

# **STILL IMPOSSIBLE**

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## FOREWORD

Many friends and readers of my first book “Missionary Impossible” have suggested for more than twenty five years that I should write another book detailing some of the amazing things that God has done since my first missionary journey to the Philippines more than thirty five ago. Most of my ministry was and to some degree continues to be in very remote regions. Some of the unusual stories and events, as well as numbers of the miracles are recorded in the following book. Because diaries of ministry events were not kept only some of the unusual things have been recorded. Twenty five years seem like a lifetime of activity between books; however I have managed to remember enough to make the content interesting for those who appreciate Apostolic and Prophetic ministry in remote areas. Throughout the book I mention some of my co-workers; they will always hold a place of honour in my life, as many have given their lives as a living sacrifice.

Numbers of my friends have passed on to glory; others have matured into great men and women of God. The cultures of my co-workers maybe the same, but their way of doing things as ministers of God has totally changed.

As the stories unfold, be reminded that I have sought to give the reader an honest account of my experiences in very different cultures. One day the children of God will live together in heaven and share heaven's language and culture. Any personal difficulties encountered in these very isolated places were usually viewed as part of the challenging life of a missionary in foreign lands. Evangelism in third world nations has been and always will be my preferred lifestyle until God says otherwise.

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The chapters in this book begin with bold titles, which describe the subject material of the revival stories or unusual miracles that took place at a certain time in a particular nation. Many of the miracles happened in very remote isolated villages. To maximize the story content no blank pages were added to separate chapters.

## GETTING STARTED

It is God's sovereign hunger within that usually has that catalyst affect in those called of God to minister His word in the nations. For me, that missionary call at the age of 17 would not go away; it simmered in the back of my mind like a portion of dinner on the stove. I had not fully answered God's call and I knew I needed to do so. It was an increasing concern for I was a married man with two small children with a western lifestyle and ongoing responsibilities; how was I going to answer God's call.

I had worked so hard for many years to build some luxury around me; I couldn't just walk away from it; or could I. Maybe I would have to do just that. For me it was as if I was a fish gasping for air in a shallow muddy pool. As far as Sunday church attendance and all other mid-week meetings were concerned, I had always been one of the faithful. I had been a church treasurer at one time and I was usually the one who gave a prophecy or had a vision to share in Pentecostal services, but now more than ever I felt I was in a backwater unchallenged and desperate for changes.

Most of my friends thought I was a very blessed hard working man with a wonderful family. I had built a new home, drove a new car and had no debt. What more could a thirty year old man want? However, an inner hunger to be used of God and see His miracle working power consumed me with distracting thoughts.

One Friday, looking forward to returning home after five days of building work in Sydney, I was praying

whilst driving the long five hour drive to Taree. The time seemed to pass a little quicker once I passed Newcastle. Whilst in prayer God reminded me of a young man I had seen at church some weeks earlier. Then God said, “Ask that man and his family to your home for lunch after church”.

The next Sunday he was at church and I did what God had asked of me; welcoming them to my home for lunch. We exchanged pleasantries and within minutes I was hearing of a Pentecostal church in USA that ran summer camp revival meetings for several months every year. Those in attendance came from many nations. Then he said, “They prophesy people into the nations”. I looked at him and said, “Run that by me again; did you say they prophesy people into the nations”? “Yes”, he affirmed. Now he had my full attention. It sounded like the account in Acts 13 where Barnabas and Saul were sent out to preach by prophecy.

That week I had a lot to think about. Dare I take a step of faith and go with the family to this place on the say so of a brother I did not know. I had no money; as I had just purchased a new car two weeks earlier. Not only that but my last week in Sydney had not gone according to plan; a contractor had refused to pay me and I was out of pocket for five days labour, timber and travel expenses. If only I had heard about this Holy Ghost convention three weeks earlier before I purchased my car.

For three days I was undecided and then I decided to sell the car and pay for the tickets to USA. Up to this point in time I had not been a risk taker; after all I

had always lived by the ethic of hard work. I fully understood why the pastor, elders and others thought I was crazy. Everyone who heard about my travel plans and the way in which I was going to finance the tickets voiced opposition. However, when we did take the necessary step of faith, God did go before us and made a way for us just as he had done for the men and women in the Bible who walked by faith.

That week I took my new car back to the car dealer. He also thought I was crazy. He told me I would lose 30% of the purchase price. The amount he gave me was just enough for the family air tickets to Virginia, USA.

The biggest airplane I had flown was a Cessna 172; call sign Echo Juliet Golf. That was the aircraft I used the day I was given my private pilot license. However, on the day of departure we rolled down the runway in a DC 10 bound for Honolulu. This was indeed a step up. Momentarily Sydney would be behind us and only God knew what was ahead.

## **THE CALVARY CAMPGROUND**

We arrived at the Calvary Pentecostal Tabernacle's Campground in Virginia just as the night service was starting. I felt so excited I thought I would burst; I just wanted to put our luggage somewhere and get to my first service. However, there were others ahead of us waiting to check into rooms.

For years I had been "laying-in-state" spiritually, waiting for God's spiritual gifts to be unwrapped. I felt I

was lingering with a sense of spiritual discontentment. I had a burning desire to somehow be released from the usual bindings and be used of the Lord. I was indeed ready for "Launch!"

Most of the meetings were held on the ground floor of a large building. The unusual thing to a carpenter's eye was that this tabernacle had no walls or windows. This building had been built to the slope of the land, the ground being stepped for the second-hand theater seats that were used for seating. There was nothing pretentious here. Much of the construction work to the many buildings on site had been done by missionaries in training.

It only took one meeting to convince me that the enthusiasm shared by all in the sloping tabernacle was what had been missing in my church life. The truth was that I had allowed others to dampen not only my life, but my personal conviction that spiritual release and revival was indeed for every person in every service.

No one needed to convince me further. My course of action was decided after the first service. During the song services, many left their seats and moved to the large leveled area in front of the stage or to the aisles to dance before the Lord. I joined those gathered at the front. There were hundreds of these "crazy" people putting their bodies on the line, as they gave themselves totally to God in dance. Some shook so violently that they appeared to be in a spasm, as the release of the Holy Spirit came into their lives. On occasion others would roll on the floor. I had heard of the "Holy Rollers", but I had never expected to be in the midst of them. At many of the meetings, some were slain in the spirit for hours and on occasion some stayed at

the altar for hours after the lights were switched off. I determined I would attend as many meetings as possible.

For the first time in my life I felt I could be used of God to do missionary work. No longer was my faltering speech a mountain I could not climb. I determined to put yesterday behind me, fast and pray and see what God would do for me in the nations of the world.

I was so blessed at these meetings, that after five weeks I decided to return to Australia. My plan was to sell my home and other possessions and use this money for the airfares necessary to gain further ministry experience in the nations of the world. This was indeed a big step of faith, as I had worked long hours for so many years to save and build the family home. This radical decision bought scorn from many who thought I had been brain-washed.

## **I SOLD THE HOUSE**

When I arrived home I realized the decision I had made was not going to be so easy as the house needed carpentry and painting work done to get it ready for sale.

Just as I finished the work a few days later there was a knock at the door. A man stood there, he told me he had just purchased the Squash courts in town and was looking for a house to buy. He said, "Someone told me this house is for sale." "That's correct", I said. "How much is it"? He asked. I told him the price and the reason I was selling lower than the market valuation. He put his hand out and said, "Sold". I said, "Don't you want to see the house first". "No, I don't have time, it is my lunch hour and I have to get back to work". He gave me his business



card and his solicitor's name and phone number and left. I was stunned. "Wow, talk about a fast moving God."

Now the treasured furniture and other things had to be taken care of. I telephoned an auctioneer and the following Saturday a friend and I carried our valuables out to the front lawn. The auctioneer sold everything, no matter what the price was at the fall of the hammer. Within an hour it was all gone.

## **INTO THE NATIONS**

My first trip was to Israel, as I wanted to stand in the Holy Land. I discovered that many of the factual events of the Bible could be verified geographically. One such site was amazing. It was where Moses had spoken to the rock and water came forth to quench the thirst of millions. The large hole about 12.5cm was at the base of a rock cliff. The surrounding land at that time was desert; there was no sign of trees or vegetation of any kind. From the hole gushed pure water that was flowing downhill towards a large orchard. The farmed lands beyond bloomed because of the water that had continually flowed for thousands of years. Another place of interest was Capernaum. As a teenager I read that Jesus had preached to 5000. How would such a large gathering hear His message without power or a sound system? As I walked near the shoreline of the Sea of Galilee I looked up the hill; there I saw amphitheater shaped land. As I walked to the top I heard two people talking near the seashore. I could hear them so clearly as if I was walking with them. My question was answered; this was how Jesus did it.

Everything written in the Word of God is absolutely true in every respect.

## **TOUR INTO CHINA**

My second trip one month later was to China. I had heard about this trip when I attended the summer time Calvary Camp convention two months earlier. In 1980 most white people could only get a visa to China by joining a tour group that was highly supervised by the Chinese government. I joined the Calvary Tours tour group and thirty of us made our way from Richmond, Virginia to Hong Kong.

On arrival the tour group was booked into the Miramar hotel. I had never seen such opulence in accommodations. The buffet breakfast was beyond imagination.

That day would be the only free day before we entered China, so I set off to get measured for a three piece tailor made suit that some of the group had been speaking of. I certainly didn't talk like some of the other preachers on that tour, but I had to do something about looking like one. I decided on a tailor shop in a very small side street sandwiched among many other businesses. I was hoping I could find this tailor once I returned from mainland China.

That afternoon we all went to a local church for the purpose of picking up some Chinese printed Bibles and gospels of John. In a month it would be Christmas so the Bibles and gospels were wrapped in Christmas paper in small packages and hidden under our clothing in our

suit cases. We hoped that the Christmas wrapping would be a foolproof method of getting the forbidden books across the border into China. We all wrapped our parcels quickly and got ready for evening service. Rev. Heflin our tour leader preached his usual powerful message which was translated by an English missionary who spoke perfect Mandarin.

The next morning we all gathered for our buffet breakfast. Whilst sitting at the table I heard one of the preachers say, “God spoke to me this morning and told me not to take any Bibles into China”. His comment was met with some opposition from many of the group sitting at the table. I was somewhat amazed as I personally had witnessed this brother purchase a huge suitcase the day before for the purpose of taking his Bibles and gospels into China. He was insistent that God had spoken to him.

Later that morning thirty of us passed through the customs at the border. I was number 29 and Bro. Buddy was the last in line. Everyone went through the check point without a hitch, but the young man that checked my luggage found my Christmas wrapped parcels. Tearing open the first gift wrapped parcel he found a Bible and immediately shouted to the man next to him to check the next bag thoroughly. Buddy confidently said, “I have no books in my bag”. Had the customs officials found any Bibles in his suitcase the whole tour group would have had their luggage examined more thoroughly. I was sorry to lose my little stash of bibles. Truly God had spoken to Buddy and I was witness to it.

Over the years I found that God changed my intended ministry plans on numerous occasions.

The next day whilst walking near an entrance to an underground subway, I saw thousands of people rushing down a large stairway that looked like a dark hole at the side of the road. As I watched this vast multitude disappearing into the ground, it was like a vision of the thousands passing into hell every day. Although the group was on a site seeing tour of some of the cities in China, others like me were having quite a different experience.

The government controlled shops were of interest the first few days. The tour guides stopped the buses outside numbers of stores hoping the rich westerners would purchase some the products on offer inside. For many on the tour it seemed merely a sidetrack for the real reasons we were there. The guides were often distracted by two or three of the group, whilst the rest passed out Chinese gospels and tracts.

People in the streets had not seen many white people. Some youngsters boldly greeted us so they could practice their English. Most of the population was poor; it was obvious that our small gift of a gospel booklet was the first gift they had ever received. Some wept; others hid the gospels inside their clothing and walked away, in case one of the guides saw their gift. This was a shocking soul destroying regime. The people were so bound and full of fear. Some of our tour group were so moved they wept with them. Some wanted to hold our hands; it seemed as if they were so wounded and locked up within that they wanted to hold onto someone representing freedom and generosity; even just for a moment until we boarded the bus.

On one occasion I was about to take a photo of a thin old man pulling a large two-wheeled cart loaded with coal. A young boy was pushing the cart from behind. As I readied my camera one of the guides ran in front of me shouting, “No photo, no photo.” I had just seen two people working like donkeys. I may have missed the photo, but the image was etched in my mind.

## **BIBLE SMUGGLER**

Some days later in a hotel in Beijing, a pastor came to my room at about 8-30PM to pick up one of the Bibles. That night was very cold and snow was in the area. He was a small aged gentleman and had travelled by bicycle more than 20 miles. I offered him as many Bibles as he could carry, but he refused. He told me one Bible would be sufficient as he had just been released from prison the week before. I asked him how long he had been in prison and he replied, “twenty years”. I was shocked by the length of his incarceration. “Why were you imprisoned”, I asked. “I was found with a Bible in my possession”, he said. “Brother, if you get picked up again tonight aren’t you afraid of going back to prison?” He looked at me, his face a picture of joy. “I don’t think they will see this Bible inside my clothes tonight, but if they stop me and find it I am ready to go back to prison,” he said. He told me he was going to cut the pages from the Bible and share them with many of his friends. They would copy a page and then pass on other pages to other friends until they all had their own handwritten Bibles.

He was only in the room a few minutes, but

meeting that pastor so impressed me. I had heard of the persecution of those who served God in underground churches, but I never expected to actually speak with one of the persecuted leaders who was about to risk his life again for the cause of the gospel. I watched him walk down the hallway briskly to the stairs and then out of sight.

My personal commitment and dedication had just been challenged. That man was in my thoughts for the rest of the tour.

The two week tour in China impressed upon me the enormous spiritual needs of a country with one billion people virtually untouched at that time by the gospel. I witnessed what happens when elected leaders and officials passed laws where democracy and personal freedom was purposefully removed. Even faith in God was disallowed forcing people by law to reject God. This forced godlessness was so vast; it had penetrated most of the population of China. It was difficult to comprehend.

## **CALL TO THE PHILIPPINES**

When I arrived back in Hong Kong, I discovered there were two ladies in the tour group that were going to the Philippines before returning home. I can't say I prayed very long to seek God's perfect will, however I asked them if I could accompany them to the Philippines from where I would make my own way. I talked with the tour leader who gave his approval. I couldn't believe I was actually about to embark on my first missionary journey.

The next day, a large percentage of the tour group was gathered in the lobby of the Miramar Hotel, to pray for Rev. Jane Louder and Janet Cooper. Being a new addition to the small group going to the Philippines, I was included in their prayers.

This was the first time I had ever been sent out to preach the gospel. The tour leader's mother was also among those on tour. She was a proficient prophetess and during the short prayer session, I also received a prophecy. I was amazed at the words that had just come forth. God said he would open many doors for ministry, and that there would be many miracles. I could hardly believe it; excitement now flooded me. I wholeheartedly believed the prophetic word, but how was God going to do it? I didn't know anyone in any country, let alone the Philippines. I was a greenhorn with no experience, but I deeply desired to be used of God in a new way.

Later that day we left Hong Kong for Manila and as the aircraft touched down on the runway, I saw my first housing slum; a vast panorama of poverty continued down the whole length of the long runway. I was momentarily shocked, but it seemed like God stamped it into my mind.

