



GET GOD'S
WORD
TO EVERY
PERSON

HEARING THE WORD
WALKING IN FAITH

JERRY JACKSON

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

I take full responsibility for all mistakes or violations of generally accepted writing methodology. I have been asked for many years to write my story and have made several attempts, each time engaging professional writers to make it “right.” But each time the personality and interpretation of the writer caused the story to creep toward that person’s imagination. I feel bad about this and any disappointment I have caused those folks as they sincerely poured themselves into their writing and invested their skills and emotions into the process.

I had given up and taken the position that I have it all in my computer so that when I die and someone is sorting through the hard drive they will discover it and can do what they want with it.

But apparently the Lord was not satisfied with this and spoke strongly to me during my normal Sunday morning “listening for God” time:

You write your story.

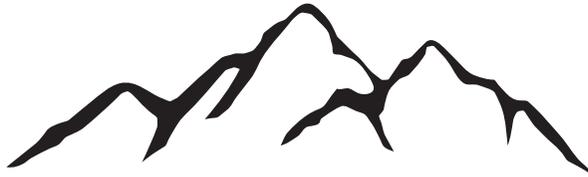
Ok, so that is what you have in your hands. Some names have been changed, but it is all true as I remember it. I hope you are encouraged by my life story.

Jerry

May 2011

CONTENTS

1.	Stepping out on “The Rez”	9
2.	There IS a God	15
3.	God’s Love in our Family	19
4.	Learning How to Hear God	25
5.	Faith Calls	31
6.	Experiencing Matthew 10:11	35
7.	Reading the Bible is Missionary Work?	41
8.	Asking in Secret	49
9.	Agitating the Comfortable	55
10.	Hippies, Drugs, and Salvation	59
11.	Confusion	69
12.	Trapped in Spiritualism	73
13.	Back-to-Back Trials	79
14.	The Confusing Road to Beulah	87
15.	A Diverse Christian Library	93
16.	Tough Business/Ministry Lessons	99
17.	Faith Comes By Hearing	105
18.	Two Locks	113
19.	Prayer Leads to Technology Breakthroughs	119
20.	The Church is Faithful	123
21.	Get God’s Word to Every Person	127
	Final Thoughts from the Author	129



1

STEPPING OUT ON “THE REZ”

As I stood looking over the reservation (commonly known as “the rez”), I noticed a man staggering up the road toward me. He came right up to me, drew himself to his full height, looked me in the eye and slurred,

“I am going to kill you!”

The smell of cheap wine was strong on Floyd’s breath and it was obvious he was pretty drunk. Apparently satisfied that he had warned me, he proceeded to stagger on down the road.

I grew up around drinking, arguments and fighting so this was nothing new to me. I did wonder about what he meant to do and why. But it is also common for a person as drunk as he was to not remember what he did during that time. So I figured this would pass when he sobered up.

A few days later my friend, Rick, and I were working on a water system in a nearby field. The bee that buzzed by didn’t have much meaning until a second or so later we heard a gunshot. I hollered to Rick,

“Run for cover! Someone’s shooting at us!”

I remembered a story a soldier told me when he was a lineman in

the Korean War. He was high up on a pole fixing some electrical wiring, enjoying a nice balmy day with bees buzzing around. All of a sudden he realized he was being used for target practice! Those “bees” were bullets whizzing by. In a panic he kicked out his spurs and hit the ground in record time. Well, I can testify that Rick and I also broke records finding shelter!

I decided to ask around about Floyd to make sure I wasn't making an assumption that he was shooting at us when it actually was some kid pulling a prank. The leaders I talked to assured me that Floyd would try to kill me and I needed to take his threat seriously. It seemed he was a member of a snake clan which had hating people of my ethnic background as one of its values.

“Snake clan!?” We were living in a homemade house car with open windows in the evening to let the cool air in. Was Floyd going to drop a rattlesnake through one of the windows when we were asleep? That caused my skin to crawl! Or would he simply use our place for target practice? Guns, rattlesnakes and scorpions were plentiful so his choices were readily available.

I grew up in inner city situations and as a minority. Gangs and violence were a part of daily life and attending school was a nightmare. Mother was twice divorced, high school dropout, probably alcoholic in her late twenties and trying to keep us three kids with her while she worked nights as a cocktail waitress. When I was threatened there was nobody to run to so I learned how to survive on my own. One person against a gang of guys who get a kick out of cutting or beating you wasn't an even match. So I learned how to not run but to stand my ground silently while the gang worked out what they wanted to accomplish. It usually ended up with them demanding some money and then they let me go.

I hoped Floyd would accept that we had made a short-term commitment to manage this mission in his village and that we would be moving on in a few months. That was not to be.

My wife Annette and I had found a storage room that we used for private time and study. Suddenly the door flung open and Floyd, obviously drunk, came in. His eyes focused on Annette and he began to move past me to put his hands on her. My gosh! He's going to try to molest my wife right in front of me! I had to think fast. Should I bash him? Try to hold him? Reasoning was not an option. I was sitting as he walked by so I simply reached out and took hold of the bottom button on his shirt and said quietly,

“You had better stop now.”

To my surprise he turned and left.

If there was any humor in this situation it was that Floyd would run short on money and ask Rick's wife Marlene for a couple of bucks. We had met Marlene and Rick when they were living in a commune. They decided to tag along with us in our adventures. Marlene was very trusting and always thought the best. She rarely had money so she would come and ask me for some. We had kind of a communal financial pot that I oversaw. So this is how it worked. Floyd would hit Marlene up, Marlene would hit me up, Floyd would go to the bootlegger, buy some cheap wine, come back drunk and try to pick a fight with me.

This all came to a head one night when Floyd showed up at the mission kitchen very drunk and spoiling for a fight. I saw him coming and moved into the entry hallway to block him. He was making threats about what he was going to do to the women and children. So we were now in a face-to-face confrontation

in which Floyd had to back down or, or what? He just got more aggressive and slapped me, saying,

“What is it going to take to make you fight?”

A few months earlier I had met a businessman who had been an alcoholic and had served time in prison. He now owned a hotel and was counseling me on how to deal with alcoholics. He firmly said that when they are drunk they will not remember what was said or took place so it is a waste of time to try to talk to them in that condition. Then he smiled and said,

“Well, we have a town drunk and he would come into my hotel and hassle the guests. I told him to stop but he just kept coming. Finally one day I had my fill of him, so I took him out to the street, pointed to the curb and asked the drunk if he could see the curb. He said yes. So I told him that the next time he came into my hotel drunk I would take him out into the street, knock him down and put his heel on the curb and break his leg by jumping on it. A few days later the drunk was walking down my side of the street and when he looked up and saw my hotel he stopped, thought, and then crossed the street.”

This passed through my mind as I faced Floyd. Maybe I should take him outside, knock him down and put his heel on a rock and break his leg. I would, of course, take him to the hospital but would let him know that I would keep breaking his legs until he stopped threatening us.

But I had an even bigger problem. It was rumored that Floyd also beat his wife and kids. My natural father was a drunkard and a wife and child beater. I had grown up hating him. Now, Floyd and I were going to tangle and I was worried that he would

take the place of my father and I would go out of control.

So, back to the slap. I calmly told Floyd,

“We need to step outside.”

This was what he wanted so we moved out and I got ready to fight. All of a sudden Floyd’s mood changed and he started talking about his tribe, religion, family, and asked if I would walk him home! We walked to his home talking like we were good buddies. Amazing!

Three years earlier, I was managing a packing house, up for promotion and building a third house on our three acres in California. We were living life in the good lane. Our three acres bordered on the National Forest in a rural community of about a thousand somewhat antisocial people. The only recreation spot for the local kids was a Tastee Freeze so their energy got released on loud motorcycles and destructive “fun.”

Our oldest son, Clay, was almost thirteen and the rumor was that the local hoodlums were starting to plan their initiation process to get him into their drug culture. We had heard this was how it worked. Heck, the parents seemed naïve and ignorant about drugs so I took it on myself to see about educating them. One of the men who worked at the packing house had just gotten out of prison after serving seven years for drug dealing. I talked to him about the situation and hinted I sure could use some drugs to show the parents.

When I went to my desk the next morning, there was a complete stash of all of the popular drugs being used by kids. Wow, this was great! So I arranged a meeting of all the parents at the local middle school. Talk about being naïve! In my zeal to help,

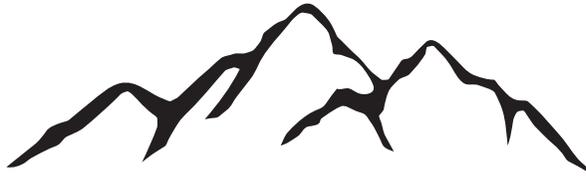
I now had a sizeable stash of illegal drugs that I was going to publically display in a public school! It makes me smile to think of what I did. I wanted them to know how marijuana smelled, so I lit up a joint and puffed smoke in each of the parent's faces!

I got away with it and the parents were now informed. But that didn't take care of the lack of activities for these energetic, bored kids. We decided to develop some activities for them on our three acres. Bought a pool table, hired a D-9 bulldozer to dig an Olympic-size swimming pool hole and level some ground for a baseball diamond.

While we had the bulldozer we talked to Bud, who owned 300 acres over the hill, about making a motocross track for the kids. He agreed and we set up an exclusive club for the motorcyclists that laid down some community rules of behavior. The bulldozer operator dozed a hill climb that was so steep that he walked it carefully before running his dozer down the mountain. He said if he hit a boulder or any serious resistance his dozer would nose over and roll down the mountain. We held our breath as he came sliding down the mountain. That hill climb was never successfully mastered by anybody and, of course, gave prestige to the club members.

People asked if we could have weekly meetings so we emptied one of the dwellings on our property and began having meetings there. Our property was located at the end of a half-mile-long, narrow road with houses on both sides.

But wait! I am getting ahead of myself and need to go back a few years for this to make sense.



2

THERE IS A GOD

To say I had no interest in spiritual things would be an understatement. But as a virile teenage boy my hormones were very active toward, well to put it bluntly, **GIRLS!** I heard the Baptist Church had some good looking girls so I went there a couple of times to check them out and see if they would like to go out with me. I struck out, probably because I sure didn't fit in their mode of dress, use of language (cuss words to be more exact) and confrontational way of expressing myself. But being typically Baptists, they got my name and address and gave me a Bible at high school graduation.

I thought that I needed a Bible like a hole in the head! So I stashed it somewhere and somehow it stuck to me like glue and was still in my stuff when I graduated from college five years later. Annette and I had married and started our family. At some point it emerged and I decided to read the New Testament like it was a chemistry book. My thought was to get it read and that would be that. Strangely, it made sense to me, so I began asking questions only to discover that I knew more about the Bible than the church-goers.

We moved to another town and needed a place to live so I contacted a realtor who turned out to be a kindly old Christian

gentleman. He asked about my spiritual journey and all I could say was:

“We have two kids and I think we need to be going to some church but I don’t know anything about churches so don’t know what to do.”

He invited us to his church and I agreed to go.

We moved in on Saturday, went out for a bite and came back to find a note on our door clinching his invitation. So we went.

I may go into more details later but I don’t want to scare anyone at this point. Let me just say it was an old-time church meeting like in the times of John Wesley! I was fascinated by what I saw and made it a point to attend all of their meetings with a notepad to take notes. Then go home, get the dictionary and look up the words they used to see what they meant, and then look up in the concordance what they said to see if it was in the Bible. Several of the church members worked at the organization I was managing so I got to “test” their character, which I did regularly.

After three months, I decided God was real and I needed to do something about it. They had a custom of people “going to the altar,” kneeling and doing something there and then things seemed OK. So that night I went to the altar.

I am 22 years old, a manager, proud and kneeling! Right in front of some of the people I managed! But what the heck was I supposed to do? Boy, did I feel dumb.

Finally, I just said,

“God, I give myself to You.”

Nothing. I felt nothing. Then the old realtor knelt beside me and stuck a New Testament in my shirt pocket. Gosh, it sure looked and felt big, bulging out of my shirt!

I stood up and went home, feeling exactly as I did before, wondering what that was all about.

We went to bed and I went right to sleep. Why is that significant? Well now my story has to go back to when I was thirteen and my mother had married her third husband, Jack. For some reason Jack decided to talk to me about how the earth was tilted on its axis and someday the weight would cause the earth to rotate and a mile-high wall of water would cover the earth. That terrified me! My imagination had already been stimulated by going to horror movies, so I was primed to imagine this happening. From that night, I never went to bed without some kind of panic attack about this, about dying or what it was like to be dead.

Now I am 22, have knelt at an altar and said, “God I give myself to You” and the panic attack didn’t happen!? Could this be true? Well, it was and is and has been for the past 52 years.

But wait, as they say in commercials, there is more. Acute claustrophobia was a second curse from Jack’s conversation. Elevators, caves, airplanes, are you kidding?! No way! I couldn’t even go into a public restroom without putting something in the door jamb so the door couldn’t close completely. That was, and is gone also.

I had a dilemma. Not everything in this church lined up with the Bible. Now I need to digress again into my life during ages 4 to 13. My natural father was a drunk and violent and had thrown me across the room, beaten my mother beyond recognition, so when mother left him when I was four, she virtually gave me

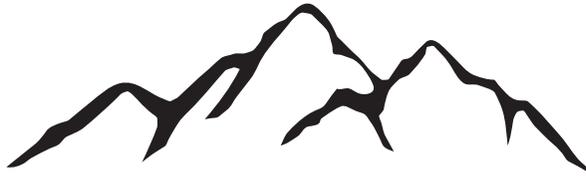
away until she married Jack when I was thirteen.

I lived in thirty or more orphanages and foster homes, seemed like I was moved about every three months. Probably for two reasons: Mother wanting to protect me from Gordon, my father, and secondly but maybe primarily, my bad behavior in the homes. Three of these homes stood out as far as religion. One was strict vegetarian and absolute inactivity on the Sabbath. Another had no rules like that but they thought if they got me baptized I would improve. They had a son my age and of course he probably hated me for all the things I did to him. So he convinced me that baptism tested to see if you were good or bad. They would throw you out in deep water and if you were good you survived, and, well you can figure out the other side! I knew I was going to die so I hid. They gave up and sent me on my way.

Actually the third religious situation was when I was fifteen and stayed with a family for the summer. He was a deacon in the church and they both were well known in the fiery southern country church. They took me to Gospel sings and to church every Sunday. But at home they gave me condoms, introduced me to the loose girls in the church, took me and my date to adult movies and encouraged sex openly.

Back to the altar. All of these experiences are in my mind. Now am I one of "them?" What am I going to do? I don't want to be like those three examples.

Now I had a pretty good launch into this new life having been freed from panic attacks and claustrophobia.



3

GOD'S LOVE IN OUR FAMILY

Jesus went into the wilderness and fasted 40 days so I thought this was how we were to start our spiritual journey. After two weeks, I was getting pretty weak and my voice was almost down to a whisper. Working full time, having a family, six feet tall and 155 pounds didn't add up to a pleasant experience. So I finally caught the pastor and asked,

“Does a person have to fast the full 40 days?”

Astonished, he asked,

“Have you been fasting all this time?”

When I confirmed this, he carefully explained the reasons why this was not necessary. I was relieved but also suspicious and didn't want to fall short because of guidance outside the Bible. But I was too weak to continue, so I accepted his counsel and enjoyed a great big bowl of cereal after church.

I had not read the Old Testament so this became my next adventure. Ok, you guessed it! We did not eat pork, fish without scales, rabbit, etc., etc., until I got back into the New Testament. I struggled to understand all of the rules and regulations in the Old Testament and was sure happy to discover they were for the

Jewish people and I was a Gentile!

