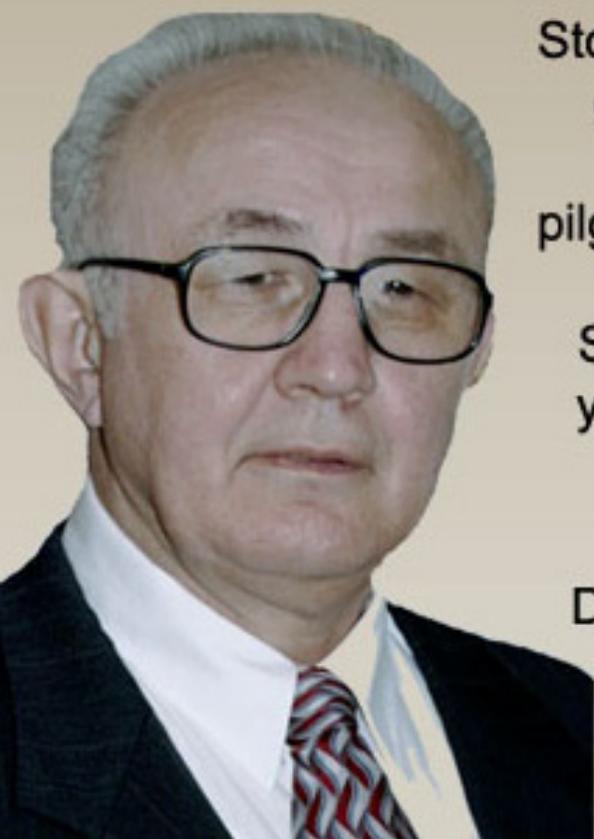


*Exceeding
Abundantly*



Stories that reflect God's
grace and kindness
on a
pilgrimage to heaven . . .

Stories that will bless
your heart and glorify
His Name!

Dr. Gordon E. Necemer

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goodness on a pilgrimage from
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Preface

Exceeding Abundantly

When I was a child, we often had special guests -- missionaries -- as I later learned they were called, visiting the church where my family attended. Occasionally, on my mother's kind invitation, these 'guests' would visit our home for lunch or evening coffee.

Regardless from which country the "visitors" came, I always looked eagerly forward to their visits. I guess the thought that these individuals had come from distant countries such as the Philippines, Kenya, Brazil or China would intrigue any young lad -- and so it did with me! What seemed to intrigue me more than the missionary's country of origin were the stories they related as we sat at the kitchen table or gathered for evening family devotions.

Each missionary had his/her "special story" which was always supported by a similar story from the Bible which I accepted as being true. One missionary related a story about a healing he witnessed while praying for a poor, unwelcome beggar in Africa. Another told a story about a "timely financial provision" he received as he was about to spend his last dollar on food for a stranger who, apparently, needed it more than he. And another told about God's deliverance from government tyranny at the exact moment he expected unavoidable death would befall him.

Each time a missionary told his/her story I listened

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intently to what was being said. But, to be honest with you, I rarely accepted them to be factual. As far as I was concerned, each story was shared to keep a young child's mind captivated to the thrill of the moment! At times, after the missionary had left, I asked my mother if she believed the stories we heard to be true. Each time she responded with the same answer, "God has not struck any of them dead, so they must be true!"

Because I respected my mother's opinion, and because I wanted to be "Christian", I decided that I would give the missionaries the "benefit of the doubt" despite not having any way of validating what they had said. To help me accomplish this, I further credited each missionary with possessing a vivid imagination and a vibrant zest for "story telling!"

But this left me with a problem. How could each guest have the same imagination? And, how could each missionary tell such wonderful stories that were so similar in nature when each of them probably had never met the other? These two questions plagued me until I became born-again and, like the missionaries, experienced God's kindness that the missionaries knew.

Within weeks my life radically changed. It did not take long until I, too, started to relate exciting stories about God's exceeding love, care, and provisions in my life. So, since being born-again for over fifty years, and having experienced God's gracious provisions in my life on numerous occasions and in numerous ways, I have decided to write this book. Some of the anecdotes will appear to be fantastic, outlandish and unbelievable. Some of the stories may even cause the reader to wonder

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if I, like the missionaries, possess a wild imagination and to doubt whether the incidents stated could have occurred as they are stated.

Relax as you read on. If I did not believe in the God that I do I, too, would have great distress and difficulty in believing some of the stories. But, my God is a great God who cannot be restricted from accomplishing His plans in His follower's lives. Whether you and I comprehend, accept, or appreciate the work God has demonstrated in my life is of no concern to God. He has worked out of His good pleasure in my life what He has concluded to be best for time and eternity. In light of this, I'm taking time to share these blessings with the sincere hope you be blessed and encouraged to keep on trusting God, regardless what comes your way.

If you really have problems accepting and believing what you read -- and I hope you do not -- please ask me for authentication of the stories. I will gladly provide you with the necessary information you need to help you set aside your doubts.

I am so privileged to know Christ as Savior and Lord. I am extremely delighted that He has been actively and pro-actively involved in saving me, keeping me and protecting me daily. Without Him, as copartner in my daily walk, my life would have been vain, futile, and desperately boring. But He has been there, and He remains there -- ever present -- doing of His good pleasure! May God be praised and may your heart be blessed as you read the following pages. All praise and glory goes to God who has shaped my spiritual formation as I travel on "a pilgrimage from earth to heaven!"



Chapter

1

The Prayer Of Faith

Exceeding Abundantly

I was born on December 10, 1947 in Powell River, British Columbia as one of eight children - six boys and two girls. My mother worked in a cedar shake mill in Kelly Creek, five miles out of town. My father worked as a logger in the area. In 1954 it became clear that a move from Powell River to Surrey would be necessary. The cost of raising the family would be less, and availability of schooling for the older children would be more readily accessible. Therefore, in June of that year, the family moved to Surrey.

Illness was not common in our family. As far as I can recall, none of my brothers or sisters were hospitalized before we moved to Surrey. Within a few weeks after the move, however, the situation was to change dramatically. In September 1951, Dr. Lyons, a longtime friend and family physician, announced that I was severely ill with epilepsy, and that there was no known cure for the disease.

For about a year and a half I suffered many 'fits' while at home and, sometimes, while the family was visiting friends. During these 'fits' I would be thrown into severe and lengthy convulsions which would inhibit my breathing for two or three minutes. People around me thought that I would suffocate as I went through these ordeals. On other occasions, without forewarning, I would collapse on the floor, and while shaking uncontrollably, I would bounce like a rubber ball. These 'fits' occurred three or four times a week and with each attack, the severity of the illness

worsened.

Finally, in March of 1952, Dr. Lyons decided that I should be hospitalized in Vancouver General Hospital until a suitable and affordable 'control medication' for epilepsy was discovered. No cure was "in the working" at this time, so to release himself from any obligation Dr. Lyons told my mother that I would probably suffer from epilepsy for the rest of my life. After a week of "unhelpful" medical care I was sent home with mother being informed of the possible complications related to my illness.