## **MISSIONARY JOE**

As I passed through customs and then through the sliding glass doors to exit the airport building, I was enveloped by the tropical humidity and heat. Any double mindedness was soon expelled, as I heard these words. "Hey Joe, are you a missionary?" I looked around, hoping to see this man Joe. I couldn't see anyone. Then the same

words were shouted again. This time I noticed a young boy about thirty meters away. Lifting my voice I shouted, "Are you speaking to me"? "Yes, are you a missionary?" I asked him how he knew I was a missionary. He said, "Oh, you just look like a missionary."

I was somewhat thankful I looked like a missionary, hoping it would be this obvious everywhere I went.

Jane had a few names and addresses which we hoped would be useful as the three of us were seeking opportunities for ministry. The first contact could not help us. But as we continued in prayer, God opened doors of ministry for the three of us. Jane and Janet departed with one of the pastors for meetings, whilst I preached in a small church in Quezon City for Pastor Reuben.

My upstairs accommodation was very basic. This didn't concern me as I only had about US\$50-00 in my pocket. I slept on an old stained sponge mattress on the floor in an empty room. This room was often used by the pastor, who was going to be married in two weeks. I shared that mattress with the pastor many nights. He was a big man, constantly drenched by perspiration, and many times during the night I had to contend for my allotted space. Pastor Reuben was like a human steamroller ever pushing me onto the floor. I pitied the fiancé he was soon to marry.

Most mornings I spent two hours in prayer downstairs. I was so desperate to see God at work in the meetings, for many came at night with great needs of which only God could heal. I prayed loudly in unknown tongues. When I did pray in English, my prayers usually



included this prayer, “God may tonight be better than last night.” I prayed that many would be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and that others would get their miracle. I asked for an increase in ministry anointing that I could be effective whilst in the Philippines.

One morning I saw a vision of a cathedral like church upturned with half of the steeple in the ground; the doors being where the roof would normally be. This was the strangest vision; I immediately asked the Lord what He was showing me. He told me that this was what he wanted me to do, “turn churches upside down.” I was no revivalist and somewhat bewildered by what God had just said. How was I possible going to revive churches like that?

Then the Lord spoke a second time, “Son do you want to see miracles?” “Oh, yes, I really desire to see you work miracles.” God’s reply was instant. “Well then, start fasting”. At that time I was quite thin and yet God was directing me to begin fasting. I began fasting every second day for many weeks.

During the day, Pastor Reuben led me on a troop march all over Metro Manila. I had never visited and prayed for so many people. My daily visitation work was sandwiched between the small church and revival meetings, which were scheduled day and night and often at a moment's notice. This man opened many doors of ministry, thinking I was indeed an experienced minister of the word of God. I was always introduced as Reverend and I never so much as blinked, keeping any embarrassment hidden. I just kept fasting and praying and believing the Lord for an increase of ministry anointing on my life.

At one prayer meeting that began at midnight, I was asked to preach. After the ministry of the word, the pastor requested I prophesy over the whole congregation. I finished about 4.00am only to be woken at 5.30am to journey an hour to pray for a sick man.

## **BEGINNING OF MIRACLES**

For many years I had been in a state of exhaustion, whilst I endeavoured to succeed in life. However, my current weariness was due to many meetings all over Metro Manila. I was indeed being used of God in fulfillment of that prophecy spoken only days earlier in Hong Kong. My preaching was now confident; the gifts of the Holy Spirit were so much richer and deeper; many testified of being healed as I laid hands on them.

One night I was taken to a meeting in a large home. God had given me a message on idolatry. At this point in time, I did not know that demonic oppression was so real for those people who bowed themselves to idols. During the sermon the pastor hesitated in his translation, for my message had a certain vehement directness relating to idols. The pastor was a good interpreter, but on this occasion he was hesitant. I leaned over and whispered, "Preach every word of this message." He smiled and continued from that moment without faltering.

Two people had deafness in their ears and someone else had impaired vision. These were healed as well as many others. One young boy about twelve years old kept tugging on my back trouser pocket, whilst I was still ministering at the altar. This was a source of

annoyance until finally he informed me in English he wanted to receive Jesus into his heart. “OK, just wait a few minutes till I have finished praying”, I said. At the close of the meeting, I was amazed at how much was done in just an hour. Some were saved, many were filled with the Holy Spirit and some others received miracles of healing. The unexpected blessings of God’s glory on this first trip were being engraved within me.

The pastor and I arrived back at the vacant room well after midnight. As he swung the door open, he burst out laughing. I could tell something was troubling him; he hadn’t said a word coming back to the house. “What’s so funny?” I asked.

He said, "You can't preach like that to Roman Catholics, some of those people support my ministry, they may not support me now".

Trying to reassure him, I said, "How many people with deaf ears and poor vision were healed, and how many were filled with the Holy Spirit? And furthermore there were many decisions for the Lord tonight". "Yeh-yeh, I hear you", he said, his attitude and tone softening.

On another occasion Pastor Reuben took me to pray for a woman he said he had prayed for many times, but without result. As we traveled by Jeepney, he talked of many things, but never mentioned the woman I was about to pray for. As we turned down an alley for my first appointment the pastor noticed another woman from his congregation working in a shop. He shouted to the driver in Tagalog, “Para”. The driver stopped and I got out and was directed across the road. I noticed the woman's arm was tightly bandaged and immobilized in a sling. I was

told the lady had broken her arm. The pastor beckoned to me to pray. The lady came out from behind the shop counter; I reached out my hand and laid it on her arm, whereupon I prayed my usual simple prayer for healing. I was astounded to witness what happened next. The lady immediately took her arm out of the sling; in an instant the heavy bandage was unraveled from her forearm. I was looking on in disbelief. She stretched that arm straight up over her head and yelled out, "My arm is healed." The pastor looked at me and said, "Let's go." We got back into the Jeepney and continued down the alley.

On arrival at the pastor's original intended address, I discovered a woman with the biggest cataract I had ever seen. As I was about to pray, she said, "Not here, pray at my friend's house." I couldn't understand why I had to have another jeepney trip to her friend's house.

The jeep stopped outside a steep narrow stairway. As we walked up the stairs, she called out to her friend. When her friend appeared from a small room, she said to me, "You can pray now."

Then I focused on her friend's eyes. I could not believe what I was seeing for another cataract came into view. The first lady brought another chair and they sat beside each other they looked at me. The lady on the left had a cataract on her right eye and the lady on the right had a cataract on her left eye. I do remember these details as the pastor was now standing behind me watching my every move. Quickly I asked the lady who had bought us there if she believed if I prayed in Jesus name, that God would heal her.

She said, "Yes Father," thinking I was a priest. I laid my hand on her eye and prayed simply, with as much authority as I could muster. I lifted my hand off her eye. Momentarily I was stationary with amazement, and began looking for the cataract. I couldn't find it. I was reasonable sure I was looking at a miracle. I scanned her whole face, eye brow, cheek, and forehead. Turning around to the pastor, I said, "Is it gone?" His amazement did not allow a word to be spoken; he was in shock his facial expression contorted, he just nodded his head in agreement. The second lady had just seen a miracle, but would not allow herself to be humbled to wholehearted faith. She shrugged her shoulders with indifference. I prayed the same prayer with even more vigor, but the woman was not healed. I believe God saw her indifference. This was a great lesson to me, and I have never been discouraged when God didn't heal.

Within the first two weeks of this first missionary trip, there were enough miracles daily to convince me that it wasn't necessary to possess a great oratory ability to do missionary work.

One day a woman who lived opposite came to the house holding twin boys by the hands. They were about six years of age and were both deaf and dumb. She entered the room walking quickly which was not the usual way Filipinos walked. When she found me she pushed her two sons in front of me. With a look of great frustration she said, "These are my sons pray for them." Her sons had a distracted controlled look of demon possession, which led me to ask what was wrong. "They are both deaf and they cannot speak," she said. As I commanded the deaf and

dumb spirit to leave in Jesus name there was an instant change in behaviour. Both boys became focused and began walking around the room with their hands near their ears. They were so surprised at hearing sound for the first time. I stopped one of boys and said, "This is your mama; say mama.". Then they both looked back at their mother and said, "Mama." They both spoke simply for it was the first time they had spoken. The woman was not sure what to say, she couldn't believe it for both her sons were now normal. She looked so rested for her great burden had been lifted. She again took hold of her sons' hands and left.

On another occasion, I was asked to minister in a very poor village in Bulacan. The designated place for the meeting was located where pigs and chickens had their habitat during the day. The pastor assured me that the pigs would be removed and that the chickens would roost in the trees at sunset.

That night after the ministry of the Word of God, many gave their lives to the Lord. As I laid my hands on the people, the pastor became agitated because he didn't have enough hands to hold up the people now being slain under the power of God. "They will get dirt on their clothes", he shouted with disapproval. Eventually, he surrendered in disgust as many made their resting place where the pigs had been walking a few hours earlier.

The following week the same pastor requested a second meeting at the same venue. He assured me he was ready this time. I was puzzled by that statement, thinking it would take a lot of work to clean the muddy terrain. When I arrived, I noticed the same pigs and chickens roaming freely; nothing had been done to improve the grounds.

At the conclusion of my message, just as I was about to lay my hands on the first person, the pastor interrupted abruptly, "Hold it!" What could possibly be wrong this time? He ran to a nearby house and returned moments later with a pile of rice bags which had been cut along both long edges. He took one of the sheets and walked behind the first person, producing some clothes pegs from a paper bag he pinned the rice bag sheet to their shoulders. I was then allowed to continue my prayer.

For the first time in those weeks of ministry, people began to be slain forward, rather than backwards. The more the pastor tried to steer his people onto the rice bags to protect their clothes, the more difficulty he encountered. One person went to the left and another to the right. He gave up the fight and in exasperation shouted, "Oh, just pray". God taught that man something about the move of the spirit and of the importance of proper preparation of an outdoor venue.

One day I was awakened at 6.00 am; I was introduced to a man who had heard of the many healings taking place in my meetings. He came to request prayer for his wife who was coughing up blood. The man knew nothing of the cause of her condition or the reason for the bleeding. I asked him to wait till I dressed, but he said in broken English that the river was flooded and that I could not cross it. He simply asked for prayer that God would heal his wife.

I took a clean handkerchief from my suitcase and placed his hands on it and my hands over his. As I prayed, I saw a vision of her lung; blood was coming from a hole the size of a pencil end. I saw it as clear as I would the

color screen of a television. I told the man what I had seen and showed him where to lay the handkerchief on his wife when he arrived home. Then I prayed and believed God to heal the hole in her lung.

The man left and I busied myself with the many things crowded into that day. When I returned to the house that afternoon, the same man was waiting for me. I asked him the reason for his second visit. He assured me there was nothing wrong; he came to tell me that his wife was healed, and had returned to her home duties. He said, “My wife stopped coughing blood after I laid the handkerchief on her chest.” This was a great miracle of healing. This man's simple faith had been rewarded. Daily, I thanked God for all those who were being miraculously healed.

## **THE REMOTE REGIONS**

After several days I was reunited with Jane and Janet early one morning. We decided we should pray and believe God to show us His direction. During prayer Jane asked me to open myself to God and prophesy. At first, I was reluctant because the three of us were seeking the Lord for direction. I saw myself as the junior missionary of the group, and if I prophesied, this would mean that three missionaries would proceed on that word of prophecy. I looked at Jane and gave her my best green-horn look. It didn't work; she insisted.

The next words out my mouth were prophetic, God was sending us north. He said he would open doors as we traveled north. Our suit cases were ready for travel and as soon as the prophetic word ended, Jane and Janet began



walking towards the front gate. “Where are you guys going?” I said. Jane looked over her shoulder and said, “To the bus station.” Later we boarded a bus bound for San Fernando, the northern capitol of La Union.

On arrival we boarded little motorized tricycles and made our way to Miracle Bible College. In those days the trip was only one peso. It seemed as if the Lord had already prepared the way, because we were wonderfully welcomed and given accommodations on campus.

The five hour bus trip behind me, I took time to find the best vantage points on the terraced college grounds to peruse the incredible ocean view of the South China Sea.

The next day Jane and Janet went to Baguio with Mercy and Phoebe, two of the college teachers. They would be their guides and interrupters further up the rugged mountains of Benguet Province. I traveled with Bro. Philip one of the other college teachers. We traveled north to Ilocos Sur and then east into the mountains by mini bus via the Besang Pass, which was so snake-like that larger buses were not used. The mini-buses and jeepneys were always overloaded with varied cargo: bags of rice, chickens, baskets of fruit, salted fish and other marketable goods. Some of the passengers sat on the roof and hung off side bars. At times the driver would ask some passengers to get off so he could get the vehicle to the top of the rise. The passengers would run behind the jeepney and re-board the vehicle at the crest of the hill. I took photographs so that folks back home could share my amazing experiences.

Where possible we used the overcrowded small buses to get to the next village. The locals who wanted to

join us at the next church usually walked the jungle tracks and often arrived ahead of us. The conductors always squeezed me in somewhere; but often my friends rode on the roof. These bus trips could only be described as bone shattering.

I once looked under a bus to see if it had springs. I found shackle bolts tied with strips of inner rubber tubing. I decided to believe God, I never looked under a bus again! Most buses used boards for the seats, and I became a human projectile as my small frame was catapulted from the boards. I ached in many places, not just my rear end which was bruised for some time.

My interpreter Philip Labagan was getting married in a few weeks, but he decided to help me bring revival to the remote mountainous villages for the next ten days.

The mini bus eventually stopped at the side of the road next to a steep walking track. Our destination was Batiangan, a small village up the mountain. We trekked for an hour and finally came to a stream with clean water. Upright stood a hollowed out large bamboo pole that was used as a cup. Philip filled it with water and said, "Have a drink". I drank the cool water without hesitation not knowing when the next stream would come into view. My toes were badly cracked and my thongs were taking the skin off as I walked. After some time we passed a small bamboo hut with grass roofing; later that evening the dirt floor church was filled to capacity.

Finally, we arrived at our destination, a village in the middle of dense jungle. Being a builder, the houses were of real interest to me. Roughly cut tree branches, many with curves, were the corner posts that supported

most dwellings. The walls were woven bamboo and the roofs were thatched very simply with grass. The floors, where we slept on thin woven mats were constructed of very narrowly split bamboo nailed onto hand cut joists. I never slept much on these treks because my back felt like ripple soles of shoes. These conditions weren't the worst, as I was always given the very best that they could offer.

The local people had an incredible ruggedness about them. Daily chores were very physical; washing was carried to the river, rice was beaten with a heavy pole into a rounded out stone, firewood was gathered from the jungle for cooking, fruit and vegetable was carried in handmade baskets to market, wild boar was hunted, slaughtered and shared.

I had entered into a primitive jungle lifestyle I had read about in National Geographic magazines. There was no rush, no clocks, no schedule, no power, no television; just jungle life. It was so quiet, except for the abundance of playful children. The nights were very dark, the silence broken with creaking bamboo, buzzing mosquitoes and gecko lizards giving their periodic call from trees.

Rice was the staple diet and served three times a day. If vegetables were available, one or two were added for variation. Most fruit came from the jungle. Bananas of varied shapes and sizes, I added to my rice.

My ministry party number would grow as we trekked from village to village. This meant I didn't have to carry very much, the bulk being carried by those who had been blessed the night before. The conversation often centered on the revival meetings; they spoke of physical healing and miracles they had witnessed the night before.

The stories were often translated for my benefit whilst we walked to the next church.