While on the concept of fasting: We discovered that our youngest son, Sandy, had a slight cross in one eye and that his brain had stopped using that eye. His eye tested 400 and the pupil was fixed. The doctor said that because Sandy was seven years old this would not heal and there was no cure. He said we could put a patch over his good eye and see if there was any hint the bad eye would respond. I was depressed about this! I went to the Lord and committed that I would not eat until Sandy's eye was healed. That I would rather die than have him blind in that eye. After two weeks, I began to wonder if God was going to take me up on my commitment! On Wednesday night we were watching TV. Sandy was just a few inches from the screen, just able to see motion. Commercials came on, he went to the bathroom, came out of the door, and said,

“Hey, I can see!”

Sat down thirty feet from the TV and watched the rest of the program. I rejoiced and promptly ate a big bowl of cereal in celebration.

His tests verified his eye was healed but the slight cross was still there. The doctor didn't know what to think about the vision being healed and went on to explain that the surgery to straighten the eye was simple and he recommended it. Here is a sad lesson! We didn't seek the Lord on this. After all, it was a simple medical procedure. Well, the eye became infected and he lost sight in that eye. I didn't feel right about going to God about this aggressively so Sandy had to adapt to having vision in one eye.

This turned out to be a positive thing in his life, though. When

he was twenty years old he hit the back of a truck while riding his bicycle. His face took the total impact and crushed everything, with part of his brain exposed. There are several miracles to be told about his recovery, but all I want to point out here is that the optical nerve was severed in one eye, which was the blind eye. Why is that a positive? If he had grown up with vision in both eyes he would have had a terrible adjustment as an adult to have the use of one eye. His depth perception would have been all messed up. While we are on the subject of kids growing up, let's talk about how this worked with a dad wanting to learn how the Bible works.

How do you explain to young boys the concept of turning your other cheek when another boy is pushing you around? We finally landed on that they were not to hit back until after the first blow was made and they had given the other boy a warning. If the boy continued then our boys were authorized to respond.

But that brings up a humorous situation. Peter picked on Clay almost every day when they were in the 6th grade. But Peter somehow got the scoop about the restriction on Clay so he never went to the second blow. Finally, Clay begged Annette to let him give it to Peter after the first blow. Annette agreed but that permission was for one day only. Well, Clay came home after school pretty battered with torn clothes. Within minutes the phone was ringing and it was Peter's mother asking why Clay had beaten Peter up. Annette explained the situation and with that, she heard Marge ask Peter what happened. Peter said he hadn't done anything to Clay that day. So Annette turned to Clay and asked if that was true. Tears welled up in Clay's eyes as he explained:

“I waited all day for Peter to attack me but he wouldn't

and I was going to lose my chance to get him, so I jumped him and picked the fight.”

Annette explained this to Marge, but our relationship was never the same after that and, of course, Peter learned his lesson.

Then came the issue of kids getting sick or hurt. Were there instructions in the Bible about how to handle that? When you read the Bible as I did with no years of explanations about when and if healing and miracles stopped, then the Bible seems very clear to pray first in everything. Then there is the story in the Old Testament about the king who had a foot disease and died from it because he consulted the doctors and not the Lord.

Using the king's experience as our example we developed the idea that we would always pray first, see what happened and then go to the doctor as needed.

Our first experience came when Clay was four. He had a hydra-seal hernia which caused swelling from abdominal fluids. The doctor said there was no need to fix it until he was seven so we had three years to pray. Each night when we put him to bed we would pray out loud for his healing. One day, Clay came running into the room and said the swelling was gone! We had him checked and sure enough this condition that the doctor had said was not self-healing was obviously healed by God.

Then there was the time when our daughter, Cindy, was still high-chair age. She got rambunctious and fell out of the chair and hit her head. The kids were all active and always getting bumps so we kept an eye on her. After a couple of days she began vomiting and her head hurt. We prayed, but no relief so we took her right away to the doctor. He said she had dented her skull just above her ear and that was putting pressure on the

brain. He said he would meet us at the hospital and he could fix it. On the way we stopped by the church and asked the pastor to anoint Cindy with oil and pray for her. Then we went right to the hospital. The doctor was very surprised to discover that the dent he had diagnosed an hour earlier was no longer there!

At the same time we were being challenged to give beyond our 10% tithe. We were a young family, struggling to make ends meet, but I was so appreciative of what God had done for me I wanted to be generous toward Him and His church. Annette and I didn't completely agree about this. Payday was three days away so on our way to church that Sunday night, Annette reminded me that we were out of milk and needed to stop at the store after the service and pick some up. The pressure mounted in the church service and the offering bags were passed a third time to meet the financial crisis in the church. I gave in and put all we had in the bag.

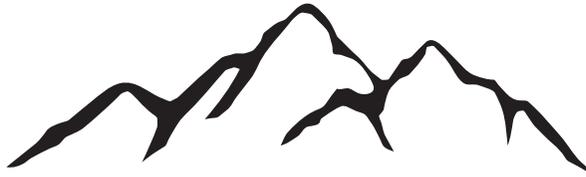
Annette was very frustrated and angry during our drive home but just sat quietly and gave off steam. We lived in the country in an old farm house out on a country road so getting to our place either took previous experience or a map. Anyway, we got home and when we went into the kitchen Annette decided to get very dramatic, went to the refrigerator, flung the door open and exclaimed,

“How could you! How could you do to this to our family!? You knew we had no milk! In fact our refrigerator is almost completely empty!”

Then her jaw dropped because the refrigerator was absolutely packed full of small milk cartons. There was not room for even one more!

She stood speechless and I dropped to my knees to give thanks to our Lord.

We learned later that one of our neighbors was a milkman and delivered to schools on the weekends. That Sunday, he had a bunch of leftover milk and was wondering what to do with it, when the thought hit him that the Jacksons lived nearby and had four small kids. He found our house unlocked and was going to set the milk on our kitchen floor. Seeing the refrigerator he thought it would be better if the milk was kept cold, but when he opened it he was shocked to see it was entirely empty. He told us that it took him a full hour to carefully stack every possible carton in the refrigerator. He thought it was a lot of fun and we got a great testimony of God's provision.



4

LEARNING HOW TO HEAR GOD

All of these experiences built a foundation for the project that was taking place on our three acres that I mentioned earlier. Remember? Motorcycles, drugs, antisocial community with no healthy outlet for the wired-up teens.

So we start having meetings in the Quonset hut and before long, 85 kids and adults are coming. The adults began to pressure me to take the lead and have some kind of services. Me?! Sure I read the Bible and was trying to learn how it worked, but did that qualify me to teach? I didn't think so, but agreed to meet every Sunday night for prayer.

We were still attending church in town; but as more people insisted we do something in our community, I went to the pastor and asked if he would recognize our work as an outreach mission of the church. We were shocked by his reaction. He said,

“If you have meetings at the same time on Sundays as the church meets you will be in competition with this church and you will never hold office in the church again!”

We tried to reason with him, explaining we had been trying to get people to come to church for over eight years with little or no success and yet these same people are insisting that we have local

meetings. The pastor just got angrier so I finally asked,

“Will we be welcome to attend church here?”

He said we could but repeated that we would never hold office or have active participation. We had been very active members and strong givers.

So we started our Sunday meetings in the Quonset hut and then we drove to town to attend church services on Wednesday nights, at least for a few Wednesdays. Our presence seemed to agitate the pastor and finally one night he exploded. He denounced us by name from the pulpit, accused us of leading people astray and excommunicated us from the church! We were then shunned by our long-time brothers and sisters. That really hurt! There were only 12,000 people in the entire town and I was managing one of the major businesses so we crossed paths with these folks fairly often.

So back to our local community. We conducted Sunday morning programs primarily for kids. These 85 or so kids piqued their parents' interest, which led to Sunday night meetings which were simply prayer.

One night I felt that I heard the words,

Covet the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

My immediate response was,

How? What gifts?

The answer,

Those in 1 Corinthians 12.

Ok, but how? How can I covet something I can't see, touch, hold or hear?

I was then shown a mental picture of a group of people who agreed they wanted to be used in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Each person was to give the Holy Spirit permission to use them and I was to open with a prayer before coveting each gift. Then we were to wait silently for a few minutes to allow the Holy Spirit to respond. Basically, just like we behave in a conversation. One person talks at a time. Then I was to start with the person on my left and give each person the opportunity to share what they had "heard" or "seen" during that quiet time. I was very nervous but wanted to test what I had heard.

I need to digress here regarding hearing the Lord speak. The Bible is, of course, full of stories about God speaking but there seems to be uneasiness in churches and even individual believers to expect this.

When I was nine years old and living with a family in the country, I was allowed to walk a couple of miles to the small country store. I was on my way one day to go get a root beer and was using that time to practice swearing. When I was five I was living in a foster home where the man taught me a full vocabulary of swear words. All of a sudden a voice spoke out loud,

Do not take My name in vain!

I nearly jumped out of my skin! There was no one around to say this. I was terrified and stopped using "God" or "Jesus Christ" in swearing. But that scared me so much that I developed anger toward God or anything or anyone religious.

My second experience was shortly after I had given myself to God.

I was on a business trip with two men who were determined to tell the filthiest, but funniest, jokes to try to get me to laugh and compromise my standard of Christian behavior. We stopped by a factory to visit one of their friends and the non-stop garbage continued. I was sitting there trying to ignore them when I clearly heard these words inside me:

Preach My Word.

Yow! In the middle of this vulgar joking! What did this mean? Then I understood God had given me His call to serve Him and chose the most unlikely non-spiritual setting so I would know it was Him, not some spiritually charged situation.

Back to the “covet the gifts” meetings. We viewed these meetings as training sessions to experiment with how the gifts worked experientially. We were in a safe environment with all of us in agreement to carefully test everything and make our mistakes among people who understand. We wrote everything down and read each thing back in the order that it was received. It was startling how few times something was received that obviously was not in the context of what else was being shared. Little by little we gained experience and confidence.

There were too many experiences to go into this book but I would like to share a couple of examples.

The attendance had grown so we started adding a couple of rooms and bathrooms. The builder attended the church and one night he asked for wisdom about the layout. A teenage girl described a vision she saw of the facility and described where the doors and windows were located. The builder was a burly Swede and bluntly declared,

“That is not where they are going!”

We went on with the meeting, and at the end the builder said he had been thinking about it and where she had “seen” them were actually the better locations.

The girl said she had seen more and that in her vision the building was never completed. I suppose some people would say,

“Well if you were so confident in hearing the Lord, did you stop building the rooms?”

No, remember this was all experimental so we would proceed and test how much was true. As it turned out, and I will explain that in more detail, the inside of the rooms were never finished.

She had a second vision at the same time. In this vision, she saw the Quonset hut empty, full of dirt and tumbleweeds. So we filed this away to see if it came true in the future.

All of the building activity, people coming to meetings and recreational activities for the teens started to make some neighbors uneasy. After all, they had moved out of town into the country to get away and now we were bringing “town” to them. A neighbor got a petition together and several members in the community hired a lawyer to stop our meetings. The Quonset hut was broken into twice and vandalized. We were permitted to burn our trash in 55-gallon barrels with a screen on top. But it seemed every time we lit ours up the fire department received a call and they were required to come and make sure we were burning legally. They would apologize, do their inspection and leave.

During one of our meetings one of the men suddenly said,

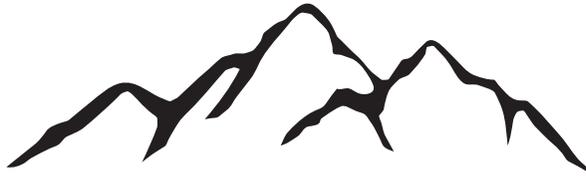
“They are going to blockade the road!”

Remember we were a good half-mile up a public road that had residences on both sides. Bud, who was a wealthy land developer, said that a blockade was impossible because it was a public road. By this time, I had learned to develop a secondary plan in case the wisdom we received actually turned out to be true. So I checked around and found that the middle school on the highway had an auditorium that had been ruled unsafe in the event of an earthquake and it was against the law for students or teachers to be in it. However, it could be used for a voluntary meeting place, like a church. So I arranged to rent it in case things turned against us.

We were ordered to a zoning commission hearing to hear our case. The opposition lawyer smugly presented a law that states a church must have a road at least 30 feet wide leading to it. He went on to report that the road from the highway to our place was as narrow as 15 feet and none of it was 30 feet so it was a misdemeanor for anyone to use it to come to church. They blockaded the road legally!

Their faces fell when I reported that we had rented an auditorium on the highway and asked if the commission would grant us 30 days to make the move. They graciously agreed and we moved into a greatly improved location and the rent, including utilities and janitorial, was only \$45 a month!

And, of course, the addition to the Quonset hut was no longer needed and never finished.



5

FAITH CALLS

Annette and I were settled in the community and our new house was 11% completed. I had been managing the business for ten years, supervising two other branches and was being considered for a higher position. We had hand-carved antique furniture, nice property, a stream just over the hill and the national forest for our kids to play in. Life was sweet.

Then I read the book, *Answers to Prayer*, which was George Müller's diary about living by faith. His journey consisted of not asking for anything but simply going to the Lord with his need. When I say "his need," that means he was feeding, housing and educating 2,000 orphans in England in the mid-1800s entirely by prayer. His experience made a deep impression on Annette and me and may have been instrumental in bringing about the next leg of our spiritual journey.

We went for a long walk one night and I asked,

"Is the Lord saying anything to you?"

She replied,

"Yes, is He saying something to you?"

As we talked we realized we were both feeling that we were

supposed to give up everything, move into a mobile form of living and learn how God answers prayer. I was 33 years old and our kids were 13, 12, 10 and 9. We had a blank page in front of us to try to fill in. But what was the starting point?

We figured the mobile form of living was probably the most logical place to begin so we began looking at travel trailer options. Annette had her sights set on an Airstream (and still looks longingly at them from time to time). At the same time our friends, Jake and Kathy, expressed they also had a leading to leave all and travel for the Lord, so they had been looking also. They included converted buses and house cars in their search.

Jake told us about an ad for a converted bus in Los Angeles. We had to be in the area so we stopped by to look at it. Jake immediately dismissed it for them. Annette and I looked it over and were not interested.

It was a thirteen-year-old (1954) GMC school bus. By “converted” the owner meant he had taken the seats out and put a propane refrigerator in it. I had a second problem because the ceiling in the center was a quarter inch shorter than I am tall without shoes so I had to slump to walk inside it. But the seller was persistent and asked what we had planned to use the bus for. I explained our faith journey plans and that our first stop was going to be among the Navajo Indians. He was asking \$2,500 for the bus, but when he heard our story he said he would like to be a part of our journey and would we take it for \$1,500.

Now we had a dilemma! We were thinking ready-made living quarters and this bus was as far from that as you could get. But, we had just gotten a \$1,500 down payment for the Quonset hut and an acre. We wondered,

“Is this the Lord?”

As we prayed we felt it was. That was hard! All of our romantic ideas of living in a nice new travel trailer were shattered. But as we learned later on in our journey, God had this all carefully planned so we could reach some people who would have been unreachable had we been in a fancy rig.

So now we had two parts of the puzzle in place. Part of our property was sold and we had our mobile form of living to develop. This led to the big step! I needed to give my employer at least six-month's notice so they could find someone to replace me. I submitted my notice and immediately had my mental health questioned. Even the replacement they selected tried to talk me out of it and to keep managing the business. Those next six months were very uncomfortable and full of emotional ups and downs.

