said when he stood behind the pulpit was, "It's good to stand here if you have something to say. But if you don't have anything to say, don't stand here, let the person be here who should be here." I knew that was the Lord telling me I'd made the right decision, then I felt good about it all. But even so, it is very hard to say no to a friend in need, and it hurts deeply.

The Lord has His Perfect Will, and His Permissive Will. His Perfect Will is what He wants us to do, and His Permissive Will, is what we want to do, but He allows it.

Albert was going overseas for a few weeks, so he invited me to speak the first and third Sundays, and another friend, also named Kevin, would speak in between. The Lord had given me something to speak on, for the first weekend, so I agreed. But, between then, and Sunday, I thought of something better to say, than what the Lord had given me. I decided I could use what He had given me, on the third Sunday.

The Lord blessed what I said on the first Sunday, even though it wasn't His Will. I went along on the second Sunday, because I hadn't seen the other Pastor for a few years. He announced what he was going to speak on, and it was the same as what the Lord had given me for the week before. I thought that was good, because what I was going to say the week after, would complement what he was doing to say. The Lord had given me five Scriptures, and a story that bound everything together. His first Scripture, was my first one. I thought that was good, we were both on the same track. But, his second Scripture was my second, this third was my third. He had my five Scriptures in the same order, and he said everything I was going to say. By then, everything I was going to say the next week was in tatters. I thought I could at least salvage the story, but the Lord had given him that too. I knew then, that someone in the Congregation had to hear that. They were supposed to hear it the week before, but I hadn't been obedient, and they couldn't wait two more weeks, so the Lord had given it to Brother Kevin. The Lord was very gracious in giving me something else to speak on the following Sunday. But, no matter how good we think something is, nothing else is ever as good as the Lord's Perfect Will.

I spend a lot of time in prayer, because, when I was a young Christian, I was told the most important part of Prayer is, after you have spoken, to wait for the Lord to speak back. You may have to wait five minutes, or an hour, or two for Him to reply. He isn't like us, He doesn't just make a noise, for the sake of making a noise. If He doesn't have anything to say, He won't say anything, no matter how long you wait. He normally speaks to me between one o'clock, and four o'clock, in the morning, when my mind is clear, and my heart is quiet. He answers me in a Voice or by giving me a Vision. The Visions are normally warnings, about something that I will encounter.

About an hour before the Christchurch earthquake, the Lord told me what was going

to happen. Does that make me a Prophet? No! It's just that I was in His Presence, waiting on Him, when He wanted to tell someone, "There was going to be a big earthquake that morning." And, because I was in His Presence, I was that someone.

Once He said, "I am the calm in the midst of the storm," in a commanding Voice. He didn't say, He was the calm *before* the storm, or *after* it, He said He is the calm as you are going *through* it, which I learnt during the snowstorm.

Another time He said, "The fifth day of Prayer, Gordon Kettering." I wrote it down immediately, believing it was a book, that He wanted me to read to improve my prayer life. That afternoon, after fellowship I asked my daughters to see what they could find out about this book, on the Internet. There was no book called The Fifth Day of Prayer, by Gordon Kettering. But there were two towns in Tasmania, one named Gordon, and the other Kettering, below Hobart, that were mentioned a lot; and, the Lord told me, that is what He mentioned to me. John Wesley told us, 'God does nothing, except in answer to prayer.' And, the Lord told me, He was going to do something in Gordon and Kettering, in response to five days of prayer.

I began to pray on the Tuesday, and because I worked long hours managing the Deer farm, I only fasted each second day. The Lord hadn't told me what He was going to do there. Was He going to divert a disaster? Or start a Revival? Was He going to call someone to Ministry, who would have a far-reaching influence? I did ask a couple of times, and waited for hours each time for a reply, but He didn't answer me. So, I tried the shotgun approach, and prayed for everything I thought *may* happen, hoping to get it right somewhere.