I valued every moment of their friendship and fellowship. Often laughter came spontaneously as I would plead with Philip, "Don't you backslide, it might be better if you walk ahead of me." Philip always knew what I was referring to for his ancestors had been headhunters. His reply was instant, "You might lose your head." Laughing, I would say, "That's what concerns me."

The humour took our minds off the steepness of the trails. My joking was always translated to the ones guiding or carrying the bags or provisions. We all had a lot of fun, but there was no foolishness. Although everyone shared the physical load whilst trekking the jungle trails during the day, the real burden was at night. I made sure everyone was given the best opportunity to receive Christ as saviour, receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit or be healed. All team members took an active role in helping me achieve that goal. I loved every moment of this tremendous experience as I shared the word of God with simple mountain people who seemed to be lost in time.

I met people who had never seen a white man. The hunger for the Lord astounded me as many walked for days to hear God's word. I had never felt so humbled. At home in Australia some drove their cars to church and yet made excuses why they could not attend church. These people were so simple and yet so dedicated, they would do anything to help bring revival to their mountain friends. I discovered a bond of genuine Christian love with my new found colleagues not experienced before. If only churches in western countries could both have and experience this

simple Christian lifestyle that produced this genuine love one for the other.

Their aim for the short time I was with them was to make revival possible for their countrymen. It didn't matter who was preaching. We were a team working together so that others in this mountainous region could be touched by God.

There were many healed at Batiangan, but one was especially outstanding: a man carried his baby, about six months old, to the altar for prayer. In the dim light of the lantern I saw oozing sores all over the child's head and clear fluid dripped from one ear. The man smiled at me and looked back at the baby. He couldn't speak English, but I knew he had faith. As I laid my hand on the top of the infected skull, I hoped the infection was not transferable by touch. Then I commanded that healing would begin immediately. There was no obvious evidence that night that the child was being healed.

About ten days later we arrived after lunch at a church in Basig, near Mankayan. It was very mountainous and very cold at night. The church was built on the foundations of a demolished building used by the Japanese who mined gold during the Second World War. The day's trek behind us we entered the church and I sat with Pastor Philip on the raised concrete platform at the front because the pews were merely tree trunks on large rocks.

We had just sat down and a man with a young child sat next to me. I greeted him, but as so often at that time the response was merely a smile, as most village people only spoke a local dialect. This man had walked many days carrying the child through thick jungles on

mountain trails to find me. Still holding this little one in his arms, he wanted to show me the wonderful miracle that God had done. Philip asked me if I remembered this man sitting next to me. I smiled, searching my memory. We had had many meetings and I was trying to recall. "This is the baby you prayed for at Batiangan, the first village." he said,

"Oh! Of course, yes, God bless you!" I was a little embarrassed, hoping that one day these people wouldn't all look so similar. Then I examined the head of the baby. Where I had put my hand, there was new skin. At the back of the skull there were only one or two dried scars. It was as if God had started the healing at the point of contact with my hand. I was amazed and humbled when I heard that the father had walked some days through the jungle, carrying the baby to share God's wonderful miracle of healing with me. Somewhat puzzled, I asked Philip, "Where did they sleep at night?" The man told Philip he slept in the jungle. I said, "You're kidding, he slept on the ground in the jungle with the mosquitoes and crawling insects with such a small baby." I could hardly believe what I was hearing.

## **THE HOLY ROLLER**

One Sunday afternoon I was asked to preach in the same church. I was expecting a large congregation, but there were only about six people. During the service I saw a vision. I was sitting in the same position at the front of the church; the church was so full that people were looking in the rear windows looking for a place they could sit. It

was a cold night for I could see someone clearing frost from the rear window to get a better view inside. I was somewhat bewildered by this vision.

When I finished my message only one person came for prayer; it was the pastor's wife. When I laid my hand on her head, she was immediately slain and began rolling so fast toward the side wall. Her husband looked a little embarrassed for his godly wife now assumed a most unholy slain position spinning like an uncontrolled wheel. When she hit the side wall with a thud, she changed direction. It was as if she was lifted up, turned at 90 degrees and then lowered so she could continue to spin down the side aisle to the rear of the church. I saw it, but I couldn't see how God did it. Being a large church building, I thought she would soon run out of puff, but she went all the way to the rear of the church as though powered by a turbine. When she hit the back wall the same thing happened, she made another 90 degree turn and continued to spin to the opposite wall at the rear of the church.

I had heard of the old time Pentecostal Holy Rollers, but this sister took first prize. This was real Holy Ghost power in action. She finally stopped spinning on the rough concrete surface, but continued to shake for several minutes. When she got to her feet I saw the glory of God upon her, one could see God had done something wonderful in her life. This lady was a humble woman of God. She came for prayer and God met her need.

I had now been ministering in the Philippines for nearly three weeks; but it felt like a lifetime because so much was happening every day.

## AMERICAN MILK BAR

My 21 day visa would expire in a few days. The time had gone so fast; most days I was going somewhere to minister. I really was a missionary now engaged in bringing revival everywhere I went, but I had only just begun. Jane and Janet also had many open doors in the mountainous villages and in order to continue ministry it was necessary to extend our visas another 21 days in Manila.

On arrival we found lodging at the SIL headquarters. Missionaries working in the islands could come and rest up using these facilities. Having been lodged in bamboo huts with grass roofs for ten days it seemed like a luxurious guest house. As paying guests we were given the same courtesy as those missionaries on staff. During breakfast we found out there was a man on staff who specialized in getting visas for missionaries. We filled out the forms and gave him our passports and he did the rest. We received our visas the same day.

That morning one of the ladies told us there was an American milk bar near the main road. At first I didn't believe it. "Really, where is it?" I asked. "You will find it at the top of the road." Jane and Janet were as interested in seeing it as I was, so off we went. Sure enough there it was right next to the Magnolia factory.

When we walked inside we were standing in an air-conditioned American dairy milk bar in its entire; long bars with stools and the super-sized tall milkshake glasses. After the jungle trails of the past weeks, just the cool air of the air-con felt luxurious. I was on a somewhat restricted



budget, but a price inquiry couldn't hurt. As we looked at the color photos on the menus, I was suitably impressed. "Are the shakes really like this?" I queried. There was only one way to find out; place our orders.

Momentarily, we were enjoying massive milk shakes, all the while sharing with each other our miracle stories; which were many. All three missionaries had spent many days in fasting. When I was eating I had eaten rice with vegetables or bananas. I had preached in such remote villagers that one man said I was the first white man he had ever seen. This interlude in the milk bar seemed like a world away from the remote mountain villages.

## **LIKE A MIGHTY WIND**

The next day we traveled north by bus direct to Baguio. Beyond Baguio there were no sealed roads. The road trip from Baguio to Bontoc was a very treacherous ten hour journey. The buses on these routes had boards for seats. The dust was like a brown cloud so I held a handkerchief to my face with one hand and anchored myself to the seat railing with the other. It didn't seem to make much difference as I was catapulted up and down bruising my rear end for more than four hours on our way to Basig.

Once at the bus stop we walked the rest of the way to the church where a conference had been convened between Christmas and New Year. Many delegates had gathered from all over the mountains. Basig was about 5000 feet above sea level; it was so cold I had to purchase a blanket from a local market in Mankayan. Housing was

very basic; there were no internal linings. There was no power; candles or small tin cans with wicks were used to lighten smaller rooms and kerosene burning Coleman lanterns was considered more than adequate in churches.

On the first night of the conference all the missionaries were seated at the front. When I looked towards the back I noticed that the church was completely full. Then I saw someone outside the church clearing the frost from the small glass window. This was the exact thing I had seen in vision some days earlier. Now I was seeing the importance of visions. I knew I was in the right place at the right time.

During praise and worship there was a great unity. It was as if heaven had come down in our midst. Suddenly the power of God came with such force that the whole church was slain in the Holy Spirit. It was like a mighty wind had blown from the front to the back. Every person was on the floor. Some were weeping, others were being filled with the Holy Spirit and yet others getting healed. The order of service had been postponed by the wind of the Holy Spirit. This human chaos had to be seen to be believed; no one could get up as most of them continued in Holy Spirit motion on the floor. Arms and legs were intertwined like spaghetti. When I looked towards the rear of the church I saw an arm with a cast like covering held upright in the air. The broken arm was now healed. A quick scan of the church revealed many unusual things taking place.

Then suddenly a woman near the front somehow got to her feet and began to jump up and down. Even though she looked completely in the spirit, I thought I

better restrict her movement before she stomped on somebody. I carefully made my way through the moving intertwined arms and legs making sure I didn't stand on anyone.

When I finally got to the woman she was now much nearer to the platform. As I reached out my hand I touched her arm, she immediately slipped and went backwards cracking her head on the edge of the concrete platform. She slumped heavily onto the floor where she came to rest. Immediately I heard the devil's accusing voice, "You did that." I had to agree that I had my mind on the welfare of others; I should have had faith in God's ability to direct her footsteps. Kneeling down I put my hands under her head. I could feel a large lump pushing at my hand; it was now the size of a large egg and growing. What head damage had been done I did not know. I prayed that God would forgive me. I vowed I would never again touch anything that God was doing in a meeting. Then I commanded that her head be healed and the lump be removed in Jesus name. Instantly the lump shrank as if it was sucked back into her skull. I felt the lump disappear instantly under my hand; it was gone. The woman lay motionless on the floor with the rest of the congregation.

When the service was over, I wanted to satisfy myself that the lady was indeed healed for I had heard such a loud crack when her head hit the sharp squared edge of the raised concrete platform. That lady was now with her friends; bemused by what God was doing. I tried to initiate conversation, but the woman had no idea what I was talking about. It was clear she had been so under the anointing of the Holy Spirit she had no recollection of

jumping, slipping on the floor or hitting her head. She did not believe anything I said. It was as if she had been anesthetized by the Holy Spirit. I learned that night that God can protect His own people, no matter how wild it gets in a Pentecostal service.

At the close of the service I walked slowly back up the hill ahead of the congregation. I was still in a heightened state of awe at what I had just witnessed in the church service. I was still bathing in the anointing of it. As others caught up to me I could hear that anointed sound of God at work as people shared one with the other. To minister in these remote areas was not a sacrifice, it was a privilege.

The next two weeks was taken up with meetings from Baguio to Bontoc and from Mankayan to Miapet. Just before the end of my trip I met Jane and Janet back at Miracle Bible College in San Fernando, La Union.

Mercy, one of the lecturers at the Bible College, heard I was leaving. Rushing towards me she said, "Brother Lawrence you can't leave yet, you haven't visited my place; we need you in Abra as well." I tried to explain, but she interrupted and said, "The miracles, you don't know the miracles! You see, Brother Lawrence, it's not just those that were healed in the church services; it's the ongoing miracles all over those mountains". Tears filling her eyes, she turned away hiding her face from me. She pulled a handmade handkerchief from her sleeve and dried her eyes. Then turning around again with a radiant smile, she said, "We'll have to wait till your next visit." When she walked away I felt like weeping myself. It was obvious that Mercy believed these meetings needed to continue in

many other villages. God was showing me that I was a valued minister and that there was still a lot of work to be done on my next visit.

Whilst ministering the gospel to the poor and needy in that six week period I had seen enough miracles to motivate me to continue ministering for the rest of my ministry life.

## **MINDORO MUNYANS**

In 1983, I decided to venture out to Mindoro, a smaller island south of Luzon. My trip was primarily to work with Pastor Philip, a friend whom I had used as an interpreter on numerous occasions. He and his wife had moved from Benguet, Luzon some months earlier. He had a great desire to evangelize the Munyan tribes, a minority tribal group living on the mountainous slopes of Mindoro.

Mindoro, unlike many of the other islands of the archipelago, was made up of two sides; the Occidental (western) and Oriental (eastern). For such a narrow island, Mindoro has a very high mountainous range, which runs from north to south, virtually splitting the island in half. There were no roads over the mountains and the linking roads for east and west were from the north of the island. These mountains made a natural boundary for east and west and boasted a very dense tropical jungle. The mountainous terrain was so dense, that a Japanese soldier was discovered in the northern part of the island only a few months before my visit. He didn't realize that the Second World War had ended

nearly forty years earlier. It was thought that the highland Munyan tribes had taught him how to hide and live in the thick jungle and survive on their jungle foods.

Inter-island transport was by air or sea. My time being limited, I decided on an early morning flight to the only airport on the island, which was located on the very southern tip of Mindoro. I calculated that the half hour flight would certainly speed up my journey. Not knowing anything about the island's terrain, this proved to be a great misconception. In fact I discovered it was much quicker to travel by sea and then by road from the north. My allotted seat was in the rear of a large jeepney. The seats were configured like a troop carrier and very uncomfortable. I was still being bounced and bruised late in the afternoon. The road conditions could only be described as unbelievable; dirt tracks, rutted by heavy vehicles and huge potholes and unseen boulders which were run over in the numerous river crossings.

## **JEEPNEY DRIVERS**

The Filipino two-wheel drive jeepney is always considered an unstoppable vehicle to the jeepney driver. These men thrived on crossing swollen; rapid running rivers, driving abreast rutted tracks that pack animals would use. I was convinced that these drivers perceived that their jeepneys were six-wheel constant drive, amphibious troop carriers: not the two-wheel drive stretch version of the Second World War US Army jeep. Once this huge jeep was filled to capacity, it traveled in and out of towns, road-side markets, often stopping as its passengers alighted near jungle trails. These vehicles

were used like trucks to transport people, huge bags of rice, chickens, piglets, fruit, vegetables, salted fish and bamboo.

It was common practice for conductors to find extra seating for the locals, who were a small framed people, even if it was on the roof. Often non-paying passengers would also board the vehicle and hang off the back handrails. The conductor's job was to collect fares and find yet more space by re-arranging cargo and passengers to make another place for someone even if it looked impossible to those crammed inside. The passengers comfort was not considered; anyway the locals knew it was better than a long walk home carrying everything on your head. Even though the journey was uncomfortable I enjoyed every moment of this crammed in sardine experience even though I ached all over at the end of the day.

I had no way of knowing where the pastor lived, but his letters were post-marked Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro. On reaching Sablayan, I made my way to the post office for initial inquiries. The clerk directed me to a Chinese store. Eventually I found someone with some information, who also gave me directions to another jeepney stop north of the town.

North of Sablayan, the roads north were better and after twenty minutes I was directed to a smaller dirt road. Sometimes, I felt like a human bloodhound on the scent of a possible revival. If nothing else, it was a challenge finding Pastor Philip's house at the foothills of the jungle. Most of the people couldn't speak English and many times I went in the wrong direction, as hand

motions from rather wild looking characters was all I had to go on.

Finally, after traveling more than twelve hours, I walked into a small village north of Sablayan, where I was directed to Philips' house near the large coconut tree. The pastor had recently purchased this coconut tree, so the coconuts could be accessed at any time. Upon arrival a young boy was summonsed and sent up the tree to get me a young coconut. Pastor Philip peeled off the fibrous skin and within moments I was drinking its milk.

That night I preached in the church. The grass roof had been blown off in a storm the previous week, but that didn't mean we couldn't hold service that night. The attendance was the same as at other times and everyone wholeheartedly enjoyed the spirit of revival.

During this visit, some Munyan elders from one of the mountain villages were informed I was staying with pastor Philip. Three elders decided to walk more than an hour down the mountain to meet the white missionary. Our initial talks began after some translated pleasantries, where I was soon asked if I would come and visit them in their village. For some reason they needed two days to prepare for my coming. My mandate was simply. I needed to minister the Word of God as much as possible; so this two-day wait was inconvenient to a missionary full of zeal who wanted to get on with the job.