I worked on the bus during those months, putting in beds, storage, kitchen, bathroom, closets, heater, water and propane. It was a challenge because six of us were going to be living in a space 7' 7" wide by 24' long. Every cubic inch was valuable. The kids each had a storage space under the bunks that was 10" high by 24" wide by 36" long. Everything had to fit in that space.

It worked and we were comfortable enough for this adventure.

Then came the part about selling our treasured furniture, partially finished house and the three-bedroom house. This came to be our first test of faith. Virtually nothing sold! Ads had the wrong address or phone number. People got lost. It was amazing and we actually ended up giving most of our possessions away. The property didn't sell, so when we left on the first leg of our journey we had it listed with a realtor but were responsible

to make the payments.

Our \$50,000 net worth just seemed to evaporate and we were “living by faith” within the first five months.

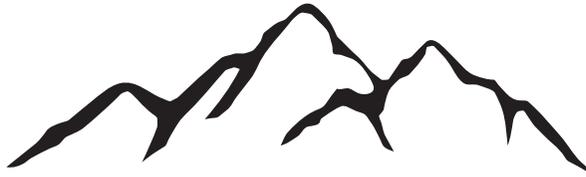
We weren't going to do the orphan ministry that George Müller did so we needed to know how God wanted us to learn about answers to prayer. As we prayed we received this Scripture:

Luke 12:31-34: Instead, seek His kingdom, and these things [clothes, food, etc.] will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

I saw “Father's good pleasure to give” as the core value of our faith journey to discover how God answers prayer. We were to ask the Father privately and not ask people. So we agreed to make this commitment to our Father:

“We will only ask You for our needs. We will not solicit offerings, accept offerings from groups/churches, or hint of any need. We will work for You full time as long as our needs are met. If our needs are not met, then we will assume that we are not seeking Your Kingdom, or we are fired, or You have gone broke.”

That was 42 years ago and we are still serving our Father full time.



6

EXPERIENCING MATTHEW 10:11

We headed out to the Navajo Reservation in December 1969. Ed and Wanda, members from our church in Upper Ojai, were in Oklahoma so we dropped some stuff off at the mission in Arizona and went on to Oklahoma to give them a hand.

At Ed and Wanda's place, I had read Mathew 10:11,

And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart.

Jake and Kathy were travelling with us so I asked them if they would like to experiment with this Scripture on our return trip. They were all for doing that. We chose a town but it was one thing to discuss it and then another to actually try to do it. Who should we ask?

We spotted a building with a cross on the front so we assumed there might be some Christian situation there and this might prove to be a safe first attempt. This was not to be—it was actually a high class antique shop in a former church building.

A well-dressed man in his thirties approached me and asked,

“Can I help you?”

I said,

“Yes, we are Christian missionary types on our way back to the Navajo Reservation. Jesus told us in Mt. 10:11 to inquire who is worthy and stay at his house. Do you know anyone who is worthy? We have motor homes.”

He stood there stunned and I stood there with anxiety. It felt like it took him at least two minutes to fully realize what he had just been asked. Finally he said,

“I think I do. Do you mind waiting while I make a couple of calls?”

We agreed and when he came back he said he had contacted a local church and the pastor had agreed to let us park there. They also opened up the bathrooms and let us plug in our electric cords. Later in the evening, we heard a knock at our bus door and there stood the salesman. He asked if he could come in and talk to us.

He was a member of this church, was married and had three children. He had felt a call to be in full-time ministry and wanted to get a theological degree but couldn't see any way he could afford to attend Bible College with his family responsibilities. He went on to say,

“What you folks have done today has given me the faith and courage to step out and go to Bible College.”

So this is how it works!

We left the next day and drove right into a blinding blizzard. Ice covered our windshield and we finally had to pull off in a small town and parked in front of a gas station. Annette and I have

always been equal partners in our marriage so I said,

“Now it’s your turn to do the asking.”

It took some convincing to get her to go into the station, but she did. I began chipping the ice off the windshield when I saw a nice car drive up and park on the other side of the road. Charlie, a lanky, western-dressed man in his forties, got out of the car and walked over to me. He rather abruptly said,

“Who are you people, what are you doing and where are you going?!”

I took a deep breath and told Charlie,

“We are Christian missionary types on our way back to the Navajo Reservation. Jesus told us in Mt. 10:11 that when we stopped in a town we were to ask who was worthy and stay at his house until we leave.”

Just then Annette came out and said the station attendant had called a church and the pastor agreed to look us over and might let us stay. Charlie cut into the conversation and said,

“Listen, if that doesn’t work out I have a place two miles out of town. Here is a map and my phone number. Y’all come out and stay there.”

I assured him that the church deal would work out based on our previous experience. But he insisted so we said we would consider it. We drove up to the church and the pastor very graciously offered to open the church to us and let us stay. We told him about our strange encounter with Charlie and the pastor said,

“You need to go and stay at Charlie’s.”

“Why?” we asked.

“Charlie’s dad donated the land for this church and Charlie donated the money for the building. But several years ago his wife left and Charlie has been backslidden and drinking heavily since then. This may be God’s plan to help him.”

So we loaded back up and drove to Charlie’s place. After we got settled, we started unhooking the VW Bug to go for groceries. Charlie saw us doing this and when he heard we were going shopping he insisted on taking Kathy and Annette in his car. When they hadn’t returned two and a half hours later we were getting worried.

Pretty soon a tow truck drove up towing Charlie’s car. Our wives told us he had been drinking and ran off the road and got stuck. During the hour or so waiting for the tow truck, Charlie opened his heart to them and they were able to minister to him as only a woman could.

We ate dinner and later there was a knock at our door. There stood Charlie. He asked,

“Do you need anything? Do you need any money?”

He pulled out his billfold, opened it up and displayed a wad of money that looked at least an inch thick. He held it up to me and urged me to take what I needed!

I was stunned! My mind raced a hundred miles an hour with all kinds of thoughts and emotions. Was this how God provided? Was I supposed to reach into another man’s billfold and help myself? Would I be missing God’s plan for providing for us if I

didn't? I tried to think of any Scripture that could give me the answer.

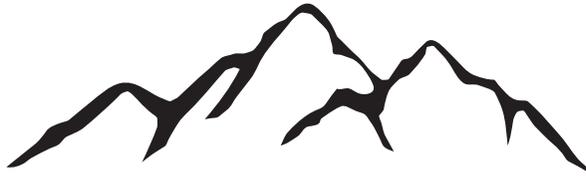
We were 1,000 miles from the reservation, in a blizzard, driving a bus that got 6 mpg and we had \$15. We had just gotten food; we had shelter, propane for heat and enough for today. I added this up and decided that we had enough for the day and was reminded that Jesus said to be satisfied with today. So I assured Charlie that we were OK and thanked him for his generosity.

He went on to tell me,

“The reason I am helping you people is because as I was driving into town and when I saw you a voice spoke inside me and said, *Help those people.*”

“I have a very successful business and have more money than I can spend. I have called all the businesses in town and told them to charge anything you need to me. Just tell them who you are and they will take care of you.”

I don't know to this day if we handled this the way the Lord intended but we did make it back to the reservation, experimenting with Mt. 10:11 along the way.



7

READING THE BIBLE IS MISSIONARY WORK?

We got settled in at the Navajo Mission, got the kids enrolled in school and started our missionary adventure. Annette volunteered her puppet and Vacation Bible School (VBS) skills and ran errands for the mission. I got a bunch of witnessing tracts and took off across the desert to call on families. The Navajos lived in hogans, which are a round, one-room building made from timbers and mud. There are no windows and only one door, which faces east, according to their religious tradition. There is a hole in the top of the roof. The theory is that the hogan is air tight so when they are cooking in the center of the hogan with an open fire, the smoke will rise and exit through the opening.

Unfortunately, the theory is better than the actual experience so the people suffered with eye and respiratory problems. I got to sit with an old medicine man who explained that God had given the Navajo people the design for the hogan. He pointed out that there were three main supports that were the foundations for the design. I asked,

“Are you saying that if any one of the three supports were not there that the hogan would collapse?”

“Yes, they are all needed.”

“God has been good to the Navajo people,” I said.

He agreed but wanted to understand why I thought this.

“Well, God has shown you in the hogan design that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the spiritual supports needed to hold up our spiritual house.”

Back to visiting families. Each family would have a flock of sheep for meat and wool. The desert they live in is very barren and requires large areas for each family's livestock to graze. We would have to drive at high speeds on washboard dirt roads to visit five or more hogans each day. Our poor VW Bug took a beating and was airborne more often than I like to remember. A hundred and fifty miles a day was normal. We did learn to fasten our seat belts tight or we hit the roof, and drinking a carbonated drink? Well, no need to explain that!

I was determined to be a good missionary. After all, when I was managing the business, long hours were common and our work for the Lord was part time. So I thought, now that God has me full time I should get a lot of results.

My missionary efforts lasted about six weeks and then the money ran out. We didn't have enough money for gas to drive the 150 miles to Flagstaff to shop for groceries! We now had to figure out if we were already fired, missing God, or had He gone broke!

To make matters worse I had been expecting a check from the business but it didn't come. We were still accumulating bills from our unsold property and not able to make payments. I called the business to ask about the check. They assured me they had sent it weeks earlier. I hung up the phone not knowing what to do.

The next day the mission pastor approached me with an envelope and said,

“This advertisement has been in my sock drawer for several weeks and I thought I should give it to you.”

“Advertisement!?” It was my check! I immediately deposited it and wrote checks to get our past due bills current. That sure felt good. A few days later, some other mail arrived that wasn’t so pleasant. They were warrants issued in California for my arrest for writing bad checks! I sure didn’t feel like much of a dedicated, righteous missionary at that point.

I called the business and discovered they had issued a stop payment on the check and they needed it back before they could issue a new one. It is a long agonizing story, but to make it short:

The bank lost the check, the business wouldn’t budge, the warrants were waiting for me, and we were out of money for food. Not a pretty picture. Finally, the business accepted that the check was lost and re-issued it. Bills got paid and the warrants for my arrest lifted.

Not bad for the first months of full-time service!

But we still needed to know why we ran out of money. John, the mission director, periodically gathered all the missionaries in the area for fellowship and prayer. It was a diverse group and we each went to our private place to pray in the manner of our tradition. While I was praying I saw this:

There was a short stubby arrow arcing through the air toward the desert floor. The arrowhead was larger than normal and white hot. It struck the desert but barely went

deep enough to hold the arrow up. Then the arrow spun rapidly several times and stopped blue cold. The sound of wind gently blowing over the desert left me with the feeling of timelessness.

I asked the Lord,

What does this mean?

Many people have come to this people burning with enthusiasm. This land and this people are patient and have seen many things come and go. Like the arrowhead, those who come expend a lot of energy but make only a small mark and leave drained.

Just at that time I saw the Episcopalian priest leave the meeting. He was outside and the winter wind was blowing hard. He was bent over and pulling his collar up and looked the picture of dejection. He was over 80 years old and had been on the reservation 26 years. He had won 12 people to the Lord in all that time. He did his ministry with great sacrifice. He came from a wealthy family in New York, but he wanted to preach the Gospel where no man had been before. His wife left him over his dedication but that didn't stop him. He went on horseback to the most remote corner of Navajo land and started a mission.

The combination of the arrow vision and the priest jerked me to a stop. Was I going to burn out and really accomplish virtually nothing? We were only a few months into our missionary journey without results and already in trouble.

I asked for prayer!

The missionaries gathered around me and prayed. One of them saw a vision of me out in the desert, sitting on a rock reading the Bible. Seemed I was doing that eight hours a day, Monday

through Friday. Fasting or praying was not part of the guidance.

Just a minute, I thought! A missionary is supposed to be witnessing night and day. God is going to pay me to sit and read the Bible and that was it? The feeling was that this was “seeking His kingdom” for me at this time. Well, we didn’t have much to lose because we were already at the bottom of the barrel so I made up my mind that Monday I would do this and see what happened.

I had the Amplified version of the Bible so I began reading in Genesis and read all day. Took a lunch break...seemed weird that praying and fasting was not part of it, but I decided to do it according to the guidance given that night of prayer.

When I went back to the compound at the end of the day, Annette greeted me with the news that \$20 had come in the mail. Hmm, coincidence? We got our mail general delivery, which made it kind of complicated to get mail to us as we moved around later in our journey.

With that encouragement, I went back out Tuesday and when I got home that night Annette had more money. It seemed pretty obvious then that “seeking God’s kingdom” was daily Bible reading and no other assignment. After three weeks, I was finishing the entire Bible and getting ready to get back to “being a missionary.”

Then the depressing message came,

Read the Dake’s Bible cover to cover.

The church had given me this Bible when we left on our journey. It was the most detailed Bible and commentary I had ever seen. There were two columns of Scripture with two columns of

commentary in small print. Then to top it off there were more pages of small print commentary at the end of every book!

I was stunned and quickly objected,

Lord, I came out to win souls; don't you remember that people are dying and going to hell? I want to work for you, not sit around all day and read!

Jerry, I don't need you.

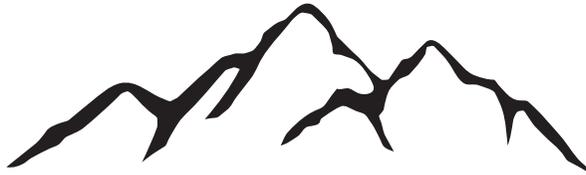
Somehow I understood that He was not rejecting me but only letting me know that my obedience was more important than my work.

So I did it. It took months before I completed that Bible. I spent eight hours a day for three months at which time changes were being made at the mission and we needed to move on. After the first three months, my reading time was reduced to four hours a day.

Where were we to go? Annette and the kids and I prayed for guidance. Annette received the names of two towns in two states. She had never heard of them, so we looked for them on a road map but couldn't find them. I have always taken a strong position that it is either the Lord or not. So I dismissed this as a "not." Then it occurred to me to go to the post office and look them up in the zip code book. Salina, Utah and Selma, Oregon were there!

Meanwhile, Jake and Kathy were also having to move and had prayed for guidance. They had received two towns also. Winnemucca, Nevada and Myrtle Creek, Oregon were both easy to find on the map. What was a little mind boggling was that all four towns were arranged like the shortest route!

So we were off to Salina, Utah. But first I need to go back a couple of months.



8

ASKING IN SECRET

Annette had a puppet stage and 200 puppets, plus all the materials for a full blown VBS. We needed more space if we were going to be travelling. The mission had graciously let us use a storage room while we were parked there. Building on our Mt. 10:11 experiences, and my Bible reading discipline, we decided to privately ask the Lord for a trailer to pull behind the bus.

The bus was 31-feet long and the legal overall length for our bus and trailer was 55 feet in most states. We figured a 20-foot-long trailer was the smallest we could use and 24 feet was the longest. We had lived in a Masonite travel trailer in our college years and it leaked, so we wanted an aluminum exterior. We were going to use it for storage so furniture would be in the way. So here was our prayer,

Lord, we need a travel trailer to haul behind the bus. We ask You for a 20- to 24-foot-long trailer that is aluminum on the outside and has no furniture.

Remember we only asked the Father in private; no one else knew we were praying for this. A few weeks later, Mike approached me and told me,

“I have a travel trailer in Window Rock that I am selling,

but the Lord told me last night to give it to Jerry Jackson.
Do you want it?"

Mike was a mechanic and he knew we only had the bus and the VW Bug to tow it, so he didn't see any reason to offer it to us.

I asked,

"How long is it?"

"24 feet."

"What is the outside covering?"

"Aluminum."