Mother, having a deep background in the Ukrainian Orthodox Faith, knew God could answer prayer. Immediately she decided that if the doctors couldn't help me, she would ask God to intervene on my behalf. But, not having been taught how to pray, she did not have the confidence to approach God herself

One a Friday evening she decided that she would visit Dr. Lyons again to inquire if he had come across any medical information that might be of help for treating epilepsy. To her disappointment, medical science had nothing more to offer than what she had already been given. Distraught with the news, mother decided she would return home by the tram, stop in New Westminster, and contact an elderly friend to see if she might have any 'special cures' for my problem.

While getting off the tram near Blacky Street, she heard music coming from a Street Mission service nearby. The congregation was singing the well-known song, "Love Lifted Me." Without thinking, my mother ran into the mission and yelled, "Preacher, if God has lifted you to these lofty heights, and if he is such a good friend

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of yours, maybe you could talk to him about my son who is seriously ill!”

The Pastor, shocked by the intrusion, stopped the service, listened to my mother share her sorrowful plight, and then prayed for me. Through that prayer, my mother’s simple faith was ignited, and she believed God had answered the pastor’s prayer.

Early the next morning she phoned Dr. Lyons and told him what she had done. With this, she also added that I would no longer be taking my prescribed medications for, as far as she was concerned, I had been miraculously healed. Being skeptical about God, prayer and healing, Dr. Lyons cautioned her about such claims. After cautioning her, he further reminded her of the severity of my illness, and the value of the medication he had prescribed.

Three days later, while seeing him at a scheduled appointment, his assessment of my situation changed dramatically when he noticed that I was gaining weight and strength. From the changes taking place, he recognized that my previous condition was history because something “strangely wonderful” had taken place. In his medical journal, which is still on file at Vancouver General Hospital, he wrote there had been a notable change in my condition that could not be attributed to anything less than divine intervention.

From the day my mother visited the mission and asked the Pastor for prayer, I have not had an epileptic seizure, nor have I had health problems that could be associated with the illness. With her simple faith, and the prayers of this small mission church, “the righteous, copartnering with God, accomplished much!

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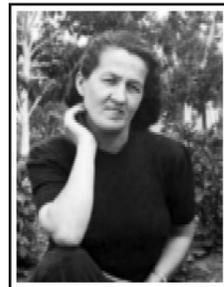
My mother and father walking along Columbia Street in New Westminster. My father worked as a tree faller for MacMillan-Bloedel; my mother faithfully cared for her nine children

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My father, sitting on one of the many donkey sleds he built in Powell River. He was a faller, but often built these sleds for the road building crews.

The last photo of my mother before she passed away on August 31st, 1961. She is seated under an Oak tree she planted when we first moved to Cloverdale in 1953.



Family photo taken in 1954 just after we had moved from Powell River to Surrey. I am the boy standing directly to the left of the baby in the high chair. The tall girl, at the back left of this photo, is my cousin, Audrey.



Chapter

2

Empty Cupboards Filled!

Many youngsters, in today's affluent society, often find it difficult to understand why children of the early fifties could not have everything they desired. What children today often do not understand is that the economic conditions of earlier times were radically different from what they are today. Most families were considered wealthy if they owned a home, a car and had enough food and clothing for each day.

In our home, we always had plenty to eat, acceptable clothing and suitable shelter. Everything we owned was regarded as a special blessing from God, and we were constantly reminded by our parents that we should never take any of our possessions for granted.

Even though we never missed a meal because of our parent's willful neglect, there were occasions when we were not sure when or how the next one was going to be provided. A particular situation during my childhood, comes to mind whenever I think of how God allowed us to have adequate food, clothing and shelter.

It was the spring of 1954. The year, from all obvious indications, appeared to be a prosperous one for our family. My father was working for MacMillan-Bloedel in Port Hardy as a tree faller, and was receiving a good wage. Our family was confident that as long as he worked, we would never lack anything. But, early in the year the loggers went on strike. For the following

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four months, therefore, no income was received by the family.

At this time, families which were facing financial difficulties did not collect unemployment insurance or welfare. Families that had no savings found it difficult to make ends meet, and they had to readjust their life-style drastically. We were one of those families!

During this trying time, to ensure food supplies, mother planted a large garden, dug vegetable roots from the roadside and picked berries in the nearby forest. As the strike continued, and our food supplies decreased, mother started to use potatoes as the main meal staple for the meals. For breakfast, she cooked potato pancakes, for lunch she cooked potato soup, and for supper she cooked potato hash. It seemed that the only food we ate during these days was potatoes and more potatoes. But, for every meal that was provided, she encouraged us to remain thankful. Within a month of the strike starting, the potato supply began to run out, and it became obvious that we urgently needed some groceries. But, we had no money. Under no circumstance would my mother ask anyone for help.

Our family regularly held a time for sharing and prayer before bedtime. On this occasion conversation seemed inappropriate. Rather than talk, everyone wanted to pray about the family's pressing food dilemma. Everyone who prayed ended his prayer in a similar way - "Lord, you know how hungry we're getting; please end the loggers' strike immediately so the family can have income, and provide us food as you did for the multitude during Bible times."

God answered our prayer faster than we expected!

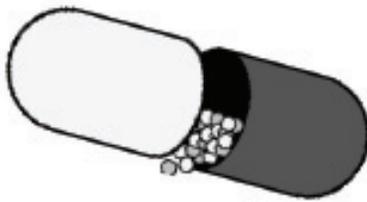
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The next day, around seven thirty in the morning, a Woodward's delivery truck backed into our yard. After opening the cargo deck packed with food, the driver approached my mother and said, "Where would you like the groceries placed?"

Mother quickly explained to the driver there had been a serious mistake because she had not ordered the groceries. Without giving the driver a chance to respond to this, she told him to leave because she did not have the funds with which to pay for them.

The driver, however, refused to heed her request, stating he had been told to leave everything that was on his truck at our home. Regardless of what my mother said, he was determined he could not leave until the truck was completely empty. Finally accepting this, she called the family to aid him unload the boxes which she now realized God had provided in answer to our prayer.

That day our empty cupboards were filled! The groceries received were more than enough to keep the family fed until my father returned to work later that summer. Years later, as the family reflected on this experience, I was reminded of David's confession, "Once I was young, now I am old, and yet I have not seen the righteous of the Lord abandoned, or his seed begging for bread."



Chapter

6

Tums For The Tummy: Repentance For The Soul

“Be sure your sins will find you out”, is an admonition from Scripture that is as certain as life. When, or how God will allow one’s sins to be uncovered usually is not known to the individual. But, one way or the other, He arranges circumstances through which one’s transgressions are eventually “declared from the rooftops”. At least, that is what happened to me!