The anticipated day arrived, Philip and I set off on our early morning trek before the heat could handicap a reasonable stride. Fortunately Philip considered a lowlander by the Muniyans had taken his machete for the



jungle grasses on some of the trails were over six feet high (180cm). History tells many stories of those who were the first to do something unbelievable. Surely I was the first white man to walk this trail.

Coming closer to the village center we encountered smooth well-worn walking tracks that were linked with many smaller tracks that disappeared into the thick tropical jungle. The weathered bamboo houses were close together forming the small close knit community on the slopes of the cut away jungle.

## **MY MUNYAN HOUSE**

On our arrival I noted a brand new yellowy-green bamboo house built on a slope, it was separated from the other smoke blackened huts. I thought this house had been recently built for some newlyweds. But I was told that this house was built especially for me, so that when I came to this village, I would have a place to stay. The reason for the two days wait became very clear. I was eager to inspect my new house, built for the purpose of initial talks with the village elders. This house was made of bamboo and palm leaves, except for the tree stumps, which gave a ground clearance of about four feet. The floor was made of narrow slits of bamboo lashed to larger bamboo floor joists. These surrendered slightly under the weight of each footstep. I had slept on floors like this many times in the mountainous regions of northern Luzon. I felt so blessed; a missionary sitting with primitive tribal people in a new bamboo house in the middle of the jungle. If the occupant possessed a

mosquito net, the unusual floor surface made a lot of sense, as the vented surface beneath them allowed cool air to circulate at night. I always felt I was sleeping on a giant aerated ripple sole. Although these houses were constructed of jungle materials they possessed a relaxed jungle atmosphere. As a missionary I had received some unusual gifts, but a new house in the midst of the jungle was a gesture of generosity far beyond my immediate comprehension. I looked around the house a second time thinking about the effort involved over those two days in cutting and carrying all the bamboo, vines, leaves and grasses from the jungle to build a house just for my visit. The reason for the new house was that the Munyans felt their houses were too old and cramped for a white man. Later in the day, I discovered that this was absolutely true.

## **CRAMPED QUARTERS**

Having finished our talks one of the elders invited me to his house, which was a little larger than my new house. His house which was only about twelve feet (360cm) square had a ramp for stairs and was shared with another three families. With this remarkable news I said, "Philip, are you serious?" "Yes!" he said, "one family for each corner." This communal lifestyle was definitely a traditional Munyan concept. As I looked around, I noticed a small woven bamboo hammock being swung by a mother whose toe was connected to a string. As her leg moved, the hammock moved to comfort her sleeping child.

Soon our lunch was being cooked on the fire in the center of the house. My gaze followed the smoke upwards to the blackened glass roof and beyond to the bamboo walls on the inside of the dwelling. Everything looked aged and blackened by the constant smoke. Then there were the squabbling scrawny native dogs running in and out. The room hardly looked big enough for one family, let alone four families, a hammock, central kitchen fire and fighting dogs. The various smells were very noticeable. I had been told that infant mortality among the Munyans at that time was nearly 50 percent. I hadn't believed it until I saw a child squat and do his business on the floor in front of me. Once the child had finished the dogs began fighting; the winner ate the prized excrement. It was obvious this was quite acceptable behavior for the Munyans who were not embarrassed at all.

Lunch could not come quick enough for this missionary. Although I sat motionless waiting for lunch, I perused my unusual surroundings. I could see the reason for this high infant mortality rate. I was told that these mountain people rarely bathed making their skin very rough and leather like in texture. One could not find words to express the conditions inside the house; I was somewhat concerned about our lunch being prepared by one of the ladies in less than ideal hygienic conditions. I had always considered myself reasonably disciplined in abnormal rough conditions, but on this occasion I was having difficulty adapting to the surroundings. I dared not show my natural discomfort even in one facial expression.

## **YAMS NOT SO YUMMY**

Their food was a lot different to the usual cuisine. They ate a species of tree root readily found and dug up under large trees. To change this tree root from a deadly poison to their favorite staple food, this white yam like root was sliced thinly and left to wash for two weeks in a running stream. This process detoxified the root, making it suitable to boil and eat.

I asked Philip if I could skip lunch; after all I did have the excuse of being bilious for some days. The water in Mindoro was usually the problem and in those days bottled water was not available. Immediately I received an elbow in my right rib cage. “I think you better eat,” he said. Nothing else was said and I felt ashamed that I had had a moment of weakness.

Lunch was served and I did manage to eat a little of their bland tasting yams.

## **OUR JUNGLE BIBLE SCHOOL**

To facilitate the work of God in this region, I used all my money from my own bank account, which was just enough to purchase land for a Bible School. The pastor wanted to start immediately, so I left the purchase of the land in his hands. It was not till some weeks after, north of Sablayan, that I discovered the pastor’s choice of property. The parcel of land had no visible boundaries; all I could see was a thick tropical jungle on mountainous slopes. The Bible school was a fifteen minute walk from the main road. The consensus was that

the Munyans would attend a Bible school in this setting because it was constructed in the jungle and not near lowland towns. The land acquired, Philip and his wife with a few students began the building work. This Bible school was virtually carved out of the jungle. The heavy undergrowth was cleared and oversize bamboo cut and used in the construction of dormitories, classroom and kitchen. Of course, they had dirt floors and bamboo shutters for windows, but the buildings were considered quite comfortable for those attending the Bible school. Mosquitoes never seemed to worry them.

The church which is still attended today was accessed by the main road. After services we began the 35 degree climb up to the Bible school. This took some effort especially when carrying rice and groceries and any other needed materials. I can attest that this climb was somewhat treacherous during the rainy season. It was bad enough during the dry, even for those who used the track every day.

The water supply was on tap and trickled twenty-four hours a day. It came by means of a 12 mm plastic hose which was taped with many joins until it covered the one thousand meters distance to the running mountain stream. Most of the water hose was buried 150mm under the ground in case of bush fire. The mountainous terrain was cultivated in vegetables so that the faculty and students had something else to eat with their rice. These rugged conditions were not considered rough by the students. The mornings were taken up with lectures and in the afternoons each student was allotted farming and kitchen duties. After sunset the students

studied by home-made kerosene lights made from small tin cans, thin steel pipe tubes were inserted into the screw tops which housed the wick.

There was no protection from mosquitoes; malaria was a common scourge in those days. The locals knew they would get it at some time, so mosquito net protection was not considered a priority even for babies. During night meetings, I prayed for many church members affected by malaria. Many suffering infants and adults were healed in the meetings; however, some of their neighbors who did not attend the meetings died.

## **THE HIGHLAND MUNYANS**

Much of my work among the Munyans the previous year had been visitation for initial contact. They seemed to be more interested in the possible donation of a water buffalo, than allowing their teenage children the opportunity of Christian education at our Bible school. The Munyan elders held the view that the lowland men treated their wives and family so badly that their children may be influenced by the lowlanders which could affect Munyan family values. Even though we had started a Christian Bible school, I couldn't give my guarantee to the elders that those children attending the Bible school may be affected by lowland customs. Although I gained the respect of the elders, only some students from the highlands actually attended the school.

On the next visit, I was asked to take a church service in a Munyan village farther south. To get to the church we travelled the dirt roads by jeepneys. Our last

jeepney stopped adjacent to a winding track and we began the three-hour trek into the mountains. My son Andrew who was only seven years old was with me that day as we trekked in the steamy heat. Within an hour his water bottle was empty.

We met the occasional Munyan along the way. They were strong handsome people and I discovered that it was common for Munyan wives to work alongside the husband all day; this was a very unusual tribal custom. When the men walked a twenty-five mile circuit carrying their produce to different markets, or sold by the roadside, their wives walked and worked with them. At times they were gone for a week in pursuit of a few pesos. Their work was usually a family affair; everyone including the children shared the burden of carrying their handmade goods such as cane baskets with lids, of varying sizes packed inside the other to reduce the bulk. The Munyan hammocks made of strong jungle vines similar to bamboo; these were very strong and a popular item at roadside markets.

After a few hours of trekking we encountered a village elder and his wife who were virtually running down the steep slopes carrying huge baskets full of bananas. The baskets were held to their forehead with a platted vine strap, causing the bearer to hunch over to counterbalance the load. Because of the incredible weight being carried, they stopped for only seconds. Covered in perspiration, the man quickly informed Philip we weren't far from the village; and then in an instant increasing their trekking stride, vanished into the jungle. His wife, bearing a similar burden, followed him

hurriedly. Nearing our destination we were met by a young woman walking down the mountain. She informed us she would be attending the evening service later. I thought to myself, “She’d better hurry”, as it was nearing sunset.

Arriving at the village in an exhausted state, we were taken immediately to the church. On top of the rickety tree branch pulpit well burnt candles were lit. There was no electricity, not even a kerosene lantern to lighten the dark atmosphere.

I was then informed that there was no water for washing. After more than three hours of trekking up hill, I felt as if I was walking in a wet film of sticky glue. As service was about to start, we decided to towel ourselves down and change our shirts. The locals rarely considered bathing a priority, let alone washing before church services.

## **REVIVAL WITH THE MUNYANS**

Moments later lusty singing ushered in the beginning of the service. As I had witnessed on many occasions in the work of God, this was yet another occasion when I found myself in God’s house at God’s perfect appointed time.

During that church service a tremendous spirit of revival fell on the people. A cloud of choking dust soon permeated the jungle church as many feet danced with committed energy on the dirt floors. I soon forgot my tiredness and lack of personal grooming. Later many surrendered their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. There



were many who were filled with the Holy Spirit who spoke in new tongues.

A lingering atmosphere of God's glory pervaded the darkened church as many testified of God's healing power. The most unusual testimony came from the young woman that met us on the walking track a few hours earlier. She testified that when she saw the missionary walking up the track, God had healed her of a stomach ailment she had been troubled with for some time. I had not laid hands on her, neither had I prayed, but God chose to heal her before the meeting, at the very moment she saw us trekking to the church. In just a few short hours God had transformed and revived that church. Indeed the God of miracles had been at work.

At the conclusion of service we immediately walked back down the same mountain trail. Our light sources were the flames from lit pine sticks carried by the local church members. An hour later we arrived at a school teacher's house where my son and I were given buckets of water to wash and something to eat before retiring for the night.

## **THE GREEN-EYED DEMON**

On another occasion I was taken to a village in the lowlands where a pastor had arranged a joint meeting of various church groups in neighboring villages. There was no church building near the pastor's house so the meeting was held in the open field where a rice threshing floor had been swept clean for service. I planned to use the swept area for my altar call.

At the close of the message, many received Christ as Savior. Then prayer was made for the sick. One young man informed me that he had pain in his stomach. As I laid my hands on him, I saw in a vision a demon spirit, with brilliant lime-green eyes. God showed me that the problem was not his stomach, but the demon troubling him. I was not so experienced in the recognition of demons; all I knew was this demon had green eyes; so I prayed loudly in my usual simple manner. "You green eyed demon, come out in Jesus name". The man was propelled backwards many meters ending up prostrate on the ground, the exiting demon contorted the man's body like a large snake, twisting and slithering on the dirt. The man headed towards the dark rear area of the outdoor gathering screaming as if being torched in flames. I continued praying for others, whilst most in attendance watched the spectacular event of the snake like man slithering towards the rear of the crowd. Some minutes went by and the man stood to his feet. I looked back in his direction and shouted loudly, "How's your stomach." "Good Pastor, its healed." he said. It is a wonderful thing to see how simply God can work a miracle. God had released the young man from the green eyed demon.

Unfortunately, this was not the end of the matter. My prayer was somewhat rushed. I told the demon to leave, but I didn't tell the demon where to go. I learned later that at that very hour, the green-eyed demon stood at the end of my son's bed in Australia at midnight and awoke him. The demon said to him, "Serve me, or I will kill you". The devil is a liar and will do anything to

distract our vision and get us off track. After thirty years my son is still alive.

## **TWO RIVERS MEET**

Some days later during an altar call, heavy torrential rain fell without warning. These tropical regions were so unpredictable. This was not a light shower of rain and within minutes a river of muddy water washed though our outdoor makeshift altar, which had been swept clean by the ladies especially for that service. I was always ready for a move of the Holy Spirit, but this unseasonable downpour would surely be disruptive. This was not the case as many people were kneeling; loud prayers of repentance were being offered to God. Others were already slain on the muddy ground as an increasing level of rainwater flowed like liquid mud. It was obvious that these reviving souls were unable to move from their prostrate positions of blessing. I was concerned that those lying prone may choke in the mud as the majority made no effort to move from the rising muddy wash swirling around them. I have always loved the river of God, but this was more than wonderful, it was as if everyone was held captive by God Himself. There were two river sources; one natural and the other spiritual married together in the same place at the same time. I was now being ushered by the local pastor under a small awning nearby to continue my prayers for the sick. Due to the flash flood, the pastor wanted everyone to relocate under the small awning as many of his members were spoiling their clothes in the

mud. This was not an option for the awning was not big enough for everyone.

Then God spoke to me, for God had not finished what He wanted to do in the muddy wash. I was now drenched in rainwater and the pastor couldn't understand why I was not interested in coming out of the rain. The fact was that the glory of God was where the mud covered people were slain. Many people were weeping uncontrollable in the presence of God.

I really was concerned about the fact that some were wearing their best clothes, but I was more concerned about them receiving everything that God wanted for them that night. It seems as if those that were covered in brown slush were also covered in the glory of God. I realized that the area of ground where the people were slain in the muddy wash was where the blessing of God was being poured out. Obviously the river within was greater than the river without. I could not allow the pastor to hinder the flow of God's river. Surely their clothes could be washed and dried. Why should anyone be more concerned about wet muddy clothes? I shouted to those waiting under the awning, "This is where we should be, right here with the others in the mud; this is holy ground".

At first they were reluctant, but slowly the members realized I was not being unreasonable; the presence of God was stronger where I was standing in the mud. This muddy venue became a special sacred place for many had a real touch from God that night, having no desire to leave that muddy sacred ground.

## THE CRIPPLED LADY WALKS

Once on a trek to Baed, I met a white man walking down the same track. Whilst exchanging pleasantries I found out he had ministered the previous night in the same church I was heading to. “I was there last night, so there is no need for you to go there”, he said. Not wanting to engage in arguments about protocol, I gave him leave and continued up the mountain.

On arrival to the church I could see no sign of any ministry work done the night before. That afternoon one of the ministry team asked me if I could come and pray for a crippled lady in a nearby village. I told her to arrange for the lady to be carried to the church that night so she could hear the Word of God at the meeting.

That night many responded and rededicated themselves to the Lord. As I prayed for the sick at the altar I perused the whole congregation, but I couldn’t see any cripple lady in attendance. I whispered to the team, “Where is the crippled lady?” They told me her family couldn’t bring her to the meeting. It was a wonderful revival meeting and I was pleased I had not been influenced to by-pass Baed.

The next morning after breakfast just as we prepared for the trek to the next village there was a second request to go and pray for the crippled lady. Her residence was not so far off the walking track; so we started trekking before it got too hot. Soon we found the house and a small older woman sitting cross-legged in front of the locked front door. “Where are her children?” I asked. “Pastor, they are in the fields working”. “So this

lady sits here all day alone until they return in the evening?” I said. “Yes Pastor”. I examined her legs and found them completely frozen in a tucked position under her body. “I need another man to help me to lift her under her arms to get her off the ground,” I said.