I started to raise my hands and goose-bump-covered arms toward Heaven and give thanks. I could take the furniture out!

But Mike interrupted me,

"There is one thing, though. I had a radio shack in it and there is no furniture."

We welded a bumper hitch on the back of the bus and managed to tow that trailer all the way to Myrtle Creek, Oregon. It sure slowed the bus down though. If we drove 10 hours we would cover 150 miles. There were times when going up a long hill that the kids got out and walked faster than the bus was moving.

We arrived in Salina, Utah and prayed for guidance. We felt we were there to help "one or two" people.

Jake and I took off with our Bibles in hand to discover what the Lord had in mind. We walked all over the main street of this town of 2,000 with no results. The next day was Sunday, so we planned to attend church and drove over to a nearby town to the

Presbyterian Church. We were a little early and met the pastor, who asked about us and showed interest in our journey. He told us,

“I have only been at this church for three months and have not had the time to get over to Salina to visit an elderly lady who I understand was recently widowed. Would you mind calling on Mrs. Nay?”

We were eager to take any opportunity and readily agreed.

After lunch, Jake and I headed for Mrs. Nay’s home. We knocked at the door and her seven-year-old grandson answered. We asked if Mrs. Nay was home and she called for us to come in. She was sitting in a recliner obviously not feeling well. She told us,

“My husband died six months ago. We are the only people of our faith in this town and have felt isolated. I have had several heart attacks over the years and I am now feeling like God has taken my husband and abandoned me.”

“Mrs. Nay, God has not abandoned you! He spoke to us in Kayenta, Arizona to come to Salina. When we arrived here we asked God what we were to do. He said we would help one or two people here. We have travelled over 500 miles to assure you that God had not abandoned you and loves you so much that He had us come all this way just for you.”

“Mrs. Nay, do you believe the Bible in James 5:14 where it instructs the sick to call for the elders to anoint them with oil and pray for them for healing?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Well, we have oil and would love to pray for you with your permission.”

She got up and shuffled into another room. She came back with two five dollar bills and reached out to hand one to each of us.

“No, no, that is not necessary, but thank you anyway.”

She insisted and told us this story:

“Because we have been alone in our faith we send our tithe to radio and TV ministers. Last week as I was getting ready to make my checks out I felt the Lord tell me to hold it, that someone would be coming to my door. And here you are!”

With that background we accepted her gift and prayed for her healing. When we left she looked no better but at least she had done what the Scriptures teach.

We got back home and asked our wives to go visit Mrs. Nay the next day. We told them our story and how lonely Mrs. Nay was.

Here is our wives' story about their visit with her:

“When we walked up to Mrs. Nay's home, she was working in her front yard! She didn't look at all like you and Jake described. She greeted us and said, ‘You are the wives of those young men who came to visit me yesterday, aren't you? Please come in, I have a story I want to tell you. I have been sick from time to time and two years ago I was pretty much bedridden. During that time I saw you two ladies' faces in a vision. I have been praying for you for two years.’”

It is hard to describe how I felt when Annette told this to me! Two years ago I was intently managing the business, pastoring on the side and raising a family with no plans other than what I was doing then. But God was visiting a sick, elderly woman in a town we had never heard of and showing Annette's face to her so she could pray for her for two years!

Oh, by the way, yes, she was healed. I am a hard-headed skeptic and want to be sure what is God's work and what is the work of a psychosomatic "I feel better because you care" experience. So I did follow-up visits and stayed in Mrs. Nay's home to confirm that God really did heal her. He did!

Now on to Winnemucca, Nevada. We prayed for guidance.



9

AGITATING THE COMFORTABLE

Lutheran.

Lutheran? First we looked up to see if anyone with the last name Lutheran was in the phone book. Nope. Then was there a Lutheran street? Nope. So we moved to the obvious, a Lutheran Church? Yup.

So on Friday we visited the church and the pastor talked with us about our journey and a pressing problem he had coming up next week.

“We have a Vacation Bible School taking place next week and I have a very serious problem in that the main ministry is still not in place. We need someone who knows how to teach lessons with puppets, visual aids, art, etc. We cannot find anyone! And I need this spot filled by Monday afternoon!”

He was stunned to learn that Annette was a professional VBS leader and had all of the resources to put on an entire VBS for several hundred kids. We offered her services and he immediately began talking about how much he would pay her. He was very surprised when we told him we would not and could not accept pay. Then, when we told him how we came to be in

Winnemucca and why we were sitting in his Lutheran Church, he indicated he had some deep thinking to do.

Over the next week, Annette was able to tell him more of our journey and she sensed he was struggling with the idea of such an active God. She began to pray for a sign she could share with him so he could have a personal experience. That came about in a very strange way.

We were parked in one of those low-end travel camps with a gravel lot and very plain. We were invited to dinner by one of the church members so I was over in the public bathroom getting ready. When I came back to the bus there was a flatbed truck with a big freezer on it and a travel trailer parked by our bus. Here is Annette's story:

“I saw this rig pull up and park and when I looked out the window the man, obviously a farm hand, was walking around our bus looking it over. I popped my head out the door and asked if he had ever seen anything like it. He said he hadn't so I asked if he would like to see the inside.

‘Sure would!’ he replied.

“As he looked around he asked me, ‘Hey honey, do you like lamb meat?’

“We sure do.”

‘How about venison?’

“Yes, we like both of those meats. With that he leaned out our door and hollered to his wife,

‘Hey, Mabel, get some of that lamb and venison for these folks.’

“They filled our refrigerator completely up with meat!

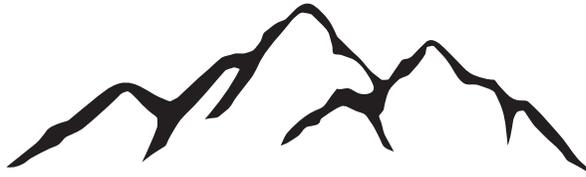
“Then he asked, ‘We are farm workers looking for work. Do you know of any jobs around in this area?’

“No, but we are going to dinner with some people who might and we will check with them and let you know in the morning.”

When we got back after dinner they were gone. Gone!? That didn’t make sense. They had arrived late, paid for the night and were all set up. Why did they leave? Then we realized this was the answer to Annette’s prayer for the pastor.

So, the next day at VBS, Annette invited the pastor and his wife to our bus for dinner. They accepted and, as we sat at the picnic table eating venison and lamb, Annette began telling them about her prayer and then told them the farm hand story and how this meat came to be on our dinner table that night. The pastor told us later,

“I have figured your ministry out. You comfort the agitated and agitate the comfortable. You have really agitated my comfort. Here I am an ordained pastor, living very comfortably in a four-bedroom home with a steady salary. Now you come into our lives, living in a bus, with no support and simply praying and trusting God. You came to us just when our church needed you, and have given us personal experiences we would have never imagined. I am going to have to do some deep soul searching.”



10

HIPPIES, DRUGS, AND SALVATION

On to Selma, Oregon. I think it is important to make it clear that travelling in an old, underpowered school bus, pulling a heavy trailer across the Nevada desert during the summer, is not as romantic an adventure as a person might think. When I was praying one time, the Lord told me something along this line:

What you have to go through to help people is not the issue. Getting people what they need is the issue.

I had been talking about our hardships in meetings and God wanted me to focus on His people and not our difficulties. So I will not say any more about our travel problems other than to try to warn a person away from thinking it is a smooth ride and full of joy.

Selma, Oregon was a gas station, a store and a campground located by Lake Selmac. Why did God have us drive nearly 1,400 miles to such a place!?! We parked at the Last Resort Campground by the lake and, of course, the kids were elated. What a difference from the Arizona desert and sand storms!

Once we were settled, the first order of business was to ask the Lord what our assignment was. I “saw” a long-haired, bearded man and got the words,

He will introduce you to people of like type.

The image was vague so I really had more of a concept than an actual person. It took less than one day to check out Selma and realize that was not the ministry area. Perhaps it was just a nice place and reward for Annette and the kids for the months of being minorities in the school system and living in the dry and dusty desert.

I enlarged my effort to Cave Junction. It was a larger town and had several churches. As I walked around, I saw signs in store windows,

“No hippies allowed.” “Hippies stay out!”

I had never seen this before or been around hippies so I asked what this was all about. I was told there was a large settlement of about 1,000 people who were nudists, practiced Eastern religions, drug users, environmental activists and vegetarians. The little town was in an uproar about this recent settlement and store owners didn't want them in their stores because they would open jars, scoop out some with their fingers and put the jar back on the shelf.

I visited the pastors and asked them what was going on in their churches and the community and soon ran into strong anti-hippie feelings, and that even though a pastor might guardedly welcome hippies, the elders would not. I eventually met a pastor who actually had three or four hippies in his church, and when I shared our journey and the vision I had seen, he offered to take me to the community and introduce me to a couple of people there.

I'll never forget my first impression. It was a balmy day in

the forest with a nice stream flowing through the place: Nude young people just going with “the flow.” It was seductive and I immediately sensed a danger of being drawn into the “doing what felt good” atmosphere. That night I made a list of my values and reviewed them periodically to see if I was drifting into that trap.

This appeared to be why God brought us here. But how was it to happen? The hippies were suspicious of outsiders because they openly used drugs and had been a target for drug enforcement people.

I was still on my four-hour-a-day reading assignment in the Dake’s Bible, so I decided to drive about a half mile further up the dirt road and spend my morning discipline there sitting under a tree alongside the road. It may seem silly but I would tell the Lord,

I am sitting under this tree above the hippie community,
so if You want me to help someone, please bring them
to me.

It was surprising how many individuals came walking up the road to spend time with me. As I recall, I spent maybe as long as three weeks there. This was a forested area and a small river was 100 or so feet off the road so this was pretty nice surroundings. But I was eager to get to work with the people and feeling pretty lazy.

One day, a young man in his early twenties came to talk to me. He definitely was not a hippie. He was a young evangelist and boy was he on fire! I sat there feeling lazy, fat and bloated as this man excitedly told me how God had called him to this community and that he was mingling with them and looking for

a rich harvest.

As he left me, I had all kinds of questions. Had I missed God? Had I been sitting here along the road for nothing? Did God pass me over and hand the work to another person? For the next couple of days, on my drive back to the campground, I would see that young man in the river with the hippies and became more convinced that I had not made the grade.

Then one day I saw three men working on a pump. This gave me a reason to stop because I had worked on pumps and wells for a couple of years. They welcomed me and my help. We got the pump going and Big D invited me into his roughly-built cabin. We sat on the floor amid Eastern rugs, hanging tapestries and crystals. I somehow had mistakenly understood that Big D was a Christian, so I began sharing our journey and experiences. All of a sudden Big D closed his eyes and began to weep.

Because I had been sharing experiences regarding the work of the Holy Spirit and thinking he was Christian, I thought he wanted a deeper walk with the Lord; so I walked across the room, laid my hands on his head and asked that his desire be satisfied. His weeping increased in intensity and then he began laughing with joy.

I was totally wrong about his Christianity. Big D was a practicing Buddhist and an LSD priest. Big D was a giant of a man, 6' 8" tall and over 275 pounds. His long hair and beard gave him the ferocious look of a lion. This was his story:

“I don't know why I welcomed you. You looked like a military drill sergeant but somehow I wanted to talk with you. I have had lots of people come and try to witness to me and I have physically thrown them off my property.

But when you were talking to me, it made sense and I made a decision to accept Jesus Christ.”

I said,

“Big D, you have just begun your spiritual journey. There are also nine gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Would you like to learn more about these gifts?”

“Sure, can you come back Monday say around one o'clock?”

On the surface I was very calm as I said I could. But my insides were leaping for joy and expectation. I was in! Oh by the way, I never saw the young firebrand evangelist again.

One o'clock Monday finally came. Big D's front room was filled with 15 or so people. They were a pretty different group for me! Of course, because they were comfortable being nudists, you guessed it, not everyone had clothes on. Much of their conversations with each other had to do with Eastern religions, which was Greek to me. After about a half hour, I asked Big D,

“Were you planning to covet the gifts of the Holy Spirit today?”

“Sure, that is why everyone is here.”

Gulp! I was going to ask the Holy Spirit to use these Eastern religion naked people in the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Would God kill me for doing this? Or remove His anointing and call from me? There is no other way to put it, I was scared!

I asked everyone to sit down and I opened the Bible to

1 Corinthians 12 and explained that each of us was going to give the Holy Spirit permission to give us experiences in the gifts through the name of Jesus Christ. I would pray out loud, they could pray as they felt comfortable, but when I finished we were to be quiet and see what we received during that quiet time. Still wondering what God was going to do to me for this, I prayed one of my most serious prayers and then we waited silently for several minutes.

I started with the person on my left and he said,

“I saw the word ‘Ezakial,’ ‘Ezagal,’ or something like that and these numbers.”

We looked it up and it was clear testimony to Jesus.

Another person got,

“I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man comes to the Father except through Me.”

I was stunned. This man had been saying before the meeting that there are many ways to God! The Holy Spirit was preaching Jesus Christ as Savior through their own mouths! I explained that they needed to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and His sacrifice on the cross for their sins. Seven agreed. The man to my right stood up and put his pants on for this next step. I have always puzzled why he did this when they seemed so comfortable in the nude. These daily meetings went on for seven weeks so there are hundreds of stories to tell but I would like to share just a few highlights.

We met a few nights in the Ohm Zone, as it was called. These people practiced “Ohming.” As we went from person to person, Rebecca said she got 1 Corinthians 1:23. I asked her to read it

but she said,

“I think it is for me.”

“Yes, but it also may say something to someone else also.”

“Ok, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.”

A couple of days later Rebecca came asking to be baptized in water. I said,

“You need to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior to be baptized.”

“Oh, I did that in the woods after the meeting. I am a Jew and Jesus Christ was a stumbling block to me so when I got that Scripture I was shocked.”

I was amazed, and baptized her in the river.

But there were funny things that happened, too. I came one Monday (we didn't meet on the week-ends) and Big D said,

“Jesus came this weekend.”

“Oh, tell me about it.”

“Well, this guy knocked on my door and asked if I was Big D. I said I was. He told me he was Jesus and I was the Prophet. I said, ‘Far out, come on in.’ But we decided on Sunday that he wasn't Jesus when he started cursing and hitting the kids. So I threw him out.”

Then there was the middle-aged evangelist and his wife who drove up to Big D's place. This is Big D's story:

“This guy showed up and knocked on my door. His wife was in the car and looked pretty scared. He asked me if I was Big D and I told him I was. He asked if it was true that I had become a Christian. I said I had. He then started asking me if my wife wore make-up or jewelry. I said she did sometimes and I liked it. Then he started getting on my case, so I didn’t know what else to do but squat down, hug him and lift him off the ground admonishing him we should love each other.”

The wife thought her husband was being crushed as he dangled there, but Big D gently let him down and the man was very eager to go on his way.

One last story: I was teaching them how to prove Scripture and that when they had some unusual experience to see if there was a similar story in the Bible. Then write and date their story in the margin. This is Big D’s Mark 15 story:

“I was helping another guy do some work around his place. It was hot and the only water he had was in a cistern. I got a glass and filled it from the spout and gulped it down. As soon as I took the glass down, a smell like a dirty diaper came. I ran to the cistern and took the lid off and discovered there were two dead chipmunks all decayed floating in the water. I tried to throw up but couldn’t. I have not been sick other than thinking about it.”

He had literally drunk something deadly without any ill effects. I have shared this story with medical people and they tell me he should have had serious problems.

During these seven weeks of daily meetings, 50 came to the Lord and an informal church emerged. They reported that another 450 people came to faith over the next year.