In 1960 our family was told that mother was seriously ill with abdominal and back cancer. The medical diagnosis of her condition indicated there was nothing more doctors could do for her. With this, we were also informed that as her illness progressed, she would suffer immense, excruciating levels of pain, and the family should prepare itself to deal with this expected development.

In March of 1961 the family received its introduction to the pain, mother would face during her future sufferings. Fifty years later, I can still recall many nights during which I could not sleep because I could hear her screaming with unbearable pain when she did not receive a ‘shot’ of morphine from the visiting Community Nurse.

During the day mother usually felt somewhat better than during the night, but she always felt nauseated after eating lunch or supper. On this particular day in April, she had mentioned to an older sister that she was

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not feeling well, and that she wished she could take something to settle her stomach.

Hearing this, I decided I wanted to help her feel better. At this time I knew of only one medication that might help her, that being Tums. Pressed by this yearning to help mother, I devised a “fail proof plan” by which I could get the Tums she desperately needed.

The process was simple. I asked a younger sister to ride to Cloverdale, about three miles from our home, to visit a local drugstore so we would buy two bottles of Tums costing forty cents each. She, knowing only part of my scheme, agreed to go with me. I then told mother that we were going for a short bike ride, and that we would be back within the hour with something that might help her. Miraculously, without questioning us, she approved our plans.

Shortly after we left home, I informed my sister regarding the details of my plan. Once we arrived at the drug store she was to pick up two bottles of Tums, and then immediately go to the counter to pay for them. As the druggist took the payment, she was to distract him by saying, “These are for mother. You know she’s not been feeling well in recent days, but she’s managing all right!” I further explained that she was to act as calm as possible so the druggist would not suspect that anything unbecoming was taking place as I strolled through the store. If all went well, I would pocket three or four extra bottles, slip out the back door without anyone noticing what had occurred, and ride home slowly until she caught up with me. All she had to do was pay for the two bottles, walk out of the store, and meet me somewhere along the main street.

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The plan worked; in fact, it worked better than I had expected! While she paid for the Tums, I grabbed what I wanted, and walked out of the store totally unobserved, so I thought.

On August 31, 1961 mother died of cancer. With her passing I forgot about this incident. After all, if the theft were going to be discovered, it would have happened by then. Years later, however, I was to discover that the act had not gone unnoticed; the druggist had been fully aware of what I was doing even though I believed otherwise.

I learned this in May 1992 when I was shopping at Woodward's Department Store in Guildford for a new shirt and necktie. I had just found a suitable complementary set when I noticed an elderly man having difficulty matching a necktie with a shirt that he was holding. To help him make a decision what tie he should purchase I politely said, "I think that teal tie over there might be the perfect match." Accepting my suggestion as being helpful, he dropped his shirt and started walking to the cashier directly behind me. As he slowly passed by me I felt constrained to say, "Excuse me, Sir, you look familiar. I think I should know you."

Looking me over carefully, he smiled, and then said, "Yes, come to think of it young man, you should. Maybe, if you recall some Tums that went missing from a drugstore in Cloverdale in 1961 you will remember me well."

I almost died on the spot! Here, standing in front of me, was Mr. Mossier from whom I had stolen the Tums. Unexpectedly, I was being confronted about a sin I committed years earlier and that I thought was buried

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in the pages of history, never to be mentioned again.

As I stood before the man I did not know what to do or say. I was in the most unwanted and unwelcome difficulty that anyone would want to face. Finally, after regaining my composure, I said, “Oh, you’re Mr. Mossier from Cloverdale. Yes, I did steal those Tums, but they were for my mother. As my sister told you, she was sick that day, and desperately needed something for her stomach. All we had was the change my sister gave you. I knew my mother needed at least three packages of Tums, but the only way I could get them was to steal them. I’m so sorry for stealing the other packages; if you’d like, I will pay you now for them, plus the interest, and anything else you might want.”

The druggist, shaking his head, placed his hands on my shoulder and said, “For your mother, I will let you have the Tums. For yourself,” he continued in a slow, chastising voice, “I hope you’re shamed to death! The apology is accepted, but what you need to do, young man, is repent and ask God to forgive you even as I am. If you will do that, you will have both the ‘Tums for the tummy, and repentance for the soul.”

I walked out of Woodward’s embarrassed for my actions in years past, but relieved that I had been forgiven the wrong I had done. Each time I drive through Cloverdale and pass the drug store, I reflect on the gracious manner in which the druggist forgave me. This, I know was possible only because of the gracious way in which Christ provided forgiveness for both of us at Calvary, even though we had sinned.



The drug store from which I stole the three bottles of Tums for my mother in 1961. I thought I had got away with the crime. Years later, however, I met the druggist, Mr. Bob Mossier, who informed me that he knew what I had done. This is the original building in Cloverdale, now called Pharmasave



Chapter

24

Rechecking The Cheque

As stated in the previous anecdote, God blessed me with a teaching position on the last day before the school year started despite the doubts of many of my Christian brothers and sisters. On Tuesday, September 4th, I began my teaching career that clearly demonstrated to me that “if God be for us, who can be against us.”

Despite the delight of receiving this teaching posting, I was to face two troublesome problems when I reached Sayward these being, finding a home in which to live, and purchasing a vehicle for transportation. God, in both circumstances, was going to prove Himself faithful as He had done many times before. The story is how He provided me a vehicle through a totally unexpected source, “right on time!”

On the Saturday following being hired as a teacher by School District #72, I returned to Langley to visit my family, and to purchase a car. Not sure what I would purchase, I visited the Volkswagen, Datsun and Chrysler dealerships which were a short distance from each other. By early Saturday afternoon, not having found a car at the price I wanted to pay, I visited a GM dealership on the Langley Bypass. As I walked into the show room, I noticed a brown and cream 1972 Mustang, which I immediately liked and hoped I could purchase at the price I could afford, parked in a nearby lot. As I headed to this car, a young sales man approached me

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asking the classical, expected question, “You’re looking for a car, are you?”

Politely I responded, “I’m not looking for a car, I’m looking at that Mustang if it’s for sale for the money I have in my pocket!”

Quickly, hoping to make an immediate sale, the young man, now walking with me said, “Sir, that vehicle is an exceptional deal. It’s mechanically sound, clean, and it can be yours for three thousand, five hundred dollars, guaranteed, if you take it now.”

I really liked the vehicle, and the sales agent knew it. From the interest I showed in the car, he expected me to accept the offer immediately. Much to his surprise, however, I said to him, “I really like the vehicle, but I don’t like your price. I think I still have adequate time to check other dealerships and come back if I don’t find a vehicle at a better price.”

And having said this, I left the lot. An hour or so later I returned to the dealership. On seeing me, the sales person who had previously talked to me, immediately approached me and said, “Sir, I’m so glad you decided to revisit us. Since you left, I’ve had an opportunity to discuss the price of the vehicle with my manager. Seeing that your intrigued with it, as you definitely are, he has dropped the price from three thousand, five hundred dollars to three thousand, providing you can come up with a down payment of one thousand dollars within the next twenty-four hours.”