Our music team ladies were quite strong and one of them said, “I can lift one side Pastor.” One young man went to one side and the lady went to the other. As they lifted her from the door mat the cripple lady showed signs of pain. I then prayed loudly in Jesus name in my usual simple fashion. I requested the other lady to pull on her legs until they were straight. The more she pulled the more the lady complained of pain. “They won’t move Pastor, I can hear cracking,” she said. “I want those legs straight; she can’t walk on bent legs, now straighten her legs,” I commanded. The ladies looked at me in disbelief as if I was a hardhearted unfeeling person with no regard for the woman’s condition. Those holding her up were having trouble keeping her up as the weight of the woman increased due to the pressure being applied downwards in an effort to straighten her legs.

Once her legs were straight I barked, “Let her stand, let her arms go; clear those rocks out of way so she can walk a straight line,” Then I said to the woman, “You can walk now”. The lady looked at me fearfully. “Lady, you’re healed just walk down the path”, I said. Slowly she stepped out one leg after the other and continued to the end of the leveled pathway about 25 meters away. “Now turn around and walk back,” I shouted. As she turned around she put her hand to her

mouth and blew me a kiss. We left her walking slowly and continued on the trek.

## **MORE OF THE UNUSUAL**

As we arrived into the next village I noticed a school on the left on a steep slope. Our luggage stowed, I requested that the pastor accompany me to the school to survey the venue where we would hold the meeting that night. When I entered the large classroom I found a large pile of gravel stored in the center of the room. The local pastor was quite excited I would be preaching that night. “Pastor, I am a little concerned about the pile of gravel dividing the room,” I said. “No problem Pastor Lawrence, we will manage,” he said.

That night the service proceeded in the usual fashion; numbers made commitments to Christ and many others were filled with the Holy Spirit. I walked around the gravel to pray for those waiting for prayer. Towards the end of service one young lady began to speak in perfect English. “Oh, I praise you oh my God”. I got closer to her as I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Some months earlier I had been to Britain and it sounded like a Londoner’s accent. Her new unknown tongue was English. It was like the day of Pentecost when those in attendance heard their mother tongue languages spoken by others in the upper room.

After the meeting I spoke to her in English; but she had no idea what I was saying. The woman could only speak the local dialect and of course perfect English in tongues.

## NEW CHURCH IN SAMAR

Once whilst traveling in Ifagao province, I was told of an American lady missionary working in a town at the base of the famous rice terraces. Mame Black's house backed onto the start of the steep rice terraces that disappeared into the clouds. It was a most incredible view. She invited me to preach that night at her prayer meeting. During the service she was slain forwards on her face. I felt the wind of her frame pass me as she crashed prone on the concrete basement floor. When she finally stood to her feet I could not see one mark to indicate such a fall. She had such a Holy Ghost presence about her one could tell she was a real woman of God. Some days earlier God had spoken to me about going to the island of Samar. I asked her if she knew anyone in Samar. She said she knew a pastor in Leyte near Samar. There was no address given, just the name of the town where he lived. I thanked her and continued my journey. One week later I decided to go to Leyte.

On arrival at the airport at 7-30am I boarded a jeep heading to town. I showed the driver my piece of paper with the name of the village. After 30 minutes he told me I had arrived. I stood on the concrete road wondering what I was going to do to locate the pastor. After a few minutes I flagged down a tricycle driver. He did not know the whereabouts of anyone named Pastor Rey. He flagged down another tricycle. That driver knew his whereabouts and for a few pesos he took me to his house. The house was so small, I wasn't sure I had the right address. Then a young man walked from the house.



As we met in the front yard, he asked me if I was a missionary. I affirmed that I was whereby he said, “Oh, good because I was in prayer just now and God told me he was sending me a missionary”. Over the next few days we became good friends and co-workers in the harvest.

As I walked into his house I was introduced to his wife and four young children who were getting ready for school. There was no bedroom that I could see and not much else that indicated a family of six lived there. Everyone slept on the floor. The kitchen was merely a leaky tap that trickled cold water into a plastic basin with a small kerosene burner to one side. “Brother Lawrence, would you like to stay with us”. I looked at Pastor Rey, and asked, “Where would I sleep, there doesn’t seem to be enough room for your family let alone a visitor”. “Oh, we will find space; we can put a sheet over there and make a bedroom for you”, he said. His wife agreed with his homely suggestion, but my western culture could not conceive of such sleeping arrangements later that night. I did indeed sleep that night behind the thin sheet.

Rey, who was a qualified Roman Catholic priest, had only recently being filled with the Holy Spirit and the week before he had removed his robes and left the priesthood. As we drank coffee together I discovered that Rey had started many churches and some of them were on the island of Samar. Rey offered to take me there on Sunday night and after preaching in a friend’s church on Sunday morning, the same pastor asked if I would preach on his radio program that afternoon.

That night we made ready for the ferry trip to Samar that departed at midnight. We arrived at the dock about an hour early to secure a hammock on the boat. The whole upper deck was covered in hammocks, which were lined up side by side and head to toe. It was so hot I was looking forward to the departure so that fresh air would rid us of the rankness of stale human togetherness.

The unsafe overcrowded ferry left the dock on time at midnight and we arrived in Samar the next morning at 5-00am. The Waray people spoke a different dialect called Waray-Waray. This was the language spoken on Samar. The Waray people on board the ferry were quite resistant to Rey's guitar playing and gospel singing.

The next morning we ate breakfast with one of Rey's associates. The pastor suggested that we travel together to another town that had been difficult to evangelize. We arrived before lunch and whilst the usual arrangements were being made with the town mayor to hold meetings in the town square that afternoon, I walked the streets.

I play acted with a few children and within minutes I was surrounded with dozens of happy laughing children. They followed me like the "Pied Piper". It must have looked unusual; a white man walking down the street with an increasing number of small children following close behind. The more I walked the more children left their houses and joined in the rowdy procession around the streets. Some parents were concerned as they saw their young ones walking from the front yard and joining the noisy crowd. I used the

opportunity to promote the upcoming meeting in the town square. “I’m preaching at 2-00pm in the town square this afternoon, bring your family and friends”, I yelled. Finally, I sent the children home to their mothers.

Then I made my way to the mayor’s office to pick up the paperwork for the meeting and made my way to the square. When I arrived I found a small sound system next to a large wooden box. Both had been borrowed for the outdoor meeting. Soon the guitarist began strumming and the sound of loud singing made its way around the village.

Within minutes many people began to gather in the grassy town square. After thirty minutes I stepped up onto the box and began preaching. My short thirty minute message concluded with the usual challenge and thirty five people made their way to the box where I was standing and gave their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Just as I stepped from the box platform God spoke to me to start another meeting immediately. Some of my helpers were unsure why I wanted another meeting, for the first one had only just concluded. The song leader stepped up on the box and the second meeting began; as I concluded my second message, I counted another thirty five people standing in front of me. The team had reaped a double portion of souls in one afternoon. It was decided I should hold a house meeting that night and invite the new converts to attend.

That night many of the new believers were in attendance. There was not one church in the village and not one new convert possessed a Bible written in the Waray-Waray dialect. “So there are no Waray-Waray

Bibles in this village?” I queried. Then a young man told me that he had an old Waray Bible in his bag that he was using at Bible school on the other island. He agreed to give me his Waray Bible that night for the new converts and I gave him money for a new Waray Bible when he returned to Bible school. That still left the problem of the seventy new Waray converts; sheep without a shepherd.

The next morning our pastor friend from the other side of the island informed me that God had spoken to him during the night and told him to move to that village and assume the pastoral duties. He said he would ask his junior pastor to care for his own church. “You mean you are going to pack up and move here”, I said. “Yes, I will move tomorrow”, he said. In those days there were no mobile phones, I hoped his wife, whom I had met briefly the day before would be just as enthusiastic.

I was astounded at how fast God had laid the foundation of this church, for I had been in the village less than 24 hours. It was evident that God had sent me to Samar; the timing of God was perfect. God had opened the way and had met every need.

## **PUBLIC SCHOOL REVIVAL**

The next year Rey moved to Cagayan De Oro in northern Mindanao. A friend from USA met me in Manila and we travelled together. Rey’s new house was much bigger than the one at the previous address and the two missionaries slept in a separate room. On Sunday we ministered in a church in a rural community. The pastor

who was the headmistress of the local school was so blessed in the service she asked me if I could preach at her school the next day. “Don’t you need to make some arrangements first?” I queried. She looked at me and said, “I’m the headmistress, the teachers have to do what I say”. “Wow”, I thought, “With liberty like this, it will be interesting to see what God will do tomorrow in scripture class.”

The next morning the headmistress was prepared and anticipating our arrival. She directed us upstairs to one of the first floor classrooms. The classrooms had large central concertina doors which had been opened making two class rooms into one large room. Other students from other classrooms were quickly ushered by their teachers into the room. As I stood near the blackboard the headmistress gave me a nod and I began my simple gospel message to about one hundred and twenty students. During my sermon other teachers who were walking to their classes looked inside the open door wondering what was happening; two stepped inside the door and stood to hear my message. The headmistress didn’t seem to mind that her teachers were not in class and made no objection. At the close of my message more than a hundred students and two teary eyed teachers raised their hands to receive Christ as Savior.

## **THE CANCER IS GONE**

As we walked from the classroom one of the teachers asked for special prayer. She requested we pray in the school yard for she was on playground duty. Joe

and I followed the schoolteacher to the centre of the field away from the children. She stopped, turned around and said, “Last year I had a breast removed due to cancer, now I have cancer in the other breast”, she said with tears in her eyes. Then she grabbed my hand and pressed it against her breast. I was somewhat embarrassed, but she held my hand firmly to her breast. “Pray for me pastor”. I looked at Joe and said, “Can you join me in prayer for this lady”? Joe had a booming voice which attracted the attention of some curious students who began to make their way to the praying missionaries. I was hoping his prayer would be a short one for my hand was still inappropriately pressed against the teacher’s breast.

Our agreeing prayer of faith finished and as I removed my hand, the teacher screamed out, “The cancer is gone, I am healed”. She was ecstatic, and kept thanking us for praying. One young boy said, “We didn’t know that Miss had cancer”. “She used to have cancer, but she is healed now”, I said. The headmistress was so pleased she offered one the empty classrooms for lodging, where we both stayed that night.

## **SAVED AND REUNITED**

On another visit the headmistress pastor thought we should do a crusade meeting in the centre of the larger town. Whilst Pastor Rey worked on the meeting preparations, I decided that I would visit the estranged headmistress’s husband who was the headmaster at another school 45 minutes away. The headmistress was

not in favour of the idea for many years she had tried to convince her husband to receive the Lord. Not only that but they had lived apart for many years. “Well someone needs to invite him to the crusade”, I said. The pastor wrote the details of the location of the school and I set off to give her husband my personal invitation.

On route I requested that the driver let me down at the school. The jeepney driver was puzzled and amused. Looking at me through the large revision mirror he affirmed he had heard correctly, “You want me to stop outside the school?”

The jeepney halted at the school gate and I walked down the pathway into the hallway. Although the classes were in session, I found a teacher who directed me further down the hallway to the headmaster’s office. The door was open and the headmaster was seated at his desk. He looked up and said, “Come in, how may I help you?” I told him my name and my purpose for being in Mindanao. I mentioned the small crusade meeting that evening in the town square and the fact that I would be the guest speaker. “I have come specifically this morning to invite you personally, I’d love you to come and be part of it tonight”, I said. I assured him that my invitation was not his wife’s idea. I shook his hand and departed.

When I arrived at the town square that night I noticed that there were not enough lighting tubes; in the dimness it took a few seconds to recognize the headmaster sitting on the front row. He greeted me like an old friend and took his place. His wife arrived and seeing her husband looked very surprised, yet hopeful.

At the close of my message, the headmaster was the first to respond to my altar call. He stood up and took his place in front of me. As others were gathering beside him, I took time to speak to the headmaster personally. “Sir, are you absolutely certain you want to make this decision; you want to follow the Lord personally”, I said. He assured me that he was serious in his decision, so I repeated what I had just said to the rest of the men and women standing at the front.

At the close of the meeting the headmistress invited everyone to her home for supper. The headmaster was not sure he was invited, so I made it clear he was personally invited. “My wife may not like that”, he said. “I am sure it is not an issue, besides I would like you to come and share fellowship with me, I’ll protect you”, I said with a smile.

The young men removed the sound system and lights, whilst my headmaster friend and I stacked the chairs. Within minutes the town square was back to normal.

When we arrived at the house, light rain began to fall. Once everyone arrived and supper was in progress there was a cloud burst of very heavy rain. The headmaster was a little uncomfortable with his wife in the room and he wanted to go home. The headmaster put on his leather jacket, said goodnight and got onto his motor cycle.

Just as he started the motor cycle very heavy rain began falling and he was forced to come back inside the house. Over a period of an hour he was forced to retreat inside three times. I said with a smile, “You might have



to stay the night”. I knew that God was working and this rain was God sent. Within a few weeks he was reunited with his wife living in the family home. What a miracle!

## **TAMILS AT THE TIP**

In April, 1989 at the conclusion of a five-month world trip, I made one last ministry stop in India before returning home to Sydney, Australia. I only had about two weeks left to me in my rushed schedule, so I was looking forward to my short stay in India. For many years I had a great desire to minister in that nation. I had two contacts only, one pastor’s name was given to me in Australia, he was located on the very southern tip of Tamil Nadu and the other contact came from USA; he was located in Gujarat state. I had written my first contact many weeks earlier, but I was told that the mail was very slow in Indian villages, so there was no guarantee that the pastor would meet me at the airport.

However, on arrival into the airport in Trivandrum, Kerala I was quickly hustled into a taxi by the pastor’s helpers. This was done at a cracking pace to avoid the intimidation of the bag snatching hands of airport porters and the aggressive taxi drivers looking for a good fare.

Making myself comfortable in the rear of the taxi, I suddenly realized I was sitting in the rear of a newer version of a 1954 Morris Oxford. This vehicle went out of production in Australia over thirty years earlier. I was told it was a Mahindra. These cars were still in production and the one I was traveling in was

only a few years old. How could such a box of rattles with no working gauges be only a few years old? For the next two hours we jerked, pitched, rolled and skated over the worst narrow tar sealed roads I had seen. Because of the heavy torrential rains, the roads resembled shallow rivers twisting their way through the most southern tip of Tamil Nadu. The driver, with one hand on the steering wheel, seemed to under-steer into most corners. My taxi ride was made even more frightening watching his other hand feverishly removing mist from the windscreen or pushing it hard on the horn even if there was nothing to honk at. The car horn seemed to be used as a play thing of power. Even as a teenager I had never allowed myself to be as foolish as to participate in joy rides with one-handed drivers. In these slippery conditions I was not exactly enjoying myself.

Silent prayer was now more than meditation and in this discipline I continued for the rest of the journey. I would soon discover that this man was a good driver compared to others in India.

When I arrived, I was asked for the taxi-fare. The pastor told me that the driver was a friend, and I would be only charged the petrol. This was something I had to get used to. Even though I was the visiting minister, the consensus was that white people and missionaries were very rich. Not only could they afford to pay for all the expenses, but they were expected to.

I was uncertain where I would lodge that night, but being a white preacher, I was taken to the best house in the village. The owner of the house was a friend of

the pastor. Nightly a taxi would arrive at the gate and take me a half-mile to the meeting. The driver was always late, before and after the meetings.