Big D wanted to take me to meet the major drug dealers in California and Hawaii to introduce them to what he had experienced. I had two reactions: Hey, this is book material and I could get famous from this. Second reaction: I could get famous and get big headed and miss God. Besides, how could I be sure that Big D really had those contacts or was just bragging? Well, he wasn't bragging and here is that story:

Word had gotten around and soon people wanted to see what was happening. I wouldn't allow it, but did give in to one fellow, John, who claimed to be one of the original hippies. I also had heard that he had been arrested for drugs and came to Christ in jail through an old fisherman witnessing to him. So I gave in and agreed to take him with me.

When we arrived at the commune, Big D wasn't home and they said he was over at Skinny M's tree house. So we went over and climbed up to join Big D and Skinny M. I told Big D,

"John is from San Francisco so you might have mutual friends."

Big D asked John if he knew several people and discovered indeed he did. Then Big D got serious and asked if he knew a guy named John XXXX.

John calmly said,

“That’s me.”

Big D looked stunned and said,

“The last time I saw you, you were sitting on the American flag on your couch, bleeding from both arms and legs, trying to hit a vein. You had long black hair and beard.”

“That was me. Me and two other guys pretty much controlled the drug market there. We bought chemicals in 55-gallon barrels. I had a specially designed room to hide in if the cops or a gang showed up. I had a gun under my coffee table and several stashed all over the apartment.”

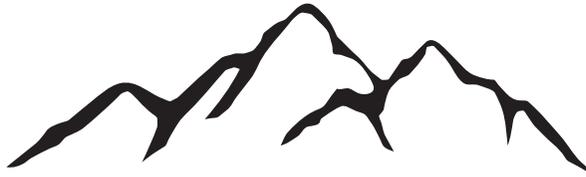
He said all of this so matter-of-factly and Big D seemed to be confirming his story. Being a little bit of a smart aleck I asked John,

“Just out of curiosity, when was the last time you killed someone?”

He paused and thought for a few seconds like he was ticking down a count and finally said,

“I think it was two years ago.”

Reality hit me! Suddenly I realized Big D could introduce me to top drug dealers and I was sitting in a tree house with former major drug dealers and people who had killed!



11

CONFUSION

When it came time for us to move on, we drove up to Myrtle Creek to join Jake and Kathy on their Christian farm. It was 80 acres of virgin timber with some pasture land and a creek. The place was very run down and needed lots of elbow grease. Two other families were there so we formed a little fellowship and began working on the place.

I decided to tackle the blackberry brambles that lined the road up to the house. It was hot and the thorns pretty much tore up my hands and arms...for that matter, anything they touched! I could hear laughter and joking coming from the house, and the more scratched the more irritated and hotter I got. But I piously thought, I'm not doing this for Jake and Kathy. I am doing it for the Lord!

Sure sounded pretty good until I looked back over my work and realized that in reality I was doing it for Jake and Kathy! So I had to start over, reminding myself that I was going to do it for the Lord and it had to be good.

There is a story in the Bible about a prophet who felt God had sent him on a journey and he was not to stop along the way. An older prophet met him and convinced him to stop and eat at his

house. The younger prophet objected but yielded. But after the meal, the old prophet chastised him and told him he was going to be killed. A lion killed the young prophet as he continued his journey.

Here is my personal experience with that story. I was carrying on ministry as usual in addition to helping on the farm. One day Jake came to me and said,

“I have been fasting and praying and God has told me that you are to be the full-time pastor on the farm.”

“Are you saying that I am supposed to give up all of the other ministry I have been doing and we are no longer supposed to continue our travelling faith journey?”

“That’s right.”

“Well, I don’t agree.”

“God has told me that if you don’t agree, Jerry, that He will take your anointing and give it to me. That you are possessed with a spirit of pride.”

I was stunned. All I could say was,

“Well, we will see, because I am rejecting your ‘prophecy’ and will continue doing as I have done to this point.”

I left the next day and drove 65 miles to Cave Junction for the meeting in the commune. When I got there and was sitting in Big D’s place, Big D haltingly asked,

“Should you obey God even though it is with someone you deeply respect?”

“Absolutely.”

With that he moved in back of me, put his hands on me and began to pray,

“God, You have shown me that Jerry has a spirit of pride and I rebuke it and cast it away from him.”

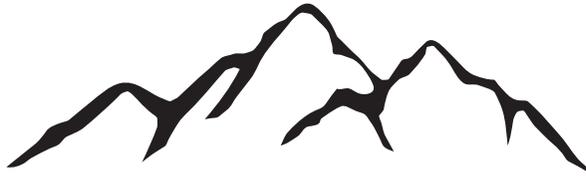
I would have been ok except I felt something lift off of my shoulders! Was this a confirmation of Jake’s prophecy? Had Annette and I been deceived all this time and not actually hearing God? Was Mrs. Nay just a coincidence? The Lutheran Church, and how about the long-haired, bearded man that turned out to be Big D? Was I now to become subject to Jake’s leading from this point forward? I was in turmoil and went into a deep depression that lasted for weeks.

I felt like I was hanging on to a string by the tips of my fingers, dangling over a dark and bottomless pit and I didn’t care! I lost all hope and confidence in following God.

One night some people persuaded me to go to church with them. It was a small country church made up of lumberjacks and working people. The man leading the worship service had teeth missing, played his out-of-tune guitar and sang off-key. I just sat like a lump of coal. Then the man began some rambling talk, which to this day I don’t remember. Whatever he said brought light into my darkness and I was given my right mind and restored.

God’s anointing did not leave me and Jake’s ministry soon fell apart and the farm was let go. He continued to walk with the Lord but not with the anointing that came with the Christian farm.

We felt it was time to move on.



12

TRAPPED IN SPIRITUALISM

A hippie couple, Randy and Mary, had followed us to the farm and needed a place for them and their two children to stay, so we had emptied the travel trailer and let them use it. We still needed storage space so we asked the Lord to provide another trailer that would hold our extra goods. We were willing to give the travel trailer to Randy and Mary if we got a replacement.

Mutual friends from southern California came up to the farm about this time and hauled a bunch of furniture and stuff to help out. When it came time for them to leave, I started to hook up their box trailer, but Ray said,

“That isn’t our trailer anymore. God told us to give it to you.”

“You mean to the farm?”

“No, God said to give it to you.”

There it was! Everything fit perfectly into the trailer, it was light and easy to tow behind the bus. Perfect! Randy and Mary were thrilled to get the travel trailer and we were ready to continue our faith journey. But to where?

It was a strange feeling to be able to pull in our electric and water

lines and literally go any direction we pleased. But how would we know we were in God's will? It was a dark night as I stood in the open field and prayed,

Lord, we have \$600 and can go in any of the 360 degrees on the map. There is no one to tell us where to go or if we are in the right place. How do we know when we are in Your perfect will?

I saw a mental picture of a leaf floating on the surface of a gently flowing mountain stream. I heard,

It is as hard for you to get out of My will as it would be for that leaf to get out of the stream. I will bless you anywhere you go; there are just places I can bless you more.

Forty years later I can testify that this has been true.

We arrived in Flagstaff, Arizona and did our usual prayer for wisdom. I don't remember anything specific but I just began walking through the city to see what God had in mind. I noticed a sign in the window of a home that boldly proclaimed,

“Praise the Lord!”

So I knocked on the door and asked the man who answered,

“Noticed your sign and wondered why you are praising the Lord.”

He was in his forties and recently divorced. In the pain of the divorce, he reached out to Jesus and received peace. He asked about us and then invited us to park our bus by his home. He offered to open his home so we could use his kitchen and bathrooms. We prayed and felt good about this so we moved to

his place.

Harold was a professional photographer and had some pictures to deliver to a client and asked if I would come with him. There were two couples in their late 20s and the lady's mother when we got there. Harold showed them their pictures then turned to me and asked me to share our journey with them.

They listened attentively and when I was through the older sister said,

“This sounds a lot like what we do. We spiritually channel and have guiding spirits from other planes. Our leader levitates and the police have paid him to find missing people. We astral travel and have Ouija boards.”

“No, it is not the same. What you are involved with can cause you to pay an incredible emotional price.”

“What kind of a price?”

“You will suffer depression, become isolated, consider or even attempt suicide.”

She began weeping and went on to tell us that just before they came to this meeting, she had checked her medicine cabinet and didn't have enough and was going to stop on the way home and get more so she could kill herself that night.

I moved over to her and asked her to call on the name of Jesus Christ. She tried and tried but could not say His name, so I just said,

“You dark spirits, I take authority over you in the name of Jesus Christ and command you to leave her!”

She passed out! I didn't know what to do, but remembered that this did happen in the Bible sometimes when Jesus cast demons out of people, so I relaxed and waited. She finally came to and was able to ask Jesus Christ to save her. The husbands and her sister joined in receiving Christ. The mother had two of her guiding spirits present and was not willing to give them up.

They gathered all of their occult materials; they had a bunch, and we burned all of it. This started a series of discipleship meetings and more people joined in. Their previous leader came up in discussion from time to time so I asked more detailed questions about him.

They knew that he had been born into a spiritualist family and had a guiding spirit all of his life. They knew the names of his guiding spirits so I wrote their names down and began praying,

Lord, this man has never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel without the influence of these guiding spirits. Their names are . . . I think he has the right to hear Your message of salvation at least once without their influence, so I ask you for this. I pray his guiding spirits will be bound during that time.

I fasted and prayed for him for two weeks. Then, to my surprise, he showed up at one of our afternoon Bible studies. When I opened the meeting, I prayed,

Lord Jesus, I pray for Your presence to be here and that all other spiritual forces would be bound and not allowed to influence anyone here. Amen.

We went on with the meeting as usual with the medium challenging me from time to time. It was perfect, because his

challenges gave me the opportunity to clearly present the Plan of Salvation to him. At the end of the meeting he said,

“I challenged you during the meeting because your opening prayer was against me.”

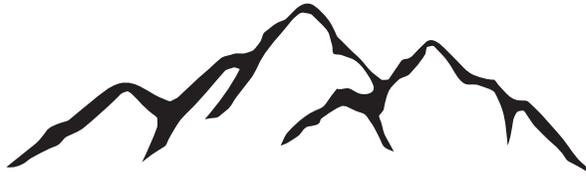
“No it wasn’t. I prayed that the spiritual forces would be bound and not able to influence people here. Did your guiding spirits influence you during the meeting?”

“No, the energy is so low in this meeting they wouldn’t bother.”

“Then, sir, my prayer was answered.”

“Your prayer was against me, and I know it because when you prayed, it felt like a knife was cutting my chest open.”

I checked on him later and understand he never came to accept the Lord; but he did, at least, get one clean opportunity to hear the Gospel free of demonic influence.



13

BACK-TO-BACK TRIALS

These meetings went on for several weeks with many people being helped in their faith. Sunday at Harold's house became an all-day event with worship in the morning, lunch together, fellowship and play in the afternoon, dinner together and then a sharing/testimonial evening meeting. I began getting an urging to visit the Christian Farm and the hippie community, so John (the former mission leader from the Navajo Reservation) and I drove in his car to Myrtle Creek. When we got there, we discovered Randy and Mary had felt led to come to Flagstaff with us and had traded the travel trailer for a converted school bus. They had stored up some food and were waiting for us before leaving. They had a 20-month-old daughter and fairly new baby. I talked it over with John, and we agreed to part and I would go with Randy and Mary to help with the driving and help with any mechanical breakdowns.

When we got ready to leave on this 1,400-mile trip, we had food, a full tank of gas and thirty-five dollars. Gas in those days was 19.9 cents a gallon. The story about this journey is not to talk about our hardships but rather what just happens and how God can work things out.

It was late in the afternoon in the mountains of northern

California. It was rainy and cold but we were comfortable inside their bus. It was my turn to drive when all of a sudden I heard a hammering noise coming from the engine and before I could get stopped the engine was not running. We made it to the side of the freeway and locked the brake. The baby was screaming, Randy was panicking and I had no idea about what to do. We were now wet, cold and miserable from being outside trying to see what was wrong. Randy told me later that he had seriously considered jumping off the cliff where we were stranded.

I was in turmoil wondering why I had volunteered and whether I had done it out of human compassion and didn't seriously seek God first. I actually thought, I wonder if this is a trial for Randy and Mary and has nothing to do with me. Should I leave them to learn whatever lesson God was trying to teach them? Would I get in the way of them learning this lesson?

I was serious. I have watched parents bail their kids out of situations that would have been a valuable life lesson if they had been allowed the full experience. I was ready to let Randy and Mary have the full experience!

Our turmoil was interrupted by a knock at the back door. When we opened the door, there stood two strangers, Bob and Joe, in the rain. They asked if we needed help. We told them what had happened. Bob said,

“I have this old heavy Buick and a chain. Let's hook it up to the bus and see if we can tow it to a town that is a few miles down the road and see if you can get the engine fixed there.”

We argued with him, pointing out that the bus was heavy, was parked uphill and it was too risky for their car. They insisted

and got their car hooked up to the bus. But first Bob opened his trunk and took out a five-gallon container of used sludge motor oil and poured a bunch in his engine. I was astonished and could imagine them parked in front of Randy's bus with a blown engine. But those two men insisted. They also urged us to put Randy's wife and two children in the car with them because without a functioning engine we only had the mechanical emergency brake to slow or stop the bus.

They started their car and tightened the chain. That old car hunkered down and smoke began pouring from under the car like it was on fire. They all put their heads out the windows because the smoke inside was so thick. But we began to move! And they got us to the top of the first mountain. We pulled as hard as we could on the emergency brake to stop the bus at the top of the mountain. They got out of the car, unchained us and then we got the bus moving down the mountain. We rapidly began going at a pretty high speed, hoping nobody got in front of us because we had no brakes without the engine running! We coasted up the next mountain as far as we could and repeated this until we got to the town and found a garage.

Bob and Joe stayed with us until they were satisfied that the garage owner was honest and we were going to be taken care of. I made Bob accept \$20 and our profuse appreciation. Now we had \$15 and a \$135 estimate for repairs. It was going to take three days to do the job. Jim, the mechanic, let us stay in the bus, but they did have guard dogs loose at night in the garage so it was a little tense.

I called Annette to let her know we would be delayed three days and what the deal was. She says my first sentence was,

“Has any money come in?”

She is probably right because we had authorized the work to be done and didn't have a clue about how we were going to pay for it. She told me this story:

“Last week, when I was volunteering in the Flagstaff Christian Bookstore, a man came in asking for books on living by faith. I pointed him to George Müller's book, but when he saw that was done in the 1800s he said he wanted something more modern. There weren't any books that I could find that were modern so I just began telling him about some of our faith journey experiences. He left and just today I got a letter from him with a check for \$135!”

I was stunned and asked her to run down to Western Union and wire it to us. Those were the days that credit cards were pretty limited and we either had cash, a checking account or used Western Union to move money.

Randy and I walked around town during the day to see if God had another purpose for us being there, beyond having two good Samaritans tow us and an honest mechanic to fix the bus. We discovered a man sitting in his car with a Bible on the dash. We asked what was happening for Jesus in his life. He said his wife had just had a rich experience with the Holy Spirit and he didn't seem to be able to. He invited us into his car and we showed him some Scriptures about the Holy Spirit, prayed with him, he had his experience and we went on our way. We couldn't stop smiling when we tried to imagine his wife's reaction when she got back to the car and heard his story!

The bus was finally ready late one evening, so we paid the \$135

and left rejoicing with \$15 in our pocket.