Recognizing that the vehicle was in excellent condition, and that I could save five hundred dollars on the purchase price, I responded, “Service the car as soon as possible. I’ll be back tomorrow night with the

thousand dollars.”

Hearing this, the young man wrote up a sales agreement which I gladly signed. I knew I had purchased what I liked, and what I desperately needed, at a price that was affordable.

With the excitement of purchasing the vehicle, I lost track of the time. Knowing that I needed to get the thousand dollar down payment by the end of the day, I immediately headed to the credit union to borrow the down payment. But, when I arrived there, it had already closed. With this, I was in a quandary how I would get the necessary, agreed on down payment so I could have transportation while living in Sayward.

Now, not certain what to do, I phoned an older sister and asked her if she could lend me the thousand dollars I needed or if she knew anyone who could. To my request she responded, “I can’t lend you the money, but tomorrow Uncle George is hosting the family at a luncheon and he will be giving a small cash gift to each of the family. Be at the family home at 12:30,” she continued, “you never know what God might provide!”

At 12:30, the next day, as I had been instructed by my sister, I attended the luncheon. After completing the meal, Uncle George thanked the family for the respect and care it had shown him throughout the years and then he said, “I want to give each of you a financial gift as a reflection of my appreciation to you. I know you don’t expect this, but accept it,” he continued, “because it’s something I know I need to do.” And having finished his comments, he handed each of us an envelope with, “Open it and enjoy the gift as you please” written on it.

As instructed, I tore the envelope open. Seeing

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that he had given each of the family a cheque, without examining it, I immediately said, "Thank you so much, Uncle George, for this gift of one hundred dollars. It will go a long way towards the down payment on the car I purchased yesterday."

My sister, who had invited me to the dinner, after hearing me say this responded, "Gordon, recheck the cheque. I think you've got the amount wrong."

Examining the cheque more closely, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Instead of the amount being one hundred dollars as I had previously concluded, it was for one thousand dollars which was exactly the amount I needed as the down payment for the car.

Turning to Uncle George I expressed my appreciation for the gift and then told him how his timely gift would cover the down payment on the Mustang .

Hearing for what the money would be used, he smiled and then said, "Gordon, you've said God provides for the fowl of the air and the fish of sea, and he will adequately provide for us, so we shouldn't worry. This gift, as you use it for purchasing the car, should be an affirmation of what you believe"

By three on Sunday afternoon I returned to the dealership and gave the sales manager a cheque for one thousand dollars. By 3:30 I left Langley, headed towards Campbell River and Sayward with the car I liked, and needed at the price I could afford because God provided for me adequately on time as He does every time.

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The 1972 Mustang, with a powerful V8 motor that I purchased with the “rechecked cheque” of \$1,000 dollars Uncle George gave at the right time, on time.



Chapter

28

God's Chosen Chef

It has been a tradition, in our home, that after the Sunday Morning Service we would go out for lunch. Those who live near Vancouver know there are many excellent restaurants within the Lower Mainland at which one can dine. My favorite one, however, is the Wayfaring Restaurant in Richmond located about half hour from where I live. I had visited the restaurant four or five times prior to meeting Fernando, the Souse Chef, on this particular occasion.

My wife and I, and some friends, were seated in a booth nearby a portable 'cookery' where Fernando was preparing omelets. They go well for breakfast, but for lunch, that's something else.

For some reason I decided that I should try one. Maybe this cook's omelets would taste better than others I had tried. Taking the opportunity of the moment, I approached the 'cookery' and said to the chef, "Let's try one with shrimp, onions, mushrooms, and cheese. Make it the best one ever."

Knowing that it would take the chef a minute or two to prepare it, I stepped aside to the salad bar and 'grabbed' a plate of coleslaw. As I prepared to return to my table, the chef glanced my way and said, "Sir, I think your omelet is ready."

Immediately I returned to the 'cookery'. As I reached to get my omelet, a young, well-dressed woman stepped

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directly in front of me to place her order. Not wanting to cause confusion I gently said, “Go ahead madam, you’ve probably just come from church. Undoubtedly, you need the meal more than I do.”

Her response was abrupt and straight to the point as she forcibly stated, “No, Sir, I haven’t just come from church, and I don’t need the meal. I like omelets, and I didn’t see you standing there when I approached the area.”

From the woman’s response it was clear that she was not interested in having further conversation with me so I ended the encounter by saying, “Well, God bless you anyway. If you ever decide to go to church, you’re always welcome to visit ours where we try to be friendly, and where we always share the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

And having said this, I decided that it would be in my best interest to grab my omelet, head back to my booth, and enjoy the plate of salad that I had picked up minutes earlier.

I had taken about three steps towards my table when, much to my surprise, I heard the cook from behind me saying, “Sir, may I have a word with you?”

Slowly I turned to him and said, “Yes, can I be of some help to you.”

Happy he successfully had my attention, he continued saying, “Sir, you did say that you know Jesus Christ.”

Spontaneously I replied, “Yes, I know Jesus Christ. I know Him well; is there something particular you would like to know about Him?”

The cook, now standing directly beside me, continued, “Sir, I do not want to be of any bother to you,

but please, sir, you must not leave the restaurant until I talk with you.”

I nodded my head and turned to sit down when the man started speaking again. But this time his talk signaled a tone of deep despair. I listened intently as he began saying, “Please sir, you must not leave the restaurant until I speak with you. I will be finished in twenty minutes and, then, sir, we will have time to talk together.”

Recognizing that this cook had something important he wanted to discuss with me, I took his hand, and said, “Sir, you have my word on it. I am not going anywhere until we talk.”

Twenty minutes later the cook, as he had promised, appeared at my booth. “Brother, my dear brother,” he began, “I am so glad Jesus brought you here today. You must know why I am so happy and why I must talk with you.”

“My name is Gordon,” I said as I introduced myself.

“Oh, I am sorry,” the cook said, “I sometimes forget Canadian customs. I should tell you I am Fernando, just one of the cooks at this hotel. I came from Honduras five years ago and I like Canada very much.”

The introductions now complete I asked, “Sir, you did have something to discuss with me, did you?”

“Oh, yes, I do”, he replied. “It’s about this Jesus. I am so glad that He sent you here to talk with me. This morning at ten o’clock, I became depressed with the emptiness of life, and I decided I would commit suicide right here in the restaurant. During my first coffee, I took a bottle of pills I carry, and I told my head waitress I was finished with living. I was just about ready to take a

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number of these pills when she said, 'Look, Fernando, there is no one else here to do the cooking; why not wait until you get home?' Understanding her predicament, I obliged her, but I made definite plans to 'end it all' as soon as I arrived there.'"

As he finished talking, he placed a small bottle of yellow pills on the table in front of me. On doing this, he then said, "This, brother, was going to be the solution to my despair."