In order to set an example to the congregation of the importance of arriving at church on time, I dismissed the driver and walked to the services. Not only was I able to be on time, but I was saving a little money as well. It was common practice for the driver to sit in the taxi and wait for his passengers to return to the taxi. The kilometer rate was not worth much, the waiting time was where they made their money. Being a white man didn't help when the bill was being settled. Diplomacy usually was forgotten when my Scottish side was challenged. I soon learned that any bartering prowess gained in other nations would need some sharpening up for India.

A day later, I was presented with more bills. It seemed I was also responsible for the Pandol, the temporary platform for the ministry team. Then there was a bill for the band. Being at the end of my world trip, I was thankful I had saved a little on the taxi fares and was able to pay the bill with as much grace as possible. Why did I have to pay for such a music band? Their music was merely crackly noise from punctured speakers and a homemade drum kit.

In order to spend more time with the pastor, I decided to relocate to the pastor's house which was located at one end of the church. I wanted to stay with him; hoping I could share some Bible teaching ideas with him. This wasn't going to be easy, as much of the pastor's time was consumed with problem solving. The words "excuse me pastor" usually meant another person

was in need of a quick solution to their dilemma, and the pastor seemed to be the district problem solver. I was sure I had found another Moses. I hoped this wasn't the situation all over India.

At night there were about two thousand people sitting on the ground at our makeshift revival. During the day the church was the communal meeting place; many busy hands were available to get ready for the night meeting. The women were more active; the noise of activity was like the buzzing of bees.

When the evening revival meetings concluded I was hurried back to my new enclave which was merely a thin curtain partition wall at the rear of the church. Every night dozens received Christ at the temporary crusade site, where many were healed and filled with the Holy Spirit.

I arranged morning teaching meetings so that the people could get the maximum benefit from my short stay; however these sessions always started at least an hour late. The men folk, including visiting pastors relished a good argument; this cultural foolishness was so difficult to work with. There was no concept that I was there for the purpose of ushering in spiritual change. My exacting foreign ways were very misunderstood; many were resistant to changes. Our cultures were so different there was very little common ground. However, everyone valued what God was doing in their midst.

Every night after the meeting, my meal was brought to my room. I was sure I had a dozen young women of the church helping the pastor's wife feed me. Their laborious job was appreciated, but it was not

possible to eat all the special made courses that were laid on my small table. Where did they get the money for this special food? I was always concerned whether the children had enough to eat, as visitors often ate first. The meal preparation seemed to take up half the floor of the church. The ladies were engaged busily in very intensive work which had to satisfy the watchful eye of the pastor's wife. Then the pastor would add another chore or two. Their generosity and love was something to behold; I wished that other church workers could see and experience this generosity to the ministry. Their service to God was considered normal Christian duty. It seemed to be customary to stand next to the visitor whilst the meal was being eaten. The pastor stood there checking that everything was satisfactory. I was certainly not accustomed to this. I was asked many times, "How's the taste, is it good?" Finally, I convinced the pastor to find another chair and sit with me.

These meal times were my only opportunity to share with the pastor. I spoke of better ways to conduct church services; how to work with the moving of the Holy Spirit in the meetings. I also taught him about offerings and other ministry disciplines. These times of sharing were greatly appreciated and soon he was seeking my advice on other issues during the day. I usually ate my dinner at mid-night and only when I had finished and my table cleared would the pastor consider eating with his family and visitors. This was done on the floor nearby my room at the front of the church. There were no other tables or chairs. Our friendship inclusive of ministry continues after 30 years.

## THE GAMITS OF GUJARAT

Having left the southern regions of Tamil Nadu I made my way north by flight to Bombay and then train to Ahmedabad, in the state of Gurjarat. In those days there were no super express trains. Even the express trains were very slow running at a mail train pace. My contact was Dr. Raj, a medical doctor now 70 years of age. He had given up his medical practice many years before to preach Christ to the Gamit tribes. This tribal minority was about 350KM south of Ahmedabad.

I was met at the railway station by Jacob Raj, the doctor's son, who was assisting his father in his ministry work. Jacob was a few years older than me and within days we became good friends. My experience of southern Tamil Nadu readied my hand on enough money needed for the taxi, but on arrival at the Raj's home, I was not allowed to pay. Dr. Raj had a very different attitude about money and the taxi fare was settled without argument.

My bags were carried into the house and I was soon introduced to the family. Dr. Raj was a small man with great Christian maturity that came from years of serving God. He believed in living and walking by faith. It seemed as if all the family members shared that view; their calling was to live and work for God. The family home buzzed with visitors from morning till night; many coming for prayer during the day in hope of their need being met by the Raj family.

That night Dr. Raj informed me that I would be accompanied by his son Jacob to minister among the

Gamit people. I was told we would leave early the next day by train to Surat and then board another local train to Vyara and then we would travel by bus or jeep the rest of our journey to the first church. I only had eight days to spare and so three churches were selected from more than a hundred that Dr. Raj presided over.

## **OVERCROWDED TRAINS**

The next day I experienced the Indian trains that some missionary friends had told me about. I had never seen such over-crowding; there were thousands already on the very long trains as it slowly came to a stop. There were even people sitting on top of the carriages. The trains, which were rarely on time, arrived at the station at a crawl. Hundreds of passengers together with their coolies and porters carried what seemed to be all their worldly possessions; these jostled for position right on the edge of the platform anticipating the beginning of the push and shove struggle of boarding. It was just as difficult stepping down from the carriage carrying luggage; one army was pushing to alight; the other army was pushing upwards to get on. Fighting often broke out during this madness of uncontrolled push and shove. It was a little better if you had a seat reservation and held a ticket with a car and seat number on it. However, this had to be done weeks in advance. The ticket inspector or T.T as he was called often settled disputes.

Later that day we boarded a second train from Surat to Vyara; then we hired a jeep to take us the rest of the journey to our first village church.

## MUD HOME COMFORT

Soon I was entering an ancient world of the Gamit people. Gamit people were nearly all surnamed Gamit, who usually married other Gamits of different locations. One didn't bother asking their surname, Christian names were good enough.

Their houses were a lot larger than other minority groups and very unusual. The walls were constructed with large timber poles with beams that supported smaller logs pitched as rafters forming a hipped roof. Over the branch rafters split bamboo battens supported unglazed terracotta roof tiles, which during the rainy season were not always water tight. The walls were constructed of woven bamboo overlaid with a mix of water buffalo or ox dung, fine straw and mud which was mixed with water and applied by hand.

It was customary for a number of women to engage themselves in this smelly task and usually houses were re-plastered with the thick brown mud every year or so according to weathering. The dirt floors were also plastered in this fashion. The surface seemed to cushion slightly under foot, making it easy to walk on. It was rough compared to modern western living, but a very pleasant change which I enjoyed immensely.

Although our lifestyles and customs were very different and both parties had no idea what they were saying to each other I was always immediately included as one of the family. Their hospitality was beyond belief and ongoing friendship with the Gamit people continues today whenever I visit.



## ANCIENT LIFESTYLE

Their subsistence farming lifestyles had only slightly changed over the centuries and on my arrival I noticed water buffalo and oxen being led into a stall. This was not the barn where the animals were kept; this stall was attached to the end of the house under the same roof. Their prized animals were separated only by a thin partition wall. On many visits I was allotted a room right next to the animal stalls. Being a light sleeper I always heard the rustling of buffaloes; milking began at about 4.00am.

Near the house where I stayed was an old ox cart. These were of a very ancient design, and used for carrying heavy loads of farmed produce. I had seen many of carts carrying sugar cane as I traveled that day. These timber framed two-wheeled carts had no springs; the drivers lurched in all directions.

Not far from the house was a threshing floor; this smooth swept ground had a timber pole standing in the center. I'm sure this was a similar type used by Boaz and his helpers in the Bible book of Ruth. Grain foods were laid on the floor and an ox (or oxen) was tied by rope to the pole and made walk in circles over the grain stems. The continual walking by the heavy ox separated the grains from the stem. The husk filled grain was then thrown into the air using a large woven plate so that the wind could separate the husk from the grain. This grain was then stored for food and seed inside their homes in big box like storage bins made from dung, mud and straw. Everything was done by hand; their subsistence

farming lifestyle was absolutely no frills. It didn't matter where I walked I found something of interest worthy of another photograph. Water was carried long distances from the well by the young girls balancing large earthenware urns on their heads. The clay urns kept the water cool.

Initial greetings included the offer of tumblers of water served by the young women. Then I followed my bags into a darkened room. There were no windows, just a small timber shutter which was opened for fresher air. This removed some of the invasive smoke from the kitchen. Some of the houses had very basic electricity; two copper wires were hooked over a power line nearby and run inside the house. Blackouts were a constant daily occurrence and sometimes there was no power for days, particularly after a storm. This was no burden as I had a flashlight, and always carried a shaving brush and razor. Visitors' clothes were ironed with a heavy old box iron heated with burning charcoal.

## **BATHHOUSE THEN CHAI**

There were no proper constructed bathrooms or toilets to be found in the villages in those days. When white missionaries arrived, pastors would ask some men to erect a temporary makeshift wash-house, which doubled as a toilet. The thin walls were like free standing woven bamboo mats, about 150cm (five feet) high tied to a few sticks stuck into the ground. There was usually an old woven bed-sheet for the door which blew in and out in the breeze. Privacy didn't seem to be high on the

agenda and after all, the white man's bathhouse would be removed in a few days and everything would return to normal. Two part-filled galvanized buckets were placed inside on the dirt floor; one had hot water and the other cold. Having hung my clothes and towel on the flexible walls, I mixed the waters with the tumbler provided and enjoyed a well-earned wash. Standing on a number of saucer size large river stones, I endeavored to soap up, only to find I slipped into the crevices of the rocks.

Ablutions done and feeling presentable for the evening service I took my Bible to the outside veranda just before dusk. Just as I gathered the last thoughts for my message a young woman brought me a cup of hot tea. This was "Gamit Chai" and instantly I summoned a love for this concoction. The cups were small; in keeping with the old English tea cups used by the British decades earlier. When I wanted another cup, I would say, "Eck Chai", meaning "One tea". The kitchen workers finally worked out what I wanted. The tea was made in an unusual fashion. Using a circular pincer like pliers, pots were placed or removed from an earthen hearth. The pot was filled with half water buffalo milk and water; as it began boiling tea leaves, crushed Cardamom and small Cinnamon sticks as well as a hand full of sugar was offered into the pot. This concoction was then stirred for a time and then the steeped brew strained through a cloth into the cups. I was not fond of strong tea, but this Gamit chai recipe was exceptional; and for the next few days if a second cup was available I made my usual hand signals so that I could procure a second cup.

## TIME FOR CHURCH

A loud announcement from loud speakers on the church roof some distance away interrupted my thoughts. The distance was not a problem due to the four large horn-like loud speakers that were mounted on the church roof; all points of the compass were covered. The sound carried some kilometres in all directions.

Singing had been going on for some time, but unlike other places in India, the people were waiting for the preachers. We walked a short distance on dirt tracks and leaving our shoes at the door walked into the already heavy air. There were approximately two thousand people already seated on the floor. Because of the large crowd, there was a very narrow pathway separating the men and women who were cross-legged on the floor. The visiting ministers and local pastors walked this pathway to get to the platform where blanket padded timber benches were made available for seating.

As I took my place on the bench I noticed that the church was constructed very much like their houses, only much bigger. Looking out across the sea of faces I noticed immediately that these people had been taught very differently. Expectancy permeated their beings; every eye was glued to the platform. Even the hundreds of small children seated with their parents had little or no personal activity or distraction; everyone was eagerly waiting for the service to begin. Even though many of the older folk were illiterate; they all seemed to have a God given purpose for being gathered. Their personal hunger and eagerness to hear the word of God literally

oozed from them. The youngsters had already been singing for an hour before the service begun.

An old table was used for the pulpit and two microphones on stands stood behind it. A kerosene pressure lantern hung in front of the table in case of the usual untimely blackout. These daily power failures continue to this day, although some of the larger churches now have generators.

## **LONG PRAYER INTERVALS**

After a lengthy time of singing, a church elder was asked to pray. This was the allotted time for an interval and his prayer was made long enough for that purpose. Those who needed to go to the toilet quickly got up and disappeared into the darkness.

Being a farming area the crop lands were obviously well fertilized when these large services were convened; the men walking in one direction and the women in another. Jacob sometimes reminded me to use my flashlight when walking back after service. This activity had no effect on the prayer being offered. In fact hundreds were lost in God's presence and many found themselves prostrate on the floor. The thousands seated on the floor closer than peas in a pod were not troubled by those being slain in the Holy Spirit. Some had simply ceased sitting upright and were temporarily lying on the floor. Those who had exited the building momentarily quickly found their places on the floor and continued praying loudly.

## HEAVEN'S REALM

This was one of the only times in any service, that I purposely kept my eyes open during prayer. I found myself in an arena of the Holy Spirit where the sea of hundreds of heads with lifted hands motioned like waves swelling and rippling at floor level. Their vibrancy of high emotion seemed to be an orchestrated flow of the Holy Spirit ushering them into the heavenly realm. I could not believe this had been achieved in only a few minutes. Why did God need a preacher in this service? There was some difficulty restoring quiet, many continued in energetic prayer and praise and most of the congregation seemed to have trouble coming back to earth to continue the order of service. Most times a tambourine or small drum was used in an attempt to subdue this glorious praise from heaven.

To this day, I have yet to experience such a wonderful unity of the spirit by any other people group. Although thousands seemed to be intertwined on the floor each person was intent on wholeheartedly giving themselves to God in worship. Many times over the years of association with this work, I have requested by a motion of an upheld hand that the wonderment of this heavenly activity be allowed to continue momentarily. Usually my request was granted; the interruption by the tambourine postponed a little longer, so that I could enjoy the heavenly glory a little longer. The leadership held the view that the level of excitement needed to be controlled, in case extreme emotionalism cut across the usual order in the services. However, I didn't see any

emotionalism; just the wonder of the liberty of the Holy Spirit being released. I yearned for the day when missionaries would allow God to do His work so that mass revival would be experienced in many nations. It was now time for the offering.

Usually in places like India, offerings were not viewed as a serious part of the service. There was a view by many in India that giving a small offering would make one poorer, so the giving of money was left to those who were richer. However, the Gamit people had been taught about tithing to the local church and the need to give offerings. On the large teak posts that were supporting the roof hung hand-made cloth bags. Nearly everyone of that large congregation stood up and began to make their way to the offering bags; others walked to the front table and laid fruit or vegetables nearby. The amazing thing was that they all returned to their original places on the floor.

## **TIME TO PREACH**

Jacob looked in my direction and said, “Yes brother”. This meant it was time to preach.

I preached an hour with as much teaching content as possible in my message. My message concluded, I asked those that were under conviction to make their way to the front. The local dialect was slightly different to Gujarati, the language taught at school and many times the local pastors would offer a slight variation in translation so that the elderly could fully understand what was being said at the altar call. Dozens responded

the first night and prayer was always made for the sick. Because of the language barrier it was difficult to ascertain all that God had done in the services, however, many testified of miraculous healing.

## **FEEDING THE THOUSANDS**

After service the people that had come long distances were fed. The church that was hosting the meetings was responsible to provide the food. Only the larger churches in the church federation movement could afford to feed such huge crowds who sat cross-legged opposite each other in long rows. Large freshly cut Teak leaves the sizes of large plates were placed in front of their crossed legs. Servers came with buckets full of rice, lentils and some other spicy foods. Each person received a good portion on the disposable leaf plates.

Near the church some men stood cooking in a make-shift kitchen. The menu of rice and lentils was cooked in huge brass pots about 100cm in diameter and 40cm deep.