It was dark and I was driving, keeping a careful watch on the oil and temperature gauges. A couple of hours down the highway, the temperature gauge suddenly rose and showed that the engine was overheating. I pulled off under a street light and saw there was radiator fluid spraying everywhere. In Jim's tired state and haste he forgot to bolt the radiator in place and it had moved back into the fan blade and had been sliced. We didn't have any tools or bolts so I just grabbed some rocks and tried to wedge the radiator back in place. I took the radiator cap off to fill the radiator and managed to throw it away thinking it was an extra rock! We managed to limp to the next town and found a radiator shop. They were able to solder the slice, gave us a replacement cap...and only charged us \$5!

We made it to Flagstaff with no further problems. Several families were car-pooling the 150 miles to Kayenta to help a Navajo pastor add on to his church. Sixty five miles out of Flagstaff our bus engine began knocking. I pulled over and discovered a rod bearing had gone bad and needed fixing before it came loose and ruined the entire engine. It was Memorial Day week-end and the next town was just a small desert town. One of the families drove me there and we were surprised to find a repair shop open.

Well, it wasn't really open; the owner was just there and drunk. When I told him we needed an under-sized rod bearing for a 1954 GMC 270 engine he just smiled and said,

“See that box of parts over there. If you can find anything there that fits, you can have it.”

We were pessimistic but happy to find a complete set of rod

bearings exactly like we needed. So we went back to the bus, sanded the rod journal, re-installed the rod and drove very slowly to Kayenta. This was just an emergency fix; we knew the engine had to be repaired. A master mechanic was in our group and recommended that we could put in a larger engine easily and he happened to know where one was for sale for \$50. I was rejoicing, and when I told Ray about this blessing he said,

“Yeah, I heard and I also heard God tell me to buy it for you.”

Praising God for this double blessing and having a local school teacher offer his garage made it look like our troubles were over. Mike and I went to work, took the old engine out and happily rolled it over a cliff. Bad news, though. Mike discovered serious problems in the bigger engine and we were now in a fix. I had to order a factory engine for \$450 and we didn't have any money. We had to have it and they offered 30-day terms, same as cash, so I rationalized that we were not in debt for 30 days and ordered it.

Annette was not a happy camper when she heard this. She chided me,

“We agreed we would not borrow and would completely trust the Lord!”

I stood my ground and she pretty much stormed out into the desert to work off her frustration and pray. It wasn't very long before she came hustling back. It seemed that a pack of wild dogs found her and she took that as a “get over it” message from the Lord.

The work on the church was finished so everyone packed up to leave. A missionary couple from the Hopi Reservation showed

up and asked if we could take over their mission until full time missionaries arrived, probably three months or so. We agreed, so Annette and two other families headed there, leaving Mike and me to finish the work on our bus.

It was a very difficult, greasy and depressing job. Mike was so frustrated at one point he just sat in the middle of the garage and wept. We finally got it ready to drive and a fellow we knew drove up and said,

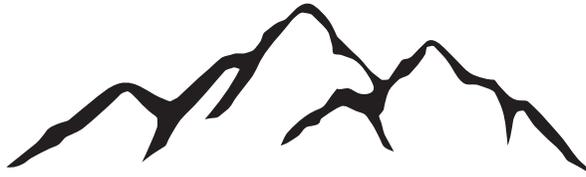
“I have had this check made out for two weeks and it has been sitting on my bureau. Heard you were here working on your bus so thought I would stop by and give it to you. Sorry to be so slow getting it to you.”

I didn't know whether to hug him or be mad at him. That \$150 would have really helped us during the repair.

We met up with Annette at the Hopi Mission and she said,

“I was at a prayer meeting this week in Flagstaff and a lady came up to me saying that she had just sold her home and God had told her to give the tithe from that sale to us. It is \$450!”

We paid for the engine before the bill came due!



14

THE CONFUSING ROAD TO BEULAH

I began this book of our journey with the Hopi Mission and Floyd so you are now up to that point in our journey. Now we move toward Albuquerque, Hosanna and Faith Comes by Hearing.

But first you need to know about how Bible listening in a person's heart language was birthed in my heart.

There was a knock at the mission door and there stood the President of a village that was a few miles south of Moenkopi. He was in his seventies and made a special trip to see me saying,

“I have heard you speak and I believe you are a man of God. I want to tell you some of the history of my people.”

He went on to say that there was a prophecy in their religion that predicted white men would come and tell them of one who comes from the East and brings peace. In the 1800s, two missionaries came and told them of Jesus Christ. The tribe accepted Him as the fulfillment of their historic prophecy and burned all of their religious symbols. We were now in one of the villages almost one hundred years later and Christianity had become a minor religion.

In the mission, there was a large quantity of Hopi New Testaments that seemed to be in new condition but simply stored away. When we asked some of the elders of the tribe why these Bibles were stored and not in the hands of the people, we were told,

“Many, many years ago there was a revival among our people with a widespread commitment to Jesus Christ. Missionaries came and translated the New Testament into our language and printed copies for us. But we could not read our language so people began using the books for offerings and in tribal ceremonies. The missionaries said this was not correct and took the books away from us and stored them in the mission.”

I was stunned. Many of my Navajo friends referred to Christianity as, “White man’s religion.” All of a sudden things made sense. The Bible commonly used among the Navajos was in English! In their minds, then, Jesus spoke English, not Navajo. This made Him a foreigner.

The revelation for me was:

*People need Scripture in the language they use when praying to God.
Otherwise it is a foreign religion.*

I began asking Christian leaders what would happen if the Bible was present in a revival in a usable form. A historian with the British and Foreign Bible Society answered my question. He pointed out that Bible Society was birthed in the Wales and Wesleyan revivals for the purpose of getting God’s Word to the common people. Those two revivals continue to have impact today.

I didn't know at the time the impact this understanding would have in my future service to our Lord through Hosanna/FCBH. So we continued our journey of faith in the bus, following His leading each day.

Visitors to the Hopi Mission were non-stop from all over world. Mostly it was people seeking spiritual insights through the Hopi religion. Word somehow travelled to a family in Albuquerque and they asked if we would minister at a youth meeting in their home. We agreed, and 75 youth participated. Of course, all I was doing was teaching people how to covet the gifts of the Holy Spirit, so we did that. Like in the hippie community, the Holy Spirit presented Jesus Christ to them through themselves and several notable miracles happened when they prayed for each other.

I didn't like Albuquerque. It was windy, dusty, dry, a national leader in crime per capita and swarming with porn shops. But it was also experiencing an awakening or renewal that was impacting Catholics, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Church of Christ and others. When the replacement Hopi missionaries arrived and we prayed about where we were to go, I was dismayed that we heard,

Albuquerque.

We obeyed, and when we arrived we pulled off on Central Avenue and parked at an RV park in the middle of Nine Mile Hill. I walked the length of the city to try to get some sense of why God would bring us here. So far we had been ministering in rural areas, not cities. Word got around that we were here and soon I was busy ministering mostly in home groups, helping people understand how the Holy Spirit was in their lives and

how He would use them. This went on for about five months and then Annette had a vision. She described it:

“I saw a forested area like a campground. There were cabins and meeting rooms. There were bunk beds – some made of wood others of metal. It is for rest, recreation and teaching.”

In our travels, we had discovered an interesting pattern that in almost every place we stopped there was someone who had recently had some major spiritual awakening; and had sold their house or business and bought a place for people to come to for rest and teaching. So we knew something was happening but how were we to be involved?

A call came from Flagstaff,

“Jerry, there is a campground for sale in the mountains and it was offered to our church but we don’t want it. Would you be interested in it? It is 13 acres, in the national forest, with cabins and large meeting rooms. They want \$1,000 down and a total price of \$35,000.”

Annette and I agreed to go over and take a look. It was what Annette had seen, right down to metal and wood bunk beds! It was a turnkey operation, complete with bedding and silverware for 150 people. To make it even more certain, a lady had slipped a \$1,000 check in my pocket the evening before, so we had the down payment. Randy and Mary agreed to be caretakers on the property until our kids got out of school in a month and we could move over. We wrote the vision down as it related to this property and let people in Albuquerque know what our plans were.

It was going to be a place where tired Christians could come and be refreshed. We would have a teaching library of books, cassette tapes and videos. It would be free and there would not be a schedule for the restees.

My imagination went wild. I had no roots growing up and now my family could plant ourselves and invest ourselves totally in this ministry and property for the rest of our lives. I had visions of my sons in Pendleton shirts, chopping wood and hunting in the woods. Finally, the day came for us to move to the property, which we had named "Hosanna." We arrived, but were stunned when three men in business suits drove up and brusquely said,

"Who are you people and what are you doing on our property?!"

"Your property? It is our property; we bought it from a church group."

They produced papers proving that they were the owners. I called my land developer friend who had helped us with the paperwork for our purchase. He called the sellers and learned that they had "lost" our down payment and sold the property to someone else. Bud said we had a legal deal and would win in a lawsuit. Did we want him to set this in motion for us? I said I needed to seek the Lord about this.

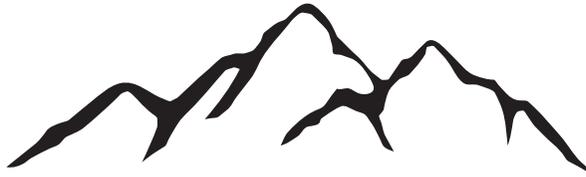
When I asked the Lord what I was to do I got a clear message not to sue them.

They are your brothers and I don't want you to go to court over this with brothers.

"My brothers!? I don't think so."

But finally I yielded and told Bud we would walk away. We were completely confused. How could this be? Annette had a clear vision of this place! What about the \$1,000 confirmation? I had to get away to clear my head, so we drove the bus to Mississippi to visit my folks and try to make some sense of what just happened. We spent two weeks there and I finally decided to go back to our faith journey.

(Eighteen years later, in 1990, the Lord gave our son, Clay, and my wife Annette another vision and Beulah was born. It is a variation of the Flagstaff vision and has become a valuable resource for Hosanna/Faith Comes by Hearing and place of rest and refreshment for thousands of God's people. More information about this can be seen online at www.beulahretreat.com.)



15

A DIVERSE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY

We drove to Tyler, Texas and parked by a lake. Doors opened for ministry and some neat things happened. But I started getting calls from Albuquerque that Hosanna could be there. I argued that Albuquerque didn't even come close to Annette's vision so I dismissed their invitation. But they persisted. Steve and his wife and their four children had joined up with us in their travel trailer. Steve was an electronics technician and had helped set up a Christian tape lending library in California, so I thought maybe what was to happen in Albuquerque would be a library that would be his ministry. With that in mind, I agreed to start a lending library there.

It was important that it would be inter-denominational so I suggested twelve mature men from different denominations to serve as a board of directors. I didn't want it to be personality or founder controlled so I refused to be on the board. I wanted a ministry controlled by mature, church-going family men. Seven men agreed to serve, and Dr. Wayne donated a small cassette tape duplicator and 200 blank tapes. We had no location so he opened his nice home and allowed us to get established over the next six weeks.

We made the rule that philosophically we would operate like a

public library. Our only conditions for a teaching to be in the library were:

1. It must raise up Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
2. It must not create division in the Body of Christ.
3. There must be interest expressed in hearing it.

We began with 350 teachings. We charged a one-time fee of \$3.50 for a membership that entitled a person to borrow three tapes and exchange them as often as they wanted. The library took off immediately and it wasn't very long before we were lending hundreds of tapes to people from the full spectrum of denominations.

Our bus was parked back up on Nine Mile Hill and I would go for walks in the evening, asking the Lord for direction. We had a view of the city at night that gave me the impression I could stretch out my arms and hold the city. One night as I was doing this, and praying, I heard these words,

Bring My church together and make disciples.

I laughed out loud! There were 250 churches in the city and I was a penniless, no brand, unknown, living in an old bus, driving an old car. Who was I to "Bring His church together!?"

Then I was given a visual image and I was given to understand,

You provide a low-keyed, non-threatening place where people can come and get teachings and the Bible. Bringing My church together is not a physical situation. When My people think the same, they are one.

We moved into an office with about 300 square feet. Dr. Wayne

saw that the single duplicator wasn't keeping up so he bought a five-station unit. Now we were in business! Within weeks we needed more space and 900 square feet came available in the same building. We needed catalogs printed but they were pretty expensive. Annette decided to help by volunteering at a print shop for several months to learn basic printing. We then bought a small copier and started printing in another office we rented in the same building.

People began asking us to duplicate their tapes, so we charged a small mark-up to help them. A professional counselor joined us to run the library, and a trained secretary, who could type more words per minute than I thought possible, came on board. We now had a team of trained professionals, all willing to live by faith.

This was in 1972 and cassette tapes were in their infancy. Prices were high and quality was low. Tape recorders were pretty primitive and coupled with the poor tape quality we were experiencing a lot of damaged tapes. So I began thinking about forming a Christian ministry purchasing cooperative that would increase our purchasing quantity and give us some ability to influence price and quality.

But how were we to get churches and other ministries to voluntarily work together? I couldn't think of any other way than price advantage. Being idealistic, naïve and fresh from all of our answers to prayer, I decided to charge churches and other ministries one penny above what we paid for tapes.

Even though our own volume was low there was a revolution taking place that was increasing tape volume quickly. People from all over the place wanted to do a tape lending ministry

like ours. So we made up a master library, which had the KJV and RSV complete audio Bibles and then a selection of teaching tapes that made a total of 500 master tapes. We printed generic catalogs in large quantities so that all a person had to do was add their cover and they were in the tape lending ministry.

So this is what it looked like:

500 master tapes

100 catalogs

100 blank tapes and labels

One single duplicator

Within months, there were over 100 libraries set up from Puerto Rico to Hawaii! They all needed blank tape so this gave us some bargaining power. As one of the most successful examples, a Colorado couple set up their library in their basement and was distributing 50,000 tapes a year.

God gave us favor and we were able to buy tape for 19 cents, which means that we sold them for 20 cents. Suppliers were selling blank tape to ministries and churches for 75 cents and poor quality. Within months, without any advertising, we became one of the top ten buyers of cassette tape in the US. We saved our Lord's church millions of dollars and were able to bargain and give them the best quality.

We had quite an assortment of people volunteering. A uniformed state policeman came in one day to borrow some tapes and when two of our volunteers saw him, they jumped out the back window and ran! They had outstanding "before Christ" warrants for their arrest.

We only served churches and ministries and operated under a principle of family and trust. We accepted checks from all over the US and delivered their product. We were doing over a million dollars a year when the following story took place.

One of the suppliers was visiting with me and began talking about how the church and pastors were the worst for paying their bills. I had heard that before and was mentally going along with his conversation when I heard the Lord ask,

How many bad checks do you have?

We had been handling hundreds of checks and I only had five! I stopped the fellow and pulled open the drawer and showed him the checks. Two of them were going to be made good, two were not because the churches had burned down and one for \$70 was from a con man. I asked the man if this was typical. He was dumb-founded, but I had physical proof, and a lot of it, that pastors, churches and ministries paid their bills. Even banks that have all kinds of requirements still have almost a 2% bad debt ratio! These five checks were nothing in the total money we had handled.

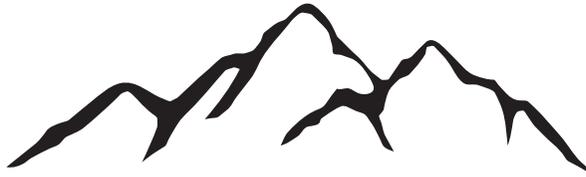
Then the Lord decided to take this further with me,

The church is My bride. I do not appreciate someone lifting up her skirts to expose her nakedness.