Over those five days, I had the distinct impression that there were four others praying for the same thing, at the same time. One was in New Zealand, two were on mainland Australia, and one was in Tasmania. I was going to put the 'Fifth Day of Prayer, Gordon Kettering,' on the Internet, and see if I could contact one of the others. But I felt rebuked when I thought of it, and knew it was the wrong thing to do.

Why did the Lord choose me to do it? Was it because I'm the pick of the litter, or special in some way? No. It was because I was listening, at a time when He wanted to ask someone to do it. And, hearing from the Lord, is the same as hearing from anyone else; the *closer* you are to them, the *easier* it is to hear what they are saying.

The fifth day rolled over, and there was no thunder from the heavens, and no fanfare, the clock just ticked over, and my part was done. I do like to know the end of the story, and I have a sister-in-law in Hobart, who is a Christian. So, I thought I'd phone her and say, a friend had mentioned Gordon and Kettering to me and I wondered what was happening there? I felt rebuked again, and felt that if the Lord wanted me to know what was going on, He would have told me, at one of those times when I asked. He asked me to be faithful, and play my part, which I did, and I will find out in Eternity what it produced.

On the farm, I made notes on a voice-recorder, or with a pen and paper. When the

batteries went flat in the recorder, I would pray, "Lord, let those batteries be recharged in the Name of Jesus Christ," and they would be. One day I watched the battery meter go from flat to full before my eyes. If my pen ran out of ink, I would pray, "Lord, let this pen be refilled in the Name of Jesus Christ," and it would be. But, not every time, because the Lord did expect me to use some common-sense, and carry spare pens and batteries

When the quad bike ran out of petrol at the back of the farm, in the rain, after I put it on reserve the day before, I prayed, "Lord, let this bike start, and get me back to the shed, in the Name of Jesus Christ." It started and took me back.

I had an MP3 player, that I used to play music. One day it froze, and neither myself nor the girls could get it to reset, or play, so I put it in a drawer. A few months later, I saw it there, and was going to throw it away, but I thought, "I've tried everything for it except prayer." So, I prayed, "Lord, let this MP3 player work again, in the Name of Jesus Christ." It played first time. I had it playing on the way to town. "Where's that music coming from?" Cassia asked. "From the MP3 player," I replied. "How did you get it going?" She asked. "I prayed for it," I told her. "I *knew* you did!" She exclaimed. I would rather be poor and humble, and know that my children have the confidence that when I pray, the Lord answers, than to be wealthy. That is the greatest honour I could ever receive.

A few weeks later, I was driving to another town with Bonnie. I turned the MP3 player on, but it wouldn't play, no matter what I did. Bonnie looked at it. Inside, I prayed, "Lord, Bonnie knows this player worked after prayer, and if it doesn't play now, she will doubt." He replied, "You show her *you* believe it will play, then I'll show her *you* believe it." I turned to Bonnie, and announced, "It's *going* to play this time," and I turned it on, without looking at it. It played.

If we trust the Lord to do small things for us, He will do small things. If we trust Him to do great things, He will do great things. "*According to your faith, be it unto you.*" (Matthew 9:29).

Around 2013 I was the assistant Pastor of an Assembly of God church, where I was also the Worship leader. I had my own personal Ministry work to do, as well as doing Ministry work for two other Churches. I was also a solo parent with three teenage daughters at home, and managed the Deer farm. One day at work, I was so weary, that I knew this was all too much of a burden for one person to bear. So, I told the Lord that I wanted a year off all Ministry work. I told Him I would only Manage the farm, and look after my family for this year while I rested. Over the next year, I got used to sitting in the back corner of the Church, not having to say, or do, anything at all, and I felt I could happily do it until the Lord returned.

A year later, I was near Wellington, and went to a Church called Lifeswitch, at Silverstream, for fellowship. The Pastor, Clint, was speaking about our Talents, and at the end of the service remarked, "If you have used your Talents for the Lord in the past, but haven't been using them for a while, perhaps it's time to take them up again?"