As soon as the first crowd had eaten, their leaf plates were quickly removed and another hungry crowd sat eagerly waiting for fresh Teak leaves to be placed in front of them. This continued until everyone had eaten. Everything was done with great efficiency and after eating many hundreds who had walked or bicycled great distances returned to the church.

After a time of lingering fellowship, everyone laid down to sleep where they were seated earlier during the service. Huddled together on the floor as close as



possible, the men slept with the men on one side of the church, and the women slept with their women friends on the other. Those who had a blanket shared it, but many times the women just used their thin scarf head covering to blanket the chill. I was sure this was a Guinness Book record for the largest sleepover in history. After many hours the excited visitors of many Gamit churches were still talking loudly and it seemed this would continue to dawn. At about 3.30am all was quiet, albeit not for long; for soon it would be milking time.

## **AN EARLY START**

The next day ushered activity much earlier than I was accustomed, considering some had not decided on sleep till 3.30am. Then I heard some men shouting at their water buffaloes at about 4.00am as milking begun. Of course there was the usual crowing of the roosters, followed by the young teenage girls who began their varied chores at 5.00am. Some were sweeping the yards outside the houses; others swept the church and surrounds before breakfast. The younger ones were already carrying heavy water urns from the well. This would be used for the tea when the buffalo milk arrived. The earthen hearth was fired up and charcoal added; soon I could get my early morning chai. The men who had done the heavier pot cooking the night before were again on site rekindling the fire for a light breakfast, which always included cups of tea for the masses.

During these special meetings it was not possible to work out which girls belonged to what household for everyone wanted to help in some way. Because of the hundreds of visitors that had stayed over-night for the morning meeting, there were numerous jobs to be done. Then there was the added responsibility of taking care of the missionary and other visiting pastors. Special food items were purchased and cooked. This was real Christian love; many working in the hot smoke filled kitchens preparing the dozens of special meals in the summer heat. There were no modern automatic ovens that could be preset hours before returning home from service. Every job was very labour intensive, however every task was done willingly with joy.

My delight has always been to sit in the smoke filled kitchen by the fire hearth waiting for my early morning chai. The young girls made very strong tea and due to the language barrier, it took some hand signals to get the first cup of weaker chai. Due to the midday heat everyone carried out their allotted duties as early as possible until the services concluded some days later.

## **HOLY SPIRIT HUNGER**

At about 9.00am we walked to the church. All those who had stayed over-night as well as those who could postpone their daily chores were already seated on the floor. Being the morning teaching session, it was customary that I would be given the microphone early so that those who needed to return home or join those working in the fields could do so before lunch. Because

of their hunger for the word of God, most of them returned again for the evening service.

In those days many pastors who owned bicycles would cycle to all the services to learn from the teachings. I made the teaching as broad based as possible, not forgetting the older ones that may have difficulty with the Gujarat interpretation.

At the conclusion of my message, I decided to share a simple method on the best way to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and asked those who desired to receive this infilling to make their way to the altar area at the front. I had prayed for hundreds of people over many years, and considered it as part of my normal missionary work. I had seen and experienced unusual happenings at altar calls, but I had never encountered such overwhelming sovereign hunger.

I knew I was seeing the greater results of the labors of other men and women of God; it was true that I fasted and prayed for a desired result, but many had labored ahead of me. I was ministering in the midst of a people whose hunger to receive was greater than their understanding of how to receive.

## **PRESSED AGAINST THE WALL**

Many times during these morning meetings the people would rush to the altar and begin to push like starving children grabbing for food.

On one occasion I was literally pushed beyond the table pulpit and found myself pressed against the back wall of the church. There was such emotion and

instant response it was as though a starting pistol had been fired, then as many as possible started running to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I managed to place the microphone on the table to protect it, then bending down to floor level I crawled on hands and knees pushing my way through dozens of legs. Having made my way behind the standing crowd, I stood upright and announced as loudly as possible with hand gestures that I needed everyone to stand in lines. Natubhai, one of the local pastors, understood the word “line”; he began to move as many of the people as possible back from the platform area. Before I began praying, those who were still seated on the floor were instructed to move to the rear of the church.

Some hundreds were moved outside the church in order that those desiring prayer could be lined up in ranks like army troopers. I boldly by-passed the usual protocols of culture and aligned myself with the way the Holy Spirit was moving. The regimenting of these hungry people into ranks for prayer was the only way I could think of to make sure everyone received God’s blessing. I quickly found my interpreter and reiterated the simple way in which God would fill them with His Holy Spirit.

Walking up and down the ranked hundreds who were hungrily praising God, I laid my hands quickly on their heads and God filled many. Even after the interruption of lining up, there were about 400 people eager and hungering to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Because of the different dialects and the noise of hundreds praying it was difficult for me to hear those

new tongues. I often asked Jacob for confirmation that they were speaking in a new tongue. Those that had not received their new tongues stayed a little longer until they did.

## **REVIVAL BABY-SITTERS**

Some days later at a different church, a similar thing happened during the morning session. Once the believers had received the Holy Spirit baptism, I asked for those who were speaking in tongues to sit down, the others continued in their receiving. Many were so changed by the reality of their Holy Spirit baptism that many Gamit women would immediately walk many hours home to take care of their neighbor's children in order that other mothers could come to service the next morning and receive the same experience with the speaking of unknown tongues.

As the final service concluded in each church, Jacob announced that a water baptismal service would be conducted as soon as the candidates could get to the river. I walked back to the house, changed into cotton trousers and walked to the river. I witnessed more than seventy candidates lined up to be baptized. The local pastor needed to approve the candidate before Jacob would allow them to walk into the muddy river. Many were under a pastor's care for twelve months before this important step of water baptism was taken. Every person was baptized individually to make it as personal as possible. Often we were in the hot sun for about two

hours. I had the privilege of shaking every wet hand. These mass baptisms are ongoing till this day.

On my first visit, I ministered three nights and two days in two churches and two nights and one day in the last one. Overall more than two hundred souls received Christ and more than seven hundred and fifty were filled with the Holy Spirit. Over the years God has continued to bless this work and now more than 150,000 people are attending about 300 churches. I knew I was in the midst of a great revival.

The harvest was truly ripe among the Gamits and the reaping of the spiritual harvest came with ease as many worked as a team. During that week Jacob asked me many times to stay longer. Regrettably, I had been away from Australia for five months and needed to return.

On arriving back at Bishop Raj's home, I was asked to sit on the bench in the hallway; it was the waiting bench used by patients when bishop Raj had practiced medicine years earlier. Jacob was then summonsed into the front room, the door closing behind them. Sitting with the dusty bags, I could hear Jacob talking to his father in Gujarati. I could only assume what was being said and hoped my work would be viewed as satisfactory. Then I heard a loud "Hallelujah." Within half a minute, the door swung open and Dr. Raj walked out first. I gathered from his excitement and great smile he was indeed amazed with what the Lord had done for the Gamit people during that week.

Over the years I have taken many people from Australia and America to enjoy the fellowship and

ministry among the Gamit people. They are indeed a blessed and revived people group and many ministers who have been privileged to work with them have returned home wonderfully blessed. On one of my visits, a CPA friend from North Carolina joined us for 10 days. When he returned home he was a changed man. He is currently pastoring his own church.

## **CORRUPTED COPPERS**

In 1993 whilst on a nine month world trip my wife and I scheduled two months of ministry in India. Having spent some weeks of ministry in Gujarat state we decided to save some money and embark on the long train journey from Bombay to Calcutta. From Calcutta we planned another train journey north to Jalgoan in the mountainous regions to the north. The first leg of the journey to Calcutta was two and a half days and we finally arrived after lunch at Calcutta's Howrah railway station.

We waited most of that day on the railway station platform to board the night train on our second leg bound for Siligiri. The Howrah station seemed to be where most of Calcutta's halt, limbless and blind beggars lived. Hundreds of other homeless families were sitting or lying on the floors. Many were in a pitiful state and I felt the need to ration my wife's giving to beggars. Interwoven with the passengers were the professional thieves of varying ages eyeing off the westerner's bags. I had the passports, air tickets and money in a special pouch around my neck and resting against my chest. I had

carried it in this fashion for the weeks we had been in India. Not having bathed properly for some days and feeling a little uncomfortable, I decided to put the pouch temporarily into my wife's handbag. I suggested it would be wise if I carried the bag in case any Howrah robbers tried to make a grab for it.

Some hours passed and that night when it was time to board the train I forgot to re-position the pouch inside my shirt around my neck. Whilst juggling our luggage down the narrow carriage aisle, someone turned out the lights. A policeman then stopped my wife at the narrow doorway and would not allow her to continue down the aisle to her seat. Then in an instant whilst trying to adjust my eyes to the darkness someone relieved me of my wife's bag with all our valuables. I turned around and made for the confusion at the end of the carriage. In the dim light I saw a small boy passing between the policeman's legs. My wife was still trying to get down the aisle. "Sir, let my wife come through", I demanded. Then I said to my wife, "Someone has stolen your handbag, so you stay with the luggage and I'll look on the station". I made my way to the other end of the carriage and found another policeman blocking the aisle. It suddenly occurred to me that the police were in on the take helping the small agile children who were able to by-pass legs carrying small bags.

I ran outside along the platform and found another group of five policemen standing in a circle, engaged in their usual inactivity. "Excuse me sirs, I've just been robbed, could one of you help me". "No, said one policeman, "We're on duty" "Exactly", I retorted.



“That means you can help me”. They began the usual Indian argumentative group discussion, occasionally looking at me with the next excuse why they couldn’t assist me. They suggested that I walk a mile to the police headquarters and tell them. I ran back to the carriage and informed my wife of my misfortune and told her we needed to forget our plans for Siliguri and walk to the police station. Silently talking to myself, I said, “How could you have been so stupid in a place like Calcutta”? “You tell others not to do these things and now you have done it yourself”. Then my wife said, “Have you got any money at all”? “No, it’s all in the pouch”. My wife seemed to have faith for the moment, but I was mentally distracted with my personal disappointment. I kept thinking of the policemen, the numbers of thieves on the station platform, but above all the fact we had missed the train and the meetings near Siliguri.

We struggled with our luggage down the dark dirty streets and finally arrived at the police station. Inside we found unruly inmates crammed into filthy cells; adjacent sat the senior policeman behind his desk barking orders. A subordinate informed me that I needed to fill out a report. “Fine”, I said, “but surely you can help me find the robber first”. This statement seemed to penetrate the rest of the confusion, whereby the head policeman man looked up apathetically and said, “I’m going home in a few minutes, you better hurry.” “Well can you give me a report form”, I said. “We don’t have any, we just use paper”, he said. “Well, give me some paper”, I said. Finally, a scrap piece of paper was torn from a dirty pad.

I began writing while my wife was taken to the in-house WC. Seconds later my wife screamed and yelling in her direction I said, "What's the problem". "There's a big rat in here with me", she said. The inmates began to laugh. The rats were the size of small cats and the news of a rat with the white woman became a source of amusement. As the rowdy inmates comments continued unabated, I quickly wrote down the events and gave my report back to the policeman. He stamped it and threw it back at me. "Don't you want to enter the report in your book", I said. "No, no", he said, "You just keep it for yourself". I possessed the only record of the theft. I wondered why we had bothered to walk all this way.

We were no further ahead than we were an hour ago; the police were obviously not going to do anything. The interview was obviously over the head policeman got up from his chair walked to a cupboard and opening the door I noticed a change of clothes. To my horror he immediately removed his trousers in front of everyone and rummaged through the small closet. My wife seeing the undressed policeman looked the other way whilst he finished dressing. Then one of the onlookers suggested that we should go to the British Embassy. "We don't have any money for the taxi fare", I said. Then a man made his way to the front of the pack and announced he was a taxi driver. He asked how much money I had. Looking again through my pockets, I found 37 rupees. "Thirty seven rupees is not enough to take us to the British Embassy", I said in utter frustration. Then for whatever reason the taxi man decided he would take us for 37 rupees and wanted to do it immediately. He

helped with our luggage, loaded us in the taxi and within a few minutes we were standing in the darkness outside the British Embassy.

I made my way carefully to the tall steel gates; but now we were confronted by the two sword-bearing Gurkha guardsmen who were not going to allow such unknowns through the gate no matter what tale of woe was told. The ranking Gurkha informed us that the embassy was closed and that the embassy officials had retired for the night. Not only that, but we weren't British subjects. The Gurkha was absolutely right, after all, the Australian embassy was in New Delhi, not Calcutta and my wife and I were standing in front of the wrong embassy in the middle of the night.

India is a nation where caste with its ranking speaks up loudly; hence raised voices are sometimes the only communication that its people respond to. It was clear that a much more forceful approach was needed to convince these Gurkhas of our plight. "Sir", I said, "we can't stand out here in the dark all night. We have no money, because it was stolen. I need to talk to the Consul man inside this embassy and I need to do it now". The Gurkhas talked one with the other and then one of them decided to pick up the phone inside the booth and speak to someone inside the embassy. Then without any further discussion one of the big steel gates was moved just enough for us to move off the street. Then one of the Gurkhas produced a flashlight and showed us the way to the residence, which was upstairs over the embassy.

## THE BRITISH EMBASSY

As we entered the residence we saw the luxury the Consul and his family lived in; the most beautiful furniture, some from Britain, hand-made Indian rugs. It was as if we had stepped into another world. A young Indian servant woman led us to the lounge area where we were seated. Our very temporary surroundings looked nothing like India. Beyond the compound gate poverty abounded, yet for the present moment we felt like we were in heaven. Momentarily we relaxed; the servant girl gathering some preliminary information of our plight. I told her of my stupidity of transferring my hidden purse of valuables from my neck to my wife's handbag. She said, "Don't feel bad, some white people have been stabbed to get to hidden money". It was her opinion we were fortunate to be alive. Some minutes passed and the Consul walked in, greeted us in his very English manner and immediately began to investigate the reasons for the emergency. I told him we were experienced travelers in India and that this was the first time we had ever been robbed of our money, air tickets and passports. He told us that because we were Australian subjects he had authority to loan each of us 30 pounds sterling the next morning. He said the money would be reimbursed by the Australian Embassy in Delhi. He then recommended we spend the night at the Fair Haven Hotel at the end of the street. He told us he knew the English lady who owned the hotel personally, strongly urging us to stay there the night. I wanted to stay at the cheapest hotel, for we were penniless and

sixty pounds sterling would have to last till we arrived in New Delhi. Due to our long train journey we were very tired and decided to yield to the British Consul's recommendation.

## **SIXTY POUNDS A NIGHT**

We agreed to come back the next morning to collect our sixty pounds. With luggage in hand we were led again to the front gates and a taxi was summoned. An embassy officer paid our taxi fare and within minutes we were at the check-in-counter of the Fair Haven Hotel. The English woman owner came and I told her the British Consul had sent us. The only room available was the biggest one at the top of the stairs. I was so tired I never thought to inquire about the price of the room; I simply signed the register. One of the house boys carried some of the luggage upstairs unlocked the door where we entered a very large room. I walked into the bathroom and noticed the biggest bath I had seen since I was a child. It was one of the old English baths with big hospital type taps. I immediately turned on the taps to see if in fact there was hot water. We were both ready for the best bathing experience in months. What luxury!