Selah!

We grew like a weed in fertile soil – Printed a newspaper with reporters. Established a video library with portable equipment to do showings in homes and churches. Developed a team of professional commercial artists and typesetting. Onsite recording, duplication and sales of tapes at Christian conferences. Full-

time team travelling the US, showing a multimedia production of Alleluia. Developed a free booking agency for Christian artists so they could expose and expand their ministries outside their contacts. Supplied blank tape, tape recorders and high speed duplicators for churches and ministries at cost.



TOUGH BUSINESS/MINISTRY LESSONS

There was no real plan to this. We didn't know what we were other than we were to serve the church. Things went fine until 1977. When we began, the churches paid cash with their order and we did the same with our suppliers. As we grew, the suppliers said it messed up their accounting to have cash with orders so would we mind letting them invoice us and then pay them. This sounded ok, so we agreed.

What happened was that we were growing so fast that the increase in cash flow covered up the fact that we were actually operating at a 5% loss. It took five years for that to hit us in the face. By then we were not paying when invoiced but were actually past due. When we finally got all of the facts gathered, we had a negative net worth of \$176,000 and suppliers were pressing us to pay before they would ship to us.

I can't express how horrible I felt. All of us had sacrificially donated our services to this ministry, saved the church millions of dollars and blessed hundreds of thousands of believers through the lending libraries. How could this be? How could Annette and I be led to towns we didn't know existed, minister to people who had seen us in a vision two years before meeting us, on and on? Why didn't I hear the Lord about this? I didn't want to do

this ministry in the first place and thought it was for Steve, but he had left after two years. I just wanted to travel and live by faith and minister to people, not do business or be a Christian businessman!

The suppliers were pressing hard to collect the past due amounts and I was very concerned that if we got put into collections there would be an involuntary bankruptcy. Some of my friends had loaned the ministry money. I couldn't let them or the suppliers, who had been more than generous to us, take a loss.

I had read in business books that organizations in trouble typically terminated the senior person. So I suggested to one of the key suppliers that I was going to ask my board to fire me with the idea that it would send a message of change to the suppliers and give the board some breathing room. He almost shouted at me,

“If you are not there the suppliers will immediately put Hosanna into collections. The only reason they have given the pricing, and terms, to Hosanna is that they have confidence in you.”

Confidence in me!? How could that be? I had really messed up by not understanding financial management and created a real problem for everyone. It was my leadership and I was to blame. And yet there was a board of directors who were experienced in business, so you might ask why they didn't step in. Good question.

The board members were all affected by the spiritual renewal taking place in Albuquerque. These men had served the Lord in their churches for years, but when they had a personal experience with the Holy Spirit they became very open to experiences

they had never imagined. Serving as a director of a dynamic, spiritually alive ministry gave them a sense of being involved in an experiment. There was truth in that sense, but we did need their practical business advice.

So what happened? There was a doctrine promoted by one of the more vocal directors called “prayer vote.” Over time, the board slowly moved toward making all ministry decisions using this system. One of the directors even said that if he made decisions like this on his job he would be terminated. Here is how it worked:

They would pray over a decision such as hiring a new person. They would not do any interviewing or look at their application. Their prayer would go something like this,

“Lord, if you want us to hire this person please give us a unanimous yes or no.”

They would wait and then poll the board. Remember, I wanted the ministry to be outside-controlled so I was not on the board and was submitted to their decisions. Some of their decisions didn’t work out so I would try to give them feedback so they could learn and adjust what they were doing. They ignored the feedback. There was another doctrine of submission and headship being promoted, which was also impacting the authority the directors felt they had to exercise to be in obedience to the Lord.

I was disappointed that the board, with the exception of Dr. Wayne, was going to choose voluntary bankruptcy and walk away. Then things came to a head. I was the board secretary so I kept minutes of their meetings. I came to a regularly scheduled meeting and was handed the minutes of a secret meeting to which I was not invited and Dr. Wayne had not attended for

some reason. This was the resolution,

“Lord, we ask you for a unanimous decision whether Jerry should continue with the ministry.”

A unanimous “no” was received.

I read these minutes as they proceeded with the business on the current meeting agenda. Finally, I interrupted them and said,

“Brothers, I am a human being and have emotions. I am reading that you are firing me. I would appreciate it if you would talk to me about this.”

Dr. Wayne’s voice cut in,

“That vote came straight out of the pit of hell!”

The board became very quiet and decided that they should take another vote in a regular meeting with everyone present. So they took another prayer vote and got a “yes,” reversing their previous vote. I loved these men, but they had been misled in their desire to learn how to walk in the Spirit. I solemnly spoke to them,

“Brothers, I have been giving you feedback about using the prayer vote but you have ignored the results. With this vote and re-vote regarding me, you have drawn a line in the sand. I will respect any practical business advice you have for me, but from this time forward do not come to me with your spiritual leadings. I will not accept them.”

The board needed to change so I discussed various possibilities with our law firm, ranging from a board made up entirely of

employees or a blend of non-employees (outside) with employees (inside). But even these options would not prevent a recurrence of what we had just experienced over the first five years. After much thought and prayer we developed a system that provided an appeal process that had the authority to discipline or replace board members.

With the leadership matters resolved, I needed to get on with the gritty part of getting the ministry on the path to recovery. I got a supply of 3 x 5 cards and listed each ministry we had going on a separate card. There were a total of 37 ministries. Then came the agonizing process of categorizing each one into one of three classifications:

Essential

Optional

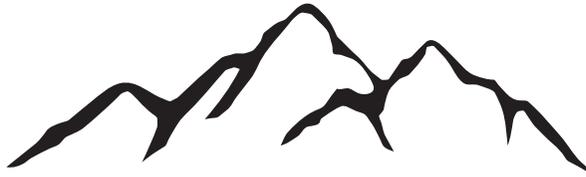
Disposable

It was heartbreaking to have to stop ministries that were very special and close to my heart but were not financially viable. I found myself being forced to make decisions based entirely on financial benefit. We had to pay the bills, period. I was so disillusioned that I purposed to do business, get the bills paid and close the ministry. We changed our pricing on blank tape from the penny mark-up to cost plus 25%. Twenty-four of the staff had to leave, which left twelve people. It took four years of struggle to get the balance sheet from negative to zero.

How did it happen? We began aggressively calling churches and ministries to sell them blank tape and labels. We also asked customers to help “save our service,” thinking we had saved them a lot of money at our expense and perhaps they would help

keep us going. Enough money to keep us crippling along.

One of our suppliers was a tremendous blessing because he believed in our ministry. He gave us a personal line of credit of five hundred thousand dollars to purchase blank tape and put fifty thousand dollars of equipment on our floor that we paid for as we sold it. It was amazing and humbling to be so trusted after feeling like such a failure.



17

FAITH COMES BY HEARING

One of the turning point projects we did just before the 1977 financial reality hit was an experiment with Romans 10:17: “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”

Here is how it worked:

Pastors of five churches of various denominations and in different parts of the US agreed to challenge their congregations to listen through the entire New Testament once a month for three months. We would loan them, free of charge, the audio New Testaments that they needed. All the pastor had to do was fill out a form weekly, showing changes in attendance, baptism, counseling load, participation and spiritual level.

Every church was revolutionized! New ministries sprung up, family relationships healed, husbands came to Christ, and, though we didn’t consider giving, they all reported giving increased. Then we had our four years of recovery and this program was set aside.

By 1982, we had recovered financially and decided to reawaken the Faith Comes by Hearing (FCBH) program, only this time we would sell them rather than loan them. We had mastered our recording down to twelve tapes. We didn’t want to make another financial mistake, but needed a price that was hard to

refuse and one that pastors didn't feel like they were selling for us from the pulpit.

You might ask why we didn't take the traditional marketing route through Christian bookstores. The spiritual answer was that I felt God had clearly instructed me to work through the pastors so that the pastor and church got the credit for the program. The business reason was that studies showed that only 3% of Christians visit a Christian bookstore in a year.

I decided a dozen eggs, twelve apostles, twelve tapes...let's try \$12, a dollar a tape with a lifetime unconditional guarantee and see what happens. At that time, an audio New Testament on tape was selling in the range of \$39.95-\$49.95.

In July, the young man managing the sales department came to me and said,

“I was out praying yesterday and I felt the Lord tell me that we would sell twenty thousand New Testaments this year, two hundred thousand the next year, a million the year after that and then three million.”

I responded,

“Well, we will see because that is going to be easy to test. We have a history of selling five thousand New Testaments a year.”

At the end of the year we had sold 19,400 New Testaments! That got my attention, but that could have just been an entry-market situation, so we would see what happened the next year. Well, at the end of the next year we had sold 275,000 New Testaments! We had rented space all around us and could hardly walk down our aisles. We even had inventory stored in any bathroom stalls

that were not needed. We needed to move into a larger space because it looked like the million New Testaments might be a reality.

The Lord provided a 36,000-square-foot warehouse, built in 1954, that was wide-open space and perfect for us to develop to fit our needs. The lease was extremely favorable, so we moved. The heart of the worker family was incredible. Everyone pitched in to put up walls and set up work stations, and still kept our Bible tape operation going full blast.

That year we sold 774,000 New Testaments and seemed to plateau at that level over the next few years. We had 56 people calling pastors and were talking to 500 pastors daily! We sold Bible tapes to 137,000 churches. But was it really the same program that we did back in 1977? I kept referring back to that five-church test and the revolution that occurred in each one of those churches. I kept looking in the news for revival breaking out. After all, if these 137,000 churches were having the same results, we should have a nationwide revival! We didn't. I got frustrated and got some people on the phone to call the churches to see what was happening. They discovered that we were reaching the 20% of the congregation that were already active and reading their Bibles. But, our original five-church test had reached the *entire* congregation and the most significant changes had come from the 80% who had been inactive.

I became convinced that we were no longer presenting a program to bring revival through God's Word, but had become a sales organization selling the Bible. We went through a difficult refocusing to re-develop the 1977 Bible listening program which we named, "Faith Comes by Hearing (FCBH)." It took six months of intensive hands-on training and fixing to get the

program where it was reaching the 80% non-active church members.

I'm going to switch gears a little here and talk about compensation. Remember we started out by everyone living by faith. When we were about three years old, a law firm asked if a law student could do their thesis on Hosanna. We were complimented by this request, and agreed. The law student discovered that even though Hosanna was a religious 501(c) (3) nonprofit, we were required to pay minimum wage if our annual revenue was more than \$275,000. We were way above that and thus subject to minimum-wage law.

I vigorously objected that this violated our religious freedom and wanted to challenge this law. I should be allowed to serve God financially in a religious ministry as I wanted to. The law firm said it would literally take a narrow exception by Congress. That it would take five years to process and had little chance of success. I wanted to take it to Congress but then realized I would be focused on that battle and not ministry. If Jesus were to come for His bride during that time would He be pleased with what I was doing? I didn't think so, so I dropped it and we all started receiving minimum wage.

After a couple of years of minimum wage, I was walking to Hosanna and the Lord said,

I want to be in charge of the wage system at Hosanna but the federal government is.

What do You mean? How do I put You in charge?

Pay what it costs to live in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

How do I do that?

Get a balanced budget form and work the formula backwards.

Down to the public library I went and looked at several examples. I got Larry Burkett's Christian budget and compared his percentages and categories to secular budgets and found his budget was comparable and included tithe. Housing and food made up 51% of expenses so I used them for the foundation calculation. The number of family members determined number of bedrooms needed and food. Once we had that expense amount then the rest of the categories were easy to calculate. The board of directors approved this change and we had this system in place for six years.

There are some humorous and some very wonderful stories to be told. One single fellow married a woman with three children. When he applied for a loan at the bank the loan officer asked about his 300% increase in pay. Had he been promoted? No. Had he changed jobs? No. What happened? "I got married."

Then there was the wife of a Methodist pastor. They had an adopted teenage daughter. The pastor had a massive heart attack and was unable to work. Immediately his wife's pay increased to head of family level and they were able to continue living a reasonable life.

This seemed very biblical to me. Adam and Eve gathered according to family size. The Israelites gathered manna and quail by family size. The land of Canaan was divided by family size.

Then one day notification came from the EEOC that a class-action suit was filed against Hosanna on the basis of discrimination against married women. Our system recognized the able-bodied man as the primary wage earner, the head of

household. A woman married to an able-bodied man was paid at the single person's level. She would receive head-of-household-level pay if her husband was physically unable to work.

It only takes one person to file a class-action law suit. In this case, one of our married women who had four children was married to a man who was earning minimum wage as a dishwasher. She was being paid at single person level. A man working next to her doing the same job also had four children and was being paid at head-of-household level. Apparently, he liked to show off his check to her and it finally just made her plain mad, so she filed with the EEOC. This finally involved one hundred women, the majority of whom didn't want to be involved but were drug in involuntarily.

It is a long story but it was clear we had to settle this and made arrangements with the EEOC for payment and a revised wage system subject to EEOC approval. I hear people say that the government is out to get religious non-profits, and that may be some ministries' experience, but my experience with the EEOC, IRS, New York and California tax authorities is that they are not out to get "us." They are required to follow up on complaints and have to do so within the rules and law of their agency.

Back to Bible tapes. We were in the process of recording the NIV New Testament, but our primary distribution was the Alexander Scourby-reading of the KJV and RSV. Over the years, there had been numerous people claiming to have exclusive rights to that recording, but our law firm always came back saying it was not copyrighted and in the public domain.

On our way back from our annual family water-skiing trip to Lake Powell, I played with the fantasy of relocating the ministry

near the lake in Page, Arizona. When I came into the office, I found a letter from our law firm,

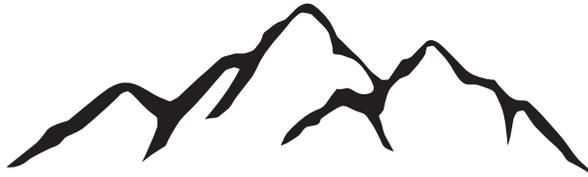
“You might want to consider moving to another state due to state property rights laws. By the way, I will be on vacation for two weeks.”

“What!?” What did he mean? Later in the day I was served with a letter from the Attorney General which essentially said,

“New Mexico property rights laws recognize that whoever has possession and owns a recording is protected. To duplicate an audio work that falls into that category is a misdemeanor and to sell it is a felony. This is to notify you to immediately stop and desist these actions.”

All these years our law firm had misread the letters from the holder of the original recording and were thinking the issue was copyright and overlooked state property rights. We had a million tapes duplicated and labeled that we couldn't sell. It was the beginning of summer, during which there was almost no sales activity. In one day, we had lost 80% of our product line! We had 250 people on the payroll, a one-million-dollar computer system and a twenty-year lease on the facility! I broke out in a sweat.

What Satan means for evil our Lord can turn to good. It may take a lot of sweat and tears but if we listen and obey Him, and have a dedicated team, it can work out. We scrambled to get rights to some other recordings and accelerated the NIV recording that was already in progress. We took this experience as a lesson to not use famous or well-known people in our recordings, and have clear agreements with text holders and readers of what belongs to us.



18

TWO LOCKS

In this frenzy of recording, Annette presented the idea of doing a highly dramatized recording for kids. We had done over seventy children’s stories on tapes and books, so we had a good idea of how to pull this off. She did Mark and Revelation. We gave it to parents to get their input and soon discovered the adults preferred the “kids” version and just took it over.

Soon leaders from various parts of the world heard our dramatized recording and insisted that we must do this type of recording in their languages. They argued,

“Americans can read, but over half of our people cannot and will never be able to read. The only way they will be able to have God’s Word is if they can listen to it.”