I quickly read the label on the bottle and asked him, "Fernando, what changed your mind about taking the pills?"

With a smile on his face he started, "Oh, brother, it was you! When you mentioned Jesus, I remembered what I was taught about Him in Honduras that He is my friend and He would never leave me." And continuing he added, "I knew from your talk, and your genuine interest in people Jesus was your friend. I thought if you were a friend of Jesus you might be my friend too."

Fernando explained he had been raised a Catholic. As the years passed, he found it harder and harder to understand the messages taught in the Catholic Church, so he decided it would be better if he left it. He mentioned that at some time in his life he had repented from his sin, but again, because he did not know what he was doing, he was not sure if he was 'saved' as some would call it.

As Fernando talked I sensed that God wanted to do something exciting for him so I said, "Fernando, perhaps God has brought me here today so you can once again hear about Jesus, but this time clearly understand what it means to repent and be free from sin."

"Brother," he responded, "you know, I think that

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you are right. Other church people come here to eat Sunday after Sunday, but no one has ever mentioned Jesus to me. But you came and you mentioned Him openly. From the way I feel I think I am ready to make Jesus my permanent friend.”

Recognizing Fernando’s sincere wish to know Christ I said, “If you want Jesus as your friend you must ask him to forgive your sins, and invite Him to come into your heart as Savior and Lord. If you want to do that, I will pray with you now, and you will be changed so you will never ponder suicide again.”

Before I could say another word, Fernando dropped to his knees by my table and prayed with me, “God, I’m a sinner; I need to be saved. Forgive my sins and become my friend as you are to brother, Gordon. I accept you as my Savior here and now, so help me to live for you, Amen.” Completing this short, but powerful prayer, Fernando jumped to his feet and said, “I must go back to church. I will go to church every Sunday so I can learn more about my new friend, Jesus and become strong in Him.”

I left the restaurant that day pleased with what had occurred within Fernando, but I wondered whether he would keep his commitment to Christ.

Five months later I returned to the restaurant to have lunch again. On entering the dining room, I spotted Fernando, at his regular spot, making omelets. Slowly I walked over to him, took his hand and said, “Fernando how is my friend and my Christian brother doing?”

Excitedly he responded, “Brother, my dear brother, thank you for coming to see me I have been thinking about you and how my life would be today if you did not

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mention Jesus to me. Brother,” he continued, “I am now back in church, I am attending a home Bible study, and I am telling everyone about the Jesus you and I know.

Then, placing his arm around me, and giving me a hug, he said, “Thank you for sharing Jesus with me, thank you my dear bother, thank you. I owe my eternity to your kindness.”

On April 20, Fernando and I had lunch together at the Richmond Mall White Spot. Again it was a glorious time of fellowship together around Christ. As we talked, Fernando shared that he would retire from the restaurant in two years. When I asked him what he would like to do in his retirement, he replied, “Brother, I think I would like to be the traveling cook with an outreach team which goes to impoverished countries to share the gospel of Christ. I have cooked in almost every country of the world,” he continued, “so, regardless of the menu, I can cook the meal. You know, brother, people who are fed well, work well. I want those who work for Christ to be nourished physically so they can nourish others spiritually. Cooking for Jesus is what I want to do, brother; that, and nothing else!”

I count it an honour to have been involved in directing Fernando to Christ and salvation. My prayer, with his, is that he will remain faithful to Christ, and in his retirement, do the ministry to which God is calling him.



Fernando Dubon

The Honduran cook who received Christ as Saviour because he heard the name of Jesus mentioned in his time of need. His faith has been firmly established in Christ and in a local church over the past several years. His desire is to serve Christ as a missions cook upon retirement.



Chapter

32

A Wedding Ring Crisis

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Someone has stated, “Diamonds are a girl’s best friend.” But they can also be a man’s worst enemy, especially if the “girl” loses them! I learned the truth of this years ago when my wife, Martha lost her engagement and wedding band.

We had been invited to attend a Far East Broadcast dinner at the Morgan Creek Golf Course. Not wanting to disappoint our friends who invited us, we attended the event even though Martha was very ill.

Prior to leaving home, I mentioned to her that she should wear only her wedding band because if I had to take her to the hospital, I did not want her valuable engagement wedding ring set to be misplaced. Despite my concern Martha, decided to wear the expensive set.

We had just arrived at the banquet, and I was about to help Martha get out of the car when she decided to put on some hand cream. As she massaged her hands, I said to her, “Be careful that you don’t drop your rings, I don’t want you to lose them.”

Martha shook her head affirming that she had heard me, and nothing more was said between the two of us. As Martha entered the restaurant, I parked the car some distance away. Having done this, I joined her and our friends who had secured us a seat earlier in the evening. Throughout the dinner hour we enjoyed a great meal and great conversation with the new acquaintances

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that we met. Moments, prior to the speaker approaching the podium, I noticed that Martha was not wearing her wedding bands. Taking her hand I asked, “Martha, did you forget your rings in the car?”

Shocked by the question she said, “No, I didn’t take them off, so I may have accidentally dropped them.”

Pressed by the crisis, she and I quickly excused ourselves from the table, and headed to the car to see if we could locate the now missing rings. We examined the car thoroughly looking under the seats, under the car mats, in the glove compartment and so on. Regardless of where we looked, or how diligently we attempted to find the wedding rings, we had no success in locating them.

Being somewhat discouraged with not locating her rings, I said to Martha, “You had them while you were putting on the hand cream. They must either be stuck to your skirt, or they may have fallen off it when you got out of the car. We’ll go to the restaurant entrance and see if we can find them in that area.”

On returning to the entrance area, and carefully surveying the surrounding area, Martha suddenly spotted the rings. As suspected, when she got out of the car, the rings fell off her dress, bounced once or twice, and landed in the middle of entrance driveway. Miraculously, none of the over fifty or sixty cars that had arrived for the supper ran over the rings.

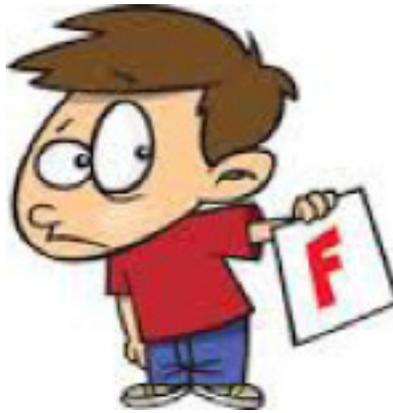
As I replaced the cherished set of rings on her finger, Martha started to cry and said, “I can’t believe I found them undamaged. God must have had one of His angels sweep them into the centre of the entrance so no one would run over them.”

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As I reflected on how God protected those rings that night, I too agreed with Martha's assessment of how God protected them. Like her, I too added a great big "Thank you, Father for assigning your angels for this timely providential, protective care of these rings."