Then he began to pray.

There was an empty seat beside me, and, as Clint prayed, a 'man' sat in the seat. He was wearing a very pale blue-green robe, that ended between his knees and ankles, and had bare feet. My hands were cupped on my left leg, and the 'Angel' reached across and slowly dropped five gold coins, one at a time, into my hands. I sat looking at the coins, his robe, and his feet, then Clint said something that caught my attention, and I glanced up at him. When I looked back, the coins, and the Angel had gone. I remembered then, that I had only asked the Lord for one year off, and that week marked the end of my year. I realised those coins represented my Talents which the Lord had put back into my hands, to use in His Service.

Over my year's Sabbatical, I had not written one word of a tract, booklet, song or skit, and had not been invited to speak anywhere. But, that afternoon, I wrote a Worship song, and the next day I wrote a Skit, and have continued ever since.

One year, I had planned to spend a week in late winter, tramping a circuit around Mt Egmont, so I bought an ice axe to take along on the trip, because the mountain would still be snow covered. I didn't get time to go in the end, so after another year, I decided to sell it. Sometime before that, I formally gave all I possessed to the Lord, including myself, and my time, even though I knew they were already His. The axe was put on Trade Me for sale, and several people wanted it, but in the end it didn't sell. I really felt that it should have, so I said to the Lord, "Why didn't my ice axe sell? I really thought it would?" He replied, "But you gave it to Me." I had completely forgotten about that, but remembered, when he reminded me. "I did too," I said, then repented of trying to sell what wasn't mine to sell. "I'll put it on Trade Me again," I said, "And if You want to sell Your ice axe to fund Ministry work, then let it sell." It sold immediately. When I told the Lord, everything I owned was His, I didn't hear a "Thank you," but He believed I meant what I said, and He took me at my word. And when He promises us something in the Bible, He expects us to believe He means what He said, and take Him at His Word.

In 2017, my ex-Pastor went away for a month, and I looked after his house. One night, I was in prayer, and at 5 am, decided I had better have an hour's sleep, before I went to work. When I got into bed, and rolled over, the house began to shake. I remembered being told to get out of bed, and lie beside it during an earthquake, so I tried to roll over and get out, but the shaking was so violent, I was thrown back each time I tried it. There was a deafening roar in the room, that sounded to me like a herd of elephants running through it. The shaking lasted about one minute. There were thousands of books in bookcases, and much crockery, in China cabinets, and I imagined the house would look like it had been ransacked. But, nothing at all had fallen over anywhere in the house, which I found hard to believe, considering the severity of the 'quake.' It seems the earthquake had only happened in my room.

In Acts 4:31 it reads, *"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken..."* I know the

Lord never does anything without having a reason for doing it, and I felt that 'earthquake,' was a warning to me about something that was going to happen in the immediate future.

Several days later, I began shivering in bed, and when I covered myself, I began sweating profusely. For the next ten days I tossed and turned, delirious, passing in and out of consciousness. For much of the time I was not aware of who, or where, I was, only that I was fighting for my life against something. I couldn't eat anything, or even drink water, and had to stay awake all night, because if I fell asleep, I would wake with the bed soaked with sweat.

When it subsided after the ten days, I had lost twelve kilos, and over the next six months it kept recurring, until I finally decided to resign from the farm, and rest until it was completely gone. After two weeks of doing nothing, except lying in the hammock, on my yacht, and resting, it finally left, and has never returned again since that day.

A nurse told me it was malaria, but I don't know. I did want to go to the doctor a few times, when I was lucid enough to do so, but when I went outside, the shivering and shaking were so violent, that I felt I couldn't go out in public. I have never been to hospital in my life, and that is the only time I have ever been really sick. Those ten days taught me, that nothing is really in our control, except by prayer, and the grace and mercy of the Lord.