This was dramatically driven home by reports we received from Haiti. We sent some Haitian Creole recordings of Mark to Haiti with a YWAM team. They reported back that pastors who received these tapes wept. When the team asked why they were weeping, the pastors explained,

“We cannot read our language and can barely read or understand Spanish. We listen to radio preachers for our sermon material, but it is in Spanish. So many times we

just repeat what we heard but don't really understand. We now have God's Word in a form we can understand and in our spoken language. This is why we weep."

This was a powerful reminder of my experiences among the Navajo and Hopi people.

Back to the matter of working out recordings in potentially hundreds of languages. We had spent thousands of dollars on our sound track. We couldn't do that for every language. But the pressure increased so much that we had to do something. We carefully analyzed our sound track and decided we could neutralize it to fit under most languages. The music is not the Word of God; it just provides some sense of mood, like a movie sound track. We did an African language and it worked!

Requests began coming in from all over the world, which led to the creation of digital recording and electronic scripting. Service centers were set up in strategic locations in different countries and teams of nationals were trained and equipped to do recordings in remote villages. These recordings were in the languages of the poorest of the poor, which meant there was no economic return; so we had to work out some way for people to be able to listen to them.

We landed on the biblical example of when King Josiah was notified that the lost book of the law had been found. He gathered all of the people, had it read to them and then interpreted. The Faith Comes by Hearing listening group concept was born! We would give one audio New Testament to a village/church leader if they would commit to gather the village and listen for 30 minutes, followed by discussion. The results were astounding! One of the side benefits to this method is that it left the village

right side up. What does that mean? In most villages the elders cannot read. The usual church-planting system would train literate young men to lead the church. This turned the authority structure in the village upside down. Listening left the elders in their recognized authority position.

One of my favorite examples of a listening group was in a Konkomba village:

The village gathered under a tree to listen to the story of the demoniac and the pigs. When the pigs ran into the water and died, the villagers stopped the listening and began asking questions.

“Did Jesus know the demons were going to go into the pigs?”

“Yes,” someone answered. “They asked His permission and He granted it.”

“Did He recompense the village?”

“It doesn’t say that He did.”

“Why would He do such an evil thing to the village?”

In their culture, the 2,000 pigs represented all of the community’s wealth. Jesus had just destroyed that village’s economy! Heated discussion broke out for a long time but finally one of the village elders stood up and said,

“We have a man like that demoniac in our village don’t we?”

Everyone nodded and grunted in agreement.

“We would rather that he die than even one of the animals, isn’t that right?”

Everyone agreed.

“We think Jesus was showing us that one man’s soul is more valuable than the economy of an entire village.”

Holy smoke! I had been told that Christianity in Africa was a mile wide and an inch deep. This conclusion was a whole lot deeper than an inch! What this showed us was that if people were allowed to interact with the audio Scripture in their spoken language they would come up with rich and deep truths. This has been proven by thousands of reports from listening groups all over the world.

These recordings and Bible listening programs must have alarmed the devil because we began to experience third world kinds of spiritual activity. Most middle class Americans are unaware of this type of warfare and are not well prepared to identify and confront it. Many of these types of attacks are ho-hum to missionaries, but would be book material for the average middle-class American church member.

My favorite is Janet, one of our managers. She is a lovely genuine lady and decided to sponsor and actively work on the Haitian Creole recording for Haiti. The recording should have taken three months or so, but ended up taking two years due to illness, conflict and all kinds of obstacles. Sometime in the process, Janet began experiencing pain in various parts of her body. The doctors could find nothing wrong. When I heard of it I asked

Janet,

“If you were a missionary in Haiti and started having these pains what would you think?”

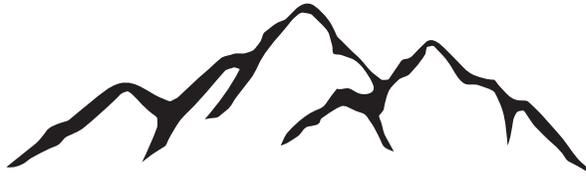
She said,

“Well, I would suspect that there was some voodoo person out in the trees sticking pins in a doll that represented me!”

I explained that the demonic forces are not physically restricted to a geographic area. I used this analogy,

“If you went to Los Angeles and insulted a major gang and then drove back to Albuquerque don’t you think they would take down your license plate number, find your address and come to Albuquerque to get even?”

This has been a real life lesson for people working in this ministry. Although they work in middle-class America, through our language recordings and listening groups we will experience third world spiritual warfare.



19

PRAYER LEADS TO TECHNOLOGY BREAKTHROUGHS

By 1995, the success of this program was straining our ability to fund all of the needed audio Bibles. I had not allowed any fundraising, so we had been paying for all of the recordings and free audio Bibles with proceeds from sales to the American churches and donations by the worker family. Our son, Morgan, finally overcame my objection to fundraising when he pointed out that our overhead was being paid from the sales, so donations would not be for our benefit, but would benefit the poor and illiterate needing audio Bibles. Morgan had virtually single-handedly developed the recording centers, partnerships with Bible Societies and Wycliffe. He travelled extensively internationally, and he and Mari, his wife, hosted international leaders in their home. By doing this, he had developed worldwide relationships that gave him a wealth of experience to share with people who might be interested in the Bible cause.

We met with a very Godly and qualified professional fundraising consultant to learn how to do fundraising. He told us that “people give to people” and went on to explain that a ministry was typically represented to donors by the president, founder or chairman of the board. Our chairman would not be interested at all in meeting with donors. I was (and am) the president and

founder but was sixty years old when this discussion took place. I reasoned that my age made it a poor long-term investment for the ministry and suggested that because of Morgan's extensive contacts and his excellent communication skills that we present him as the face and voice. We agreed and this has worked very well. It may not have been as effective if he hadn't been my son and his willingness to represent me as the visionary and his whole-hearted expression of unity and personal commitment to the Bible cause.

Since the birth of the ministry, I had felt the Lord wanted us to honor His church and not compete with the church for donations from its individual members. I was comfortable with asking pastors to take up offerings from their congregations for the Bible cause, but was adamantly opposed to us contacting church members directly. This presented a serious handicap because the commonly accepted fundraising method is to rent mailing lists and do mass mailings to individuals.

So, who could Morgan contact? Foundations, businesses, ministry partners, pastors and wealthy individuals? At first, he and our consultant felt like they were taking on a task with one hand tied behind their backs, but over time this has proven to be the right path for our ministry.

Fast forward to 2004. Audio technology was rapidly on the move from cassette tapes to CDs to MP3s and we started getting requests for all three formats even in minor languages. It was creating all kinds of confusion and going to drive us crazy. During this time a pastor had contacted me and said the Lord had indicated that the FCBH staff should have three days of prayer and fasting.

Three days of prayer and fasting!?! We are not a church. We are a blend of many denominations and can work in agreement together because our mission is the pure Word of God. There are also several health situations that would be life threatening if a person fasted. I couldn't see how to do this, so let it simmer for almost three months. There was no real object in this; we were just supposed to do it and see what would happen.

We had a meeting and I announced that we would do a voluntary three days of fasting and prayer. I said,

“We are not a church and probably don't agree on what fasting entails. Let's each do it our own way and leave the next person alone. Do it as it fits you and don't impose your system on someone else.”

We set aside prayer time and one day turned all the phones off until noon for dedicated prayer and seeking the Lord. On the third day, some of the staff went from department to department praying and anointing each doorway with oil. I was praying in my office and heard,

There is confusion in the audio playback systems. You need a dedicated playback system for the Bible.

That was sure frustrating! Sure there was confusion and we had been working for almost ten years unsuccessfully with an electronics group who had developed a digital system, but their quality was unacceptable. I didn't know what else to do but send an internal email to the management team telling them what I had heard.

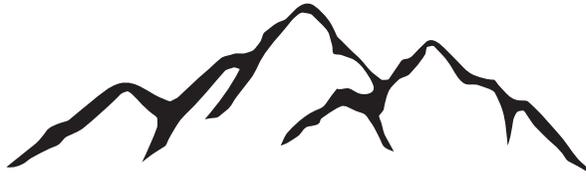
Two weeks later, our engineer, Mike, walked into my office with a device he had created. He turned it on and it played the

dramatized Bible perfectly! I was overwhelmed and wept. We named it the “Proclaimer.” He designed it so that the poor would not have any cost to run it and it would be virtually indestructible. It has a rechargeable battery capable of being recharged more than a thousand times and could run for fifteen or more hours on a single charge. He provided for a built-in solar charging panel, hand-cranked charger and plug-in for electricity when it is available. The fidelity was so clear that a crowd of over 300 people could comfortably hear the dramatized Bible.

Then Bob entered this process. He had coordinated electronics manufacturing, and when he heard about Mike’s invention he offered to give us a hand. So he came and filled a white board with all the things that had to be done. It was intimidating but with Bob’s experience we could do it. Then he dropped the development cost shoe! Just to get the ability to manufacture the first unit could take up to \$100,000! That dashed our hopes of proceeding because we didn’t have any money like that available. Then Bob finished his sentence with,

“But don’t worry about that, I will cover the development cost.”

We were overwhelmed with this confirmation that Mike’s invention could go forward and maybe we would actually have a dedicated playback device for the audio Bible. As the development process was nearing completion we were told that we needed to order a minimum of 2,000 units. This was going to take \$500,000! God spoke to a local foundation and they gave the money to produce these. This was the largest donation in their history.



20

THE CHURCH IS FAITHFUL

Then Troy joined us. He had been in the digital telecom business and God had spoken to him to get back into ministry. We had been selling Bible tapes and CDs to the church to do their FCBH 40-day listening programs. I was bothered that some pastors viewed this as selling over the pulpit and wouldn't do the program, and we were not getting as much saturation in the church congregations because of pricing.

I began asking our CFO to do some projections about what it would take to give the church members a free audio New Testament and ask the pastor to simply take up a general offering and send it to us. The cost of the tapes and CDs made this impossible. Troy was familiar with MP3 compression technology and came up with the idea of fitting the complete New Testament on one disc. Our CFO guardedly conceded that that might work.

“Ok, then let's try a pilot program and see what happens.”

We gave each church specialist 100 churches for a total of 1,500 churches. The plan was to send a free MP3 for every adult, teen and child four years or older. In exchange, the pastor agreed to challenge the people to listen with him through the entire New

Testament over the next 40 days. During that time the pastor would take up a voluntary offering to help with our international outreach. This was a big risk because we didn't know if the offering would cover our average church cost of \$500 to give these free. There was also the question about lag time from the time we shipped the materials to the time we received any money back.

So we held our breath and launched the experiment.

We were barely two weeks into the test when a representative from another major Bible ministry visited and discovered what we were doing. We didn't realize how excited he was until we got word that he had met with leaders of three major denominations and they wanted to do this also. Of course, some of the churches in our 1,500 test were in those denominations.

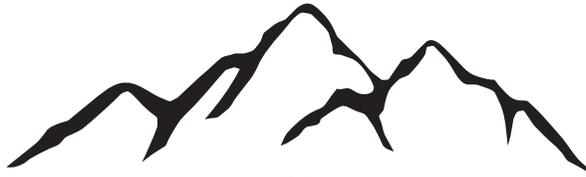
Our church manager came to me and said,

“Well, Jerry, it looks to me like you put the troops on shore and burned the boats! We can't go back to selling so we are committed to free and an offering. The problem is that we haven't even received the first offering so we don't know if this will be successful or not. But we are in a sink or swim situation and will do our best.”

As usual the church proved to be honorable and trustworthy. After six years of doing the free distribution, the church continues to send donations well in excess of our cost, and millions of poor and illiterate people are listening to God's Word. So, in a few years Faith Comes By Hearing went from 80% self-supported through sales to 90% supported by donations.

It turned out to be a good decision as our church revenue

nearly doubled and we were now reaching almost 100% of the congregation, including children. But it was not without pain and anxiety. You would normally have huge turnover of the staff by going through such a radical change, but that didn't happen. Why? Because the staff is committed to the Bible cause and not the delivery system.



21

GET GOD'S WORD TO EVERY PERSON

Sometime around the spring of 2000, I was in prayerful thought and heard,

Get My Word to every person!

This came somewhat as a shock to me because I felt I had a clear mandate to work through the church. These words seemed to expand our mission beyond this. I pondered them for a year, trying to understand fully how they affected what we were doing. I came to understand that we were to continue working with the church, but we were to reach out in new ways to reach every person. How was this to happen?

For more than five years, I had been pointing to the cell phone as the ultimate Bible delivery system. Troy understood the telecom industry, so he began developing a strategy and team to do this. As five of the original developers and I sat in a room bouncing ideas back and forth, I suddenly felt the presence of the Lord and sensed,

The world is being changed in this meeting!

That was a big statement but I thought I was sensing the Lord so I interrupted the meeting and made that declaration to the

group. We then prayed that Wisdom, who was there standing with our Lord at the creation of all material things, Wisdom who cries and yearns to be in mankind, Wisdom as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, would fill all of our minds and give us knowledge and understanding. We prayed that we could create something for the Kingdom of God that went far beyond the current understanding and knowledge in the cell phone digital industry.

I believe that prayer was answered and demonstration of that can be experienced at www.faithcomesbyhearing.com and the Bible.is app on your Smartphone. The 38 years of recording hundreds of major and minor language translations suddenly made sense. Through the Internet and cell phones, the “knowledge of the Lord” could literally cover the earth “as the waters cover the sea!”

I need to back up a little in time to draw this story to its current stage.

In 2005, I was challenged by a major Bible ministry with the idea that there could be enough New Testament translations completed by 2016 to reach 97% of the earth's population in their spoken language. However 50% of the world still cannot and will not be able to read so audio recordings were required to make this a reality. We already had recordings in enough languages to reach 65% of the earth's population, so this 2016 target was not unreasonable to work toward.

FINAL THOUGHTS FROM THE AUTHOR

I want to end this part of my journey with my dream.

In my lifetime, I am hoping we will have the Scriptures available in enough languages that some religious leader can be emboldened to make this public declaration:

“Heavenly Father, Your Word is now available to 97% of the earth’s population in their spoken language in audio and in print. With this knowledge, we are asking You if this is enough to satisfy Jesus’ declaration in Matthew 24:14, ‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.’ Because of this we are presenting You, Heavenly Father, with a formal request to send Your Son for His bride.”

If He comes, then we will rejoice at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If He doesn’t, then we simply go back to work on the remaining 3%.

“Come, Lord Jesus!”

■ GET GOD'S WORD TO EVERY PERSON



Faith Comes By Hearing founders Jerry and Annette Jackson have dedicated their lives to sharing God's Word. They began ministering on Arizona's Hopi and Navajo Reservations in the early 1970s. During that time, they discovered the power of providing the Word of God in audio. The Bible, they realized, is a closed book to those in "oral cultures" who cannot read and who cannot afford to buy a Bible.

Now, more than 40 years later, Faith Comes By Hearing has become the world's leading Audio Bible ministry. This non-denominational ministry offers heart-language New Testaments in more than 600 languages and reaches people in almost every country in the world.

The Jackson's story is a testimony to what God can do through people who are simply willing to do as He asks.

Walking in faith, Jerry Jackson obeyed God's voice as he went from businessman to missionary and later, established the Audio Bible ministry Faith Comes By Hearing.

"I made a decision while still on my knees at the altar. I will live my life as though I was a native in the jungle and I found this book (the Bible) and somehow I could read it. There was no one to tell me what worked and what didn't work, I would just try it all. That is my story and what you will read in this book."