Martha and I on Sunday morning after our marriage on September 26, 1988. She, indeed, was a special gift from God with whom I enjoyed nine years of marriage. Because of a liver disease she caught in Israel, she died on April 1, 1998. She loved her God immensely as was demonstrated when she led a room partner to Christ's redemptive grace twelve hours before she died.



Chapter

33

Trying To Help God: Failure Guaranteed!

Exceeding Abundantly

Proverbs 3:5-6, a scripture that is regularly recited by many Christians, reminds believers that their first-place commitment to God is best displayed by “trusting the Lord with all their heart,” instead of relying on their own ingenious insights when problems in life arise. In so doing, they protect themselves from being skewed to believe their self-designed plans can bring quicker and better resolution to their troubles than prayerfully relying on God. I was reminded of this powerfully by the Lord during the summer of 1998.

From 1988 to 1999 I owned a 1981, twenty-four foot Country Seigneur motor home, that I enjoyed as I traveled British Columbia or when I went fishing at some of the nearby lakes. The unit was well maintained and mechanically sound because two years earlier I had repaired the motor and upgraded the running gear.

During Martha’s illness the motor home was used off and on, but for the greater period, it sat idle. One day, as we were discussing her medical prognosis, she casually said, “Gordon, regardless what happens to me I want you to sell the motor home and buy something newer that will be easier for you to manage.”

After her death in April 1998, I reflected on what she had said. Taking seriously her counsel, by June I started making plans to sell it before the summer’s end. Immediately I started informing everyone I knew and met

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that the motor home was on the market at a reasonable price. The summer quickly passed, but no one showed interest in purchasing it. I had prayed about the matter, and I hoped God would intervene and help me move it, but still no one showed interest in it.

By mid-August, I became weary with trusting God to bring me a buyer – as some believers once in a while do – and so I decided that I would “help Him by printing a thousand, two coloured flyers with a photo of the motor home and the asking price on them. Once this was completed, I would have them distributed by Canada Post to residents nearby. Certainly, by doing this I thought, someone would grab the opportunity to own a well maintained unit at a low, low price.

During the following two days, after coming up with this brilliant idea, I designed and typeset the flyer. On Wednesday, after this was done, I inked the press and started printing the flyers. To print a thousand flyers takes about fifteen minutes. The press ran with no disruptions, and the finished product looked very impressive. With what was taking place, I was confident that when the flyers were delivered, the unit would sell immediately. Everything I had planned was going to solve my dilemma - and that right quickly!

But my prideful attitude was going to be crushed. This occurred as the last flyer flew out of the press. I was reaching to grab it off the chain when, over the noise, I heard the office phone ringing. Quickly I ran into it, grabbed the phone, and said, “Thank you for calling; is there something with which I might help you?”

The caller – an older man – responded, “A friend of mine, with whom you had lunch last week, told me

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that you have a motor home for sale. I'm calling," he continued, "to see if my wife and I could drop by your home tomorrow and give you a thousand dollars down payment on it."

I couldn't believe what had happened! I had worried for weeks about selling the motor home, I had talked to everyone about wanting to sell it, and I had designed and printed a first-rate flyer to ensure that it would move. But, regardless what I planned or did, God clearly revealed that trusting and delighting in Him is always be best because, as we do this, we give Him unrestrained opportunity to intervene and "give us the desires of our heart" (Ps 37:4).

On Wednesday evening, as arranged, the couple viewed the unit and paid the deposit. Early, the following Saturday morning they arrived to pick it up delighted with what they had purchased. As the God-sent purchasers left the yard, I was once again sharply reminded of a Bible verse I learned when I was a child that states, "be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall rule keep your heart and mind through Jesus Christ" (Phil 4:6).

I allowed my mind to be fogged with my concocted hopes and worked hard to sell the motor home. Life would have been a lot less strenuous and anxious if I would have obeyed the Word and "sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" so He could "work all things together for my good" as one of the called of God.

Chapter

39

Harvest Ministry
Resignation

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From February 1st, 2007 to March 30, 2011 I had the joy of being Lead Pastor at Harvest Christian Fellowship, Maple Ridge. Coming to this church and leaving it was unquestionably through godly direction. Although I would like to relate how God directed me to come to the church, I feel more strongly constrained to relate how God directed my resignation and eventual departure from it.

But before relating this, it is necessary to affirm that the four years of ministry with the congregants was a blessed delight. A number of obstacles were confronted during our time together, but for the greater part, the people were collaborative, cooperative, congenial and constructive members of the body. Each member offered whatever ability, talent, or ministry gift he or she possessed, and willingly worked together to realize progressive, positive growth in the fellowship.

This was clearly demonstrated on a number of occasions. Sunday after Sunday God added to the church new members, and those who joined us were actively deployed in using their gifts regularly for the betterment of the church. Even at the closing service of the fellowship, individuals arrived, looking for a church to attend.

Now on to the facts of the story. In August 2010 I began feeling that my time of ministry at Harvest

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was coming to an end. I had mentioned it to Donna a number of times, but she encouraged me to continue ministry because the church was doing so well. In early September I asked a pastor – Phil Collins – to visit the church with me a second time that year. Since he had done my induction service in 2010, I asked him how I would know for sure whether I should resign. His reply was simple as he stated, “You’ll know by an inner conviction of the Holy Spirit, and by the witness of circumstances.”

Still not sure whether I should resign I consulted my Associate Pastor – John Williams – and he suggested that I talk to the Board about my feelings. In late September, therefore, knowing that I was heading to Russia, Romania and Hungary on a mission trip, I called a Board meeting. On the agenda, as John had suggested, was the issue whether I should resign. After about an hour’s discussion, one of the Board members suggested that if the Nazarene Pacific District raised our rent again at the New Year 2011, this would be a clear indication that our association with it would end and the church would close, thus necessitating my resignation. Feeling that this was a reasonable and godly suggestion, the Board and I agreed to this.

In late September Donna and I, along with two members of the church, went on the aforementioned trip to Russia, Romania and Hungary as we had earlier planned. Three days after arriving in Moscow, Donna and me, along with the leader of the tour, Brian Lise, was walking along the Moscow River enjoying the sights and talking about our experiences in the past two days. Suddenly, and unexpectedly – yet in the provisional

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providence of God – I turned to Donna and said, “I’m resigning from Harvest on January 2nd, 2011. I have an unshakable conviction,” I continued, “that this is God’s appointed time because He has something greater in store for us than continued ministry at this church.”

Shocked by what I had just said, she responded, “But you’ve agreed with the Board that you will only resign if there is a rent increase; you’re not sure that will happen, so you really can’t say you’ll resign on January 2nd, 2011.”

Knowing that she was somewhat perturbed with my abruptness in the decision, I replied, “Donna, God spoke to me in a similar way when I was attempting to get teaching job in 1977, and He came through at the appropriate time. Based upon that experience, and the impression I have from the Lord about resigning,” I continued, “January 2nd, 2011 is the day I terminate my ministry at Harvest.”