Sometimes, Faith is, *'the evidence of things not seen.'* At other times, it is merely, the *'substance of things hoped for.'* On one New-Years-day, I had to travel to Auckland, to fix a few things on my Aunt's house. I left home at 6-30 am, but before I reached the edge of town, I realised I didn't have enough petrol to get me there, and I didn't have money to buy any. I prayed about it, and felt 'impressed' to continue, praying, "Lord, you will have to provide me with petrol along the way."

At the edge of town, there was a man hitch hiking. As I slowed to stop, he let out such a sigh of relief, that I knew I had done the right thing. He told me he had camped at Coroglen with his girlfriend for New-Years-eve. But, six men in a tent near his had taken a dislike to him, and, during the night they attacked him, tied him up, and called the Police. The Police believed their story, that one man had attacked six, so they arrested him. The Cells at the nearest Police Station were full, so they took him to Whangamata, some distance away. At six in the morning, the duty Policeman opened the door, and told him he was free to go. He didn't have a clue where he was, so he asked, "Which way is Coroglen?" "Follow this road to the end of town, and keep going," he was advised. Which is where I met him.

He hadn't slept at all, and offered me one-hundred dollars, if I would take him to Coroglen. I told him I was happy to take him there, but I wouldn't take his money, as the night had already cost him enough. We arrived at the campsite, but his tent and girlfriend were gone; so, we returned to the main road, and parked at a rest area to decide what to do. His girlfriend drove up shortly after, and he asked me to wait, while

he went to the car. He returned with fifty dollars. "I have to give you this at least," he said, so I accepted it. As I drove on, I realised I now had the petrol money to get me to Auckland. Praise the Lord!

When I got over to Tapu, there was another man hitching, so I picked him up. He had gone there with a group of friends, to spend the night celebrating. But, during the evening, something his brother had done years ago, was brought up, and he was made to feel unwelcome, so he left. He had spent the night sleeping on the beach, with only the clothes he wore for comfort, so he was feeling very weary too. I dropped him at his home in Auckland, and arrived much later than anticipated, at my Aunt's.

One day at the farm, I was thinking about my stepfather Dave, who I had tried unsuccessfully to share the Gospel with, over the years. Out loud I asked, "Lord, don't let Dave die, until I've had a chance to share the Gospel with him." The next morning, my mother phoned early, to tell me, Dave had suffered a massive stroke in the night, and wouldn't live long. I knew then, the Lord had put those words in my mouth, to keep Dave alive until I could speak to him. I travelled to Dargaville, and went to talk to Dave. He was unconscious, and had such a loud rattle in his throat, when he breathed, that I knew he would not be able to hear me when I talked. So, in prayer, I asked the Lord to clear up the noise in his throat, so he could hear me; and to make him conscious, so he could hear the plan of Salvation, and respond.

I expected a miracle, but instead, the Lord sent a doctor, with a suction device with a hose, which he used to clear the fluid from Dave's throat. With that done he was quiet enough to hear me. I sat, holding Dave's limp hand, and, when I took my hand away to scratch my face, I noticed Dave's hand moving around, looking for mine. He was conscious.

I shared the Gospel with him, then prayed. When I finished praying, he was unconscious again, and the next day, he stepped into Eternity, with the Lord. We must always be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit of God, because we are finite, but He knows all things.

We had many stags on the Deer farm, and one of the breeding stags took a hearty dislike to me for no apparent reason. He would stand ten metres away from me, watching me from the corner of his eye, and as soon as I looked away, he would drop his head and charge me. For this reason, I had to stay vigilant, and always be armed with a spade to hit him in the face when he attacked, and ward him off.

On one occasion, as I drove into the stag paddock, three stags ran out through the gate. I walked out to chase them back, but soon realised my 'friend' was one of them, and I had no weapon, and nowhere to run or hide. Seeing his good fortune, he lowered his head, and ran at me. But, when he was about two metres away, another stag ran in with his head down, hit him in the chest, and bowled him over. When he stood, the other stag bowled him over again, and again, until he ran off through the gate to safety.