The weeks quickly passed, and sooner than we had hoped we returned to Maple Ridge to continue ministry there. It was great to be home among the people we loved, and to whom we enjoyed providing ministry. The Christmas celebrations came and went, as did the New Years’ Eve celebrations. We were excited for the congregation’s spiritual growth over the last year, and we were very pleased how it had supported our ministry.

Yet, still in the back of my mind was that unsettled conviction that I should resign on January 2nd, 2011. Donna, the Financial Secretary of Harvest Church, always paid the rent – \$400 – on the first of the month as expected by the Pacific District representative of the Nazarene Church. As far as she was concerned, we

wanted to demonstrate unwavering responsibility to our obligations.

On January 2nd, the strangest thing happened. As I opened my e-mail, I noticed there was a message from the Manager of Properties for the Pacific District of the Nazarene Church. It read, "Thank you for your payment of \$400 for the rent of the building on Dewdney Trunk Road, Maple Ridge. This e-mail is sent your way to inform you that effective immediately the rent is being increased from \$400 per month to \$450 at the moment, and in April, 2011 it will be increased to \$750 per month. This fee," the letter continued, "will bring your rent in line with the Seventh-day Adventist Church that also rents these premises, and will make the Pacific District happy adequate rent is being received."

I printed the e-mail, quickly ran to Donna and said, "This is it, this is it! This is the confirmation to what God told me in October as we walked along the Moscow River. Now I know I must definitely resign next Sunday."

To this Donna said, "Gordon, you can't resign without considering the feelings of the people. Many have been with us for four years, they strongly support your ministry, and they would be greatly offended if you resign without talking to them about the matter."

Kindly I responded saying, "Donna, God has set the stage for me to resign as the Board and I have agreed. If He can do that, I am fully confident that He has prepared the congregation for it. Before I announce my resignation, I will talk to a number of the folks privately so I can discover how they feel and think. Don't worry," I continued, "God's got the matter under His control, and I know everything will work out well for His glory and for



Chapter

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Funnier Things
Just Don't Happen!

the good of the people.”

During the following week we visited a number of the congregants informing them of the e-mail we had received, and the intent of the Pacific District of the Nazarene’s intent to raise our rent from \$400 to \$750 by April. Each member was incensed with Nazarene’s plan and expressed the need for Harvest to definitely terminate its association with it by the end of March if it did not reconsider the rent increase.

What God had impressed on me by the Moscow River, three months earlier, had now been unquestionably confirmed. Donna and I, along with the people we loved, were extremely set back that the work we had poured ourselves into with diligence would soon end. But, collectively, we accepted that His “change in our plans” would result in an unexpected blessing. And it did!

Two months after the congregation decided that it could not and would not pay the increased rent demands, Providence Theological Seminary of Otterburne, Manitoba contacted me if I would be interested in doing the Doctor of Ministry degree there. Through the counsel of ministry colleagues, and with further, lengthy discussions with Donna, in April I applied and was accepted for the program. Four years later, in the providence of God and with determined effort, I completed the program. On April 18, 2015 I attended the seminary’s graduation exercises and received the Doctor of Ministry degree.

God spoke, I listened, the Board and the congregation followed through with its convictions regarding the proposed increased rental demands of the Nazarene District. As we look back on how things

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developed, we affirm with Solomon that the best and safest path for believers – regardless of their calling – is to “trust in the Lord with all their hearts; in all their ways acknowledge Him instead of leaning on their own understanding, and He most certainly will direct their paths” (Prov 3:5-6).

I have a close friend who states dogmatically that laughing in church is unacceptable, ‘because no where in the Bible do we hear of Jesus laughing.’ We know that Christ was fully human; He cried when circumstances warranted tears and, with this, I am sure that He laughed when circumstances called for laughter.

I’ve always enjoyed humour; it has been a regularly appreciated part of my life, and so, in this section, I’d like to share some incidental anecdotes that I think, and I hope you will also think, are worthy of a good chuckle, if not a good laugh.

While attending Cloverdale Pentecostal Church in 1968 and 1969 two very funny situations occurred which, I think, I must share with you. Both incidences cause me to ‘roar with laughter’ every time I think of them. I hope that you, too, will find these incidents hilarious, and will be able to laugh along with me.

A Flawed, Unwelcome Press Release

Every four or five years the church 'called' a new pastor. Why a change was necessary, I am not too sure, but, as regular as clock work, the change took place. Whenever a new pastor came to the church the board held a 'pantry shower', at which time the congregation provided the pastor's family new household supplies and a cash gift for groceries.

For this particular incident the Chairman of the Board decided that it would be in order to invite the community to enjoy with the congregation this planned 'pantry shower'. To do this, he suggested that the following advertisement be put in the local newspaper:

'On Wednesday, April 17, at eight o'clock, after the regularly scheduled Bible Study and prayer, there will be a pantry shower for the new pastor and his wife. The community is invited to join the church in this event.

Eagerly everyone waited for the invitation to be printed. Early, on the morning that the paper was to be distributed, a Board member was at the publisher's office, to scan the paper and insure that the ad was in it. On perusing it, he read the following:

On Wednesday, April 17th, at eight o'clock, after the regular Bible study and prayer, there will be a panty shower for the new pastor's wife. The community is invited to share in this colorful event'.

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Undoubtedly, he noticed the errors and tried to have the ad rewritten before being published; however, he was too late, as the paper had already gone to press. Needless to say, because of this, as the guests arrived for the event there was much excitement about what might take place on this unforgettable evening.

Surprise Action Of A Guest Evangelist

Often evangelists would speak at Cloverdale Pentecostal Church. These would come either through a personal invite from the pastor, or by recommendation of the District Superintendent. In 1964 our church hosted a Reverend John Smith, from California for a week of “revival services.” Although I cannot recall the events of every service, I can recall what occurred during this one. What took place that unforgettable night is as clear today as it was on the evening the incident took place.

But first, I must provide the setting of the event. The sanctuary had just been remodelled and repainted for the upcoming 25th Anniversary services. On entering the building one would surmise that it had just been built. No one would expect “visitor John” to do what he did that night, but it happened!

John Smith was a young, energetic and enthusiastic evangelist, who, so he claimed at the time, had formerly been a light weight boxer. As he preached, therefore, he continuously jumped around considerably as he preached. Both his personality and, as he put it, “the power of the Holy Spirit,” kept him energized beyond the strength of other guests we had visit us before.

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For the message that evening, John decided that he would speak on Ephesians 6:10-17 - "putting on the full armour of God" - and for the title of his message he chose, "Count Down To Satan's Take Down."

As he spoke, he informed the congregation that he had been a light weight title holder some years earlier. With this he further emphasized that no boxer took down his opponent with one solid right hook. "Rather," he said, "if the boxer is to be successful, he gives the opponent a number of sharp, directed jabs with his left hand to tire him out. Then, when he is convinced the opponent is adequately fatigued, he gives him a solid right hook which will bring him down for the count."

Wanting to show the 'saints' how they should fight Satan, he began throwing punches into the air while still speaking. After a few suggestive thrusts, he walked over to a wall left of the pulpit, and took one, quick and qualifying punch towards it. Much to the congregation's shock, he punched a large hole into it.

The pastor, overcome with horror with what had happened, jumped out of his chair, ran towards Rev. Smith, grabbed his shoulder, and shouted, "Brother, brother, we're fighting the devil, not the church - remember, it's the devil we're fighting!"

By the date of the dedication service the hole in the wall had been repaired. Pastor Bell never forgot the incident, and we laughed over it many times.

A Sobering "Wake Up"

The year was 1967. I was in grade 10 at Lord Tweedsmuir



Chapter

42

Encounter
At 2 Right 4

The place was Okalla, a maximum security prison located in Burnaby, British Columbia. I was serving my second day of a thirty day sentence for disobeying a Supreme Court Order. I, without question, was not thrilled with my present plight.

In spite of what was taking place, I decided that I would do my very best to accept my present predicament. In doing this I made myself available to be God's ambassador of redemptive grace to someone who might need help in this 'dungeon of iniquity.'

No more than ten minutes of my incarceration had passed when I met a Wade, a young man of about twenty years, who was serving his thirteenth day of a twenty month sentence for possessing and trafficking marijuana. After being introduced by Wade to what he called 'appropriate prison conduct', I made my way to my allocated cell, threw my few possessions on the floor and sat down to consider what could or would happen while I 'vacationed' in Okalla.

Much to my surprise Wade had found his way to my cell. Startled by his unexpected and obtrusive presence, I quickly jumped off my bed, and politely inquired if there was anything he had a desperate need of.

"You're a Christian, aren't you?" the young man asked cautiously. "At least," he continued, "I would assume you are one because you have a Bible with you."

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“Not everyone who carries a Bible is a Christian”, I responded, “it takes more than carrying a Bible to make one a Christian.”

Wade, appearing very disappointed with my callous and somewhat uncaring response, left my cell and returned to the large central table where most of the other inmates were playing card games.

Little was said between he and me until after supper when he again appeared, uninvited, at my cell door. Once more he inquired of me, “You’re a Christian, aren’t you?”

To this second, probing question, I responded in the affirmative . . . “Yes, I am a Christian; indeed, I am, Wade!”

Immediately a relaxed smile appeared on his face. He, now, feeling ‘safe’ in my presence, sat at the end of my bed, picked up my Bible, opened it, and then said, “We have nothing to do except talk. Why not tell me what a Christian is and how I can become one?”

I was totally, unbelievably astonished by what was taking place right before my eyes. I knew, however, that regardless whether I comprehended what God was doing, I had to respond to Wade’s request.

“It’s simple,” Wade, I said. “A Christian is nothing less, nothing more than one who recognizes, and admits that he is a sinner separate from God because of disobedience to His commands. Once this becomes a reality,” I continued, “he moves on to seek God, in sorrow and contrition of heart, for God’s forgiveness from those sins. Through a purposed faith in Christ, and a willful repentance of sin, he becomes born again, and therefore a Christian.”

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To further aid him understand what I was trying to say, I continued . . . “God created man. It was He who formed man out of the dust of the earth as a perfect creature with whom He wanted to have fellowship. Man became deceived by Satan’s cunning and deceptive lies. Instantly he became trapped by sin, a slave to Satan, separated from God and divorced from all moral goodness. God looked down upon his creation and justly concluded that man, in this present state, was depraved, desolate, destitute and needed help . . . badly!

In spite of man’s precarious dilemma, God still loved His creation. This compassion compelled God, before the foundation of the world, to send Christ to earth to inaugurate salvation, the sole means whereby one can become a Christian. Willingly Christ set aside His glory, left heaven, took on bodily form and died on the cross at Calvary, “the Just for the unjust so that He might bring man to God.” When man was “dead in his trespasses and sins,” separated from God and alienated from His love, “Christ who was rich in mercy appeared to die so that He might reconcile man to God and reinstate him into the fellowship with God as it was intended at creation.

No one is excluded from Christ’s mission of love; All have sinned . . . all need a saviour . . . and all are invited to repent. Those who place their faith in Christ, and call upon Him for mercy will be saved, regardless of what they have done.

Once a person exercises faith in Christ, he is changed into a new person. In many cases previous values, old habits, and life standards are changed.

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Whereas an individual prior to faith in Christ was strongly influenced by anger, jealousy, pride, hatred, lust, etc. he now is directed by Christ's standards of love, patience, kindness, joy, peace, temperance etc.

In reality, a Christian is one who is sensitive to God's standards of life; he reaches to a newer level of behaviour because he has a new standard by which to measure his conduct - that which Christ has provided when He died on the cross."

After about twenty minutes or so had passed, Wade interrupted me. "But," he said, "I have committed so many other crimes; there are still other outstanding charges with which I still have to deal, and I know that unless everything else is settled, I could never ask a Holy and Righteous God to accept me."

"It doesn't matter what your present position is," I responded immediately. "You can come to Jesus without any fear of rejection. God wants to forgive you as soon as you call on Him regardless of how wicked you may be or how wicked you think you've been. That's His unwavering promise to you so, while you have this God given opportunity, call upon Him and you will be saved."

Wade was ready . . . he wanted to set aside talking and take action towards becoming a Christian, and he wanted to become one right then and there. In the quietness of that dark, dreary and unwelcoming prison cell Wade knelt beside the steel bunk and he and I prayed that well know 'sinner's prayer'. Immediately Wade became the Christian that God had promised he would become if he repented. Whereas Wade had walked into my cell with a sullen, withdrawn look on his face, he left with smile on his face which came because

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of the joy and peace he had found in Christ.

Wade wanted thank me for helping him become a Christian, but our time for further discussion was quickly ended when an announcement, “2 Right 4, pack your bags, your going to the hospital,” interrupted our conversation.

Hurriedly I left the tier. I have never seen Wade again since that day. But based on the experience he and I had together that day, I know that he is a Christian in the truest sense of the word and I thank God this ‘encounter at 2 right 4’.

To become ‘born again’, as Wade did you must:

- accept that you are a sinner separated from God
- ask God for help to believe he loves you
- repent of your sins by saying, “sorry to His commandments
- turn from your present ungodly lifestyle to follow God wholeheartedly and unreservedly
- seek out a church to attend so you can be discipled in the life of Christ
- read your Bible and pray daily.

As you do these things, under godly, structured and continued mentorship, you “will grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ” and enjoy the blessings of God who promises that there is “no good thing He will withhold from those who walk uprightly before Him.” Don’t pass this opportunity by - it’s the greatest, most prosperous decision you can make in this life!

Exceeding Abundantly