On two other occasions I was caught out, and attacked by this guy, when I was inadvertently unarmed; and on both occasions, was saved by the same stag. So, I named my protector Big Boy, and always fed him fruit to reward him for saving me on those occasions.

The other stag gave up attacking me after a year or so, but about seven years later, he started again, and again for no apparent reason, unless it was the memory of the times I hit him, those years ago. Then, he began to age, and ail, as did Big Boy, but during this time he made his peace with me. I could hand feed him, and touch, and rub him. He also made peace with Big Boy, and they spent their days together. After a month of this, I went away for a weekend, and when I returned, I found they had both passed away in my absence. These are the times when it's heart-breaking, to be a farmer; and many a tear is shed on a lonely hill, between a shepherd, and his animal friends.

I was so pleased we had made our peace, but I was never sure if Big Boy protected me out of love and concern, or if it was as it is written in Job 5:22-23, *"At destruction and famine though shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the fields: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee."* I may never know.

In Revelation 19, we read about the Lord, and the armies of Heaven, returning to earth on white horses, for the battle of Armageddon. So, there are animals in Heaven, and I hope there are deer. In particular, my beautiful big stag named Big Boy, waiting patiently for me to finish my earthly sojourn, and come to him with a handful of bananas.

I am a work in progress, as we all are, and will be until the day I die. The important thing in life, is to walk with the Lord, to be on the path, and travelling it. As long as we are moving, He can guide us. I spend a lot of time in 'Knocks College.' Often, I open my mouth, and the Lord puts His Word in it, at other times, I open my mouth, and put my foot in it. I make mistakes, and fail Him too often. But I am not relying on how right or wrong I get things, I am totally reliant on the grace of God, and I know He will never fail me.

'Everybody's somebody's fool,' as the song tells us. To be a fool for someone means you aren't ashamed to be associated with them, and be made fun of, on their behalf. It may cost your reputation, your friends, your family, your job. It could cost your health, or even your life. Right, or wrong, it's a reason to live for many people. Some will embrace a cause, an ideology, or a political or religious movement, and devote themselves to it. To others it may be their wife or husband. Some people are fools for their employer, simply because that's the hand that feeds them. There are noble fools, happy fools, deluded fools, pathetic fools, God's fools, and Satan's fools. We're all somebody's fool. I'm a fool for Jesus. Whose fool, are you?

7.

The Way Home

We are all born separated from our Creator, by Adam and Eve's original sin, in the Garden of Eden. The only way back into God's Presence for us, is by having that sin atoned for. God Himself came to live among us as Jesus Christ, and give Himself as the Sacrifice, to atone for the sin that separated us from Him. As the Bible tells us, *'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.'* (2 Corinthians 5:19.) And as John 3:16 famously puts it, *'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'*

The only hope we have, for a life beyond this mortal existence, is to accept the death of Jesus Christ on Calvary, as the payment for our sins, personally. It is offered to us as a free gift. *'For by Grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God,'* (Ephesians 2:8).

The way to do that, is by inviting Jesus Christ into your life. It takes a prayer of repentance, and commitment, such as, "Lord Jesus, I repent of my sins, and accept your death on Calvary, as the atonement for them. I invite You into my life, to be my Lord and Saviour, and promise to honour and serve You as long as I live." How can you be sure your sins are forgiven? *'If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all righteousness.'* (1 John 1:9). God promised it.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, you are now a son or daughter of God, on a Heavenly journey through life. *'If any man (or woman) be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold all things are become new.'* (1 Corinthians 5:17).

The Bible is spiritual food for our souls. Read it daily, and find a Church where Jesus Christ is honoured as Lord and Saviour, so you can learn, and grow Spiritually. As with any relationship, the most important part of it is communication, so communicate with Jesus Christ daily, in prayer, and may He richly bless you.

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Ed.D.