Whilst the water was running into the bath I walked back to the door to read the hotel rules. Then as I read, I saw it. Tariff.....60 pounds sterling. It couldn't be true. Not another mistake to add to my day of blunders. Why would the British consul send me here knowing I would spend all the sixty pounds he would give me the next day on the room tariff? I spun around and shouted,

“Before you get undressed, there’s something you need to know, this room costs sixty pounds...a night!” My wife looked at me and said, “I’m too tired to move anywhere else tonight. I need to bathe and go to bed”. How could I refer to myself as an experienced missionary? I had broken every traveling ordinance in a missionary’s handbook. I had mentored others for years, not even the novices I had taught would make these mistakes. One thing was certain my wife and I needed a miracle of provision.

## **OUR LAST SUPPER**

The sixty pound tariff included a good English style breakfast and lunch. We ate breakfast heartily, and then walked to the British Embassy. Unlike the night before, we were immediately ushered through the gates and led to the glorious room. The consul inquired of our well-being and whether we slept well. We affirmed our rested state, but I inquired about the possibility of getting more money from him as the tariff was 60 pounds, which was the amount he was about to give us. He said that 30 pounds was the total amount permitted to be loaned each person. We filled in and signed the two the forms, then I received the sixty pound loan.

Arriving back at the hotel I talked with the English lady about the possibility of postponing some of the room payment in order that we could travel to New Delhi and work out our dilemma. She was adamant; the total 60 pounds would be paid immediately. “Could we skip lunch and you deduct the cost of the lunch”, I said.

“No, you will pay me 60 pounds and eat your lunches”, she said. This was unbelievable. Why was this English woman so money hungry; after all she got my business from her friend, the British consul. It was obvious I was telling the truth. I gave my wife the bad news and then we walked to the meal room for lunch.

We seated ourselves at a long meal table and I sat at one end of it. My wife sat to my right and whilst we waited for our fish luncheon to be served, I said to my wife, “This maybe our last supper so eat as much as you can.” I had faith in God’s ability to intercede, but frustration was giving me cause to speak unwisely.

## **THE THOUSAND RUPEE MIRACLE**

Just then another white man sat next to me. I recognized his Australian accent and the usual pleasantries were exchanged. A minute or two went by then an American appeared at the other end of the long table; with loud declaration he told everyone awaiting lunch that all his camera equipment had just been stolen at the Howrah railway station.

I whispered to the man next to me; “we had that happen to us at Howrah last night. They got all our valuables; airline tickets, passports and money. My wife and I went to the British Embassy this morning. They loaned us enough money for the room last night”, I said. “You mean you have no money at all” he said. “Not a rupee”, I said. “Come to my room after lunch, and I’ll give you 1000 rupees”, he said. “Oh, no need to give it to me, just lend it to me”, I’ll send it to you when I get to

Australia”, I said. “I have a better idea” he said. There is a lady I know in Australia who has had a car accident; she’s in a wheelchair. She needs it more than me, so send it to her when you return home. Having made an agreement with the man, he returned to his room upstairs.

I looked at my wife who had been talking to someone next to her and said, “Guess what, the man who was seated next to me said he will give me 1,000 rupees after lunch; that will get us to New Delhi!” We were both very relieved and while I went to get the money and the address of the lady in Australia, my wife closed up the luggage. We immediately left the renowned Fair Haven hotel, which at one time was used as a movie set.

I flagged down an auto-rickshaw and we headed to a much cheaper hotel nearby. We checked in using the passport numbers on our unused train tickets. A man at the hotel offered to accompany me to the Howrah station reservation office to purchase two second class train tickets bound for New Delhi. Without passports this was indeed going to be difficult. I pulled out my unused Siligiri train tickets.

There were hundreds of people waiting in lines. My newly found companion armed with my story of woe approached the ticket counter with a piece of paper with each name and age written.

Within minutes I had the train tickets I needed for travel the next day. That night we rested a lot easier.

The next morning, to conserve money I found a man cooking omelets near the slum. His rickety bicycled wheeled cart was his kitchen. On top of the cart was a



small kerosene fired burner with a blackened wok. I'm sure I was the first white man to purchase breakfast from him. I purchased the best Spanish omelets in Calcutta for ten rupees. My wife was impressed with my elegant breakfast; served hot for only ten rupees. Breakfast done we made our way to the Howrah station.

## **PASSPORTS OR BUST**

We travelled for seventeen hours on that crowded train arriving mid morning in the northern capitol of New Delhi. I had traveled to many places in India, but given our current financial status New Delhi was going to be a challenge. Leaving the platform I found a telephone booth outside near the exit; where I made a collect call to USA.

A year earlier I had spoken briefly to a man of God in Virginia. He was a man that never made unbelieving statements, but on one occasion he said if ever I found myself in trouble I could call him collect. Somehow, I remembered his telephone number and asked him if he knew any one in New Delhi who could accommodate us.

I was given the name of an elderly Christian lady in Green Park, a well-to-do suburb in New Delhi.

On arrival we met Mrs. Nathaniel, an elderly saint who instructed her servants to put us in the upstairs bedroom. We told Mrs. Nathaniel our story and the reason why we needed to come to New Delhi to get new passports. She said we could stay as long as we needed to. I asked her if there were any Pentecostal Churches

nearby where we might minister on Sunday morning. She telephoned her Pastor and he agreed to have me minister the following Sunday.

The next day we went to the Australian embassy to arrange our new passports. The following Sunday we accompanied Mrs. Nathaniel to church.

On arrival I noticed new cars and numbers of motor cycles parked outside the church. Being such well to do people, maybe the pastor would consider giving us an offering to help us, I thought. The service was wonderful and so many had been healed. At the close of service we were driven back to the house empty handed; not even a few rupees as a love offering.

## **THE HEALING HANDKERCHIEF**

The next morning I received a telephone call from the same pastor. He told me that one of ladies I had prayed for the previous day wanted us to visit them. I told him I had no money for a taxi fare and if they wanted us to visit them they would need to come and meet us at the house.

When they arrived, they came bearing numerous gifts. I remembered the lady; she was the last person I had prayed for. Her father-in-law was gravely sick in bed and was not expected to live much longer. I had taken my handkerchief and after prayer instructed her to lay it on her father-in-law. This she had done and there was an instant result. They were so thankful and appreciative that they had come bearing gifts. The lady's husband was the owner and manager of a hotel in Manu Marg. He

asked us if we would like to stay at his hotel. I declined stating our financial problems had not been resolved. “You and your wife can stay free, no charge”, he said. “How long can we stay, for it may take many days to get all our visas and stamps into our new passports?” I said. “You can stay as long as you like free of charge”, he said.

We both accepted and thanked the man and his wife for their generous offer. We thanked Mrs. Nathaniel for her kindness, packed immediately and left for the hotel.

Our new quarters were a great blessing and much appreciated. Then the manager said, “See this button here, just press it and one of the house boys will come and take your order, tea, coffee, sandwiches anything you like on the menu”. Then he pressed the button, and sure enough, fast stepping feet could be heard coming up the stairs. The manager introduced us to the house boy and then gave him special instructions regarding his special guests. He sent him out for tea and cucumber sandwiches.

It was amazing what one miracle of healing had done. This brother couldn’t do enough for us.

## **ANOTHER THOUSAND RUPEES**

The next morning our host came to our room to check everything was in order. “Before I go, you will need some pocket money”, he said. He put some money into my hand and then left. When I counted it, I found

one thousand rupees. I was astonished, for this was not my usual experience of India; traditionally money flowed from the missionaries to the people. This was indeed another miracle gift.

The next day our friend returned again. He suggested that we visit the Taj Mahal. We told him we were not tourists and that our primary purpose was the ministry whilst in India. He said, “Well you have been ministering, but I want to pay for a bus tour tomorrow for both of you to visit the Taj Mahal. The bus will come downstairs at 4.30am. You must be ready and downstairs at that time. The bus will return to the hotel and drop you both here tomorrow night. My wife and I looked at each other and then we agreed. Then he took more money out of his pocket and said, “You will need some more pocket money for your journey tomorrow”. “Brother, you gave me money yesterday”, I said. “Oh, that was yesterday, this is today”. And with that, he put another one thousand rupees into my hand.

We now had our new Australian passports, but being on a world trip we needed to get all the visas and entry stamps into the new passports before we could even consider leaving India. There was no problem getting the USA and French visas, but the Indian officials wanted bribes and I was not going to yield to this unbelievable unrighteousness.

After many days of traveling back and forth I finally said to the lady in a loud voice, “I will not pay a bribe in this consulate and today is the day that you are going to give me those passports. I want the visas and entry stamps and I want them now”. The lady was

amazed at my defiance and boldness and immediately opened the desk draw in front of me and took both of our passports and walked down a long hallway. It was obvious our passports had not moved from the desk drawer.

Then I heard the loud noise of heavy mechanical stamps making contact. She immediately returned and threw the passports at me. “Now you can leave”, she said angrily. I could not believe people lived in this manner. I had the visas and stamps in our passports and I didn’t pay a bribe; it was a miracle.

## **MIRACLES OF PROVISION**

The next Sunday was our last day in New Delhi. I ministered in a very small Pentecostal church in Green Park on the Sunday morning. There were so many miracles in the service, that when the service concluded, Pastor George insisted that we accompany him to his home. My wife and I sat down and when he returned from his bedroom, he said that God had spoken to him to give us his tithe. It was 1000 rupees. He said he wanted to sow it into our ministry. Indian pastors didn’t usually speak in those terms; it was like a miracle offering. God knew our needs it didn’t matter we were in India.

That week we returned to Gujarat state, back to the Gamit tribes. When we arrived in Ahmedabad, Jacob was already in the villages. We stayed the night and then the next day boarded yet another train to travel south.

On arrival late that day I spoke with Jacob. He had heard of the episode of the stolen bag and the

problems we had encountered. He gave me an assuring look, then said, “Brother don’t worry, the Lord told me to bring my father’s briefcase with me. It has US \$618 in it and you can have it. It is the money he had left when he died.” I was dumbfounded, for Jacob was quite serious. He wanted to give me the total cash inheritance left to the family from his father. I immediately refused, but Jacob kept urging me. I said, “Just lend it to me and I’ll return it when I get to America”. Jacob reluctantly agreed and the money was given to me. We did a few more days of meetings and then we left for Bombay to fly to London.

On arrival we stayed with friends, even so some days later most of our money was gone; consumed by public transport.

## **THAT STILL SMALL VOICE**

One night after a meeting in Birmingham, God spoke to me to reconfirm our air tickets for Tel Aviv. But we were in England, surely this was not necessary, and besides it was 11-00pm and all the offices would be closed. Then again that still small voice of the Holy Spirit urged me to reconfirm our air tickets. I made an STD call and to my amazement a lady answered the phone, who summoned a second more senior woman who could help me.

Due to our constant moving, we had not been notified that the budget airline we were using had gone bankrupt and at midnight that very day was the cutoff point whereby British Airways would honor the tickets

sold by that company. No wonder God had told me to reconfirm the tickets. The lady told me she had both tickets ready for collection at the check-in counter which would open at 5-00am.

We immediately packed our bags and caught the night bus for Heathrow. This was yet another miracle of provision.

The next afternoon we arrived in Jerusalem and stayed with Ruth Heflin at the Mount Zion Fellowship in Jerusalem. We had gone there to pray in the prophetic prayer meetings.

One afternoon at one such meeting I felt God speak to me about going to Egypt. I mentioned it to my wife. At this juncture we had used all of Jacob's \$618 in England and we needed another miracle for the bus fares to Cairo.

The next morning I approached Ruth and told her what God had spoken to me. I asked her if she could lend me some money to get to Cairo. "How much do you want?" she said with a look of caution. "I don't know the cost of the bus tickets, but about US\$250 would help," I said. I assured her that I would give it back when we returned from Cairo. Ruth said, "You will give it back to me when you return! Brother Gregor, you know there are no offerings given in Egypt". For some reason I looked at her and said, "I will give it back to you when I return". Sister Ruth said graciously, "I only have US\$200 at the moment. I thanked her kindly, took the money and purchased the tickets.

That afternoon during the prayer meeting a lady from Virginia, USA said that she had seen a vision of me

holding a multi-coloured bag and that she saw it full of money. I have always valued Prophetic ministry when it was coupled with detailed visions. I noted down as much detail as possible whilst pondering the vision of the “multi-coloured bag.”

## **THE MULTI COLOURED BAG**

The next morning we boarded the bus for Cairo. We traveled south-west through the desert passing many burnt out military tanks and other vehicles of war left over from the 1967 war. That “multi-coloured bag” full of money was still in my thoughts; for the details in the vision were so unusual.

Once we passed over the Suez Canal and into Egypt there was an announcement on the bus, informing the passengers that the bus would only stop at five-star hotels and that all visitors to Egypt must stay at one of those hotels. Given our current financial status we had no plans to stay in any five-star hotels. I asked my wife for the address given to us some days earlier. I began asking English speaking passengers which five-star hotel was closest to that Cairo address. I was told the next hotel was the closest. “Driver, let us down at the next hotel”, I said.

The bus pulled up on the opposite side of the road; our bags were unloaded from the bus luggage bay. We walked across the road slowly in the direction of the bright lights of the hotel.

When the bus was out of sight we immediately crossed the road again and flagged down a taxi. We gave



him our contact address and soon we were outside the apartments. The taxi driver was unaccustomed to taking white people to such suburbs. Being curious he helped us up two flights of stairs with our luggage.

I knocked on the door several times; no answer. Our lady contact was not at home. The corridors were noisy which aroused the next door neighbor. He was sure we had the wrong address. He confirmed his neighbor's name then asked us into his apartment to wait for our host.

The lady finally returned and we told her that we had tried to telephone her during the day. However, she was full of fear as there was a lot of persecution of Christians in Egypt at that time. For some reason we were not welcome to stay and needed to leave immediately. It was 11-00pm by the time she telephoned a pastor across town. His elderly pastor's wife told the fearful believer that we could stay with them that night.

We arrived at the new address at midnight, where we were given a room upstairs over the church. The next morning after breakfast, the Pastor told us that we could stay with them as long as we wanted, but that there was no ministry available to us.

I followed him to his office and said, "Pastor, we came to Egypt because God spoke to us to come. I thank you for your hospitality, but we came to minister. Surely, there is a church here in Cairo that needs missionaries. Reluctantly he found his book of church telephone numbers and very slowly looked down the list. His finger rested on the very last of the twenty two churches. "Maybe this one will take you", he said. After a very

brief conversation in Arabic, he put the phone down and said, “The associate lady pastor will pick you up soon, so get your luggage ready”.

The lady came and we were loaded into a car and taken to her home in a very dusty suburb where piles of garbage lined every sandy street. We were introduced to her husband and later we met the senior pastor of the church who was about eighty years of age. They agreed to schedule us for service that very night for two consecutive nights.

## **DEAD WOMAN RAISED**

My wife and I decided before breakfast that we should both fast and pray that day for opens doors.

That night we walked to the church. It seemed as if we were walking in circles on talc like dust.

On entering the church we were both asked to sit up on the platform behind the pulpit and wait for service to begin. After a while I glanced towards the rear of the church; I saw that a woman was now lying down on the floor in front of a row of pews. At first I took no notice, for I was used to Pentecostals lying prostrate in prayer before meetings started. My prayer-fullness was interrupted when the noise level of the commotion increased around her.

Finally, I asked my wife if she would go down and see what was happening. “See if you can get those women to be quiet”, I said. Some time went by and my wife returned and said, “I think that woman is dead”.

“Oh, no one dies in church, just sit here and smile and I’ll go and take a look at her”, I said.

I went as quickly as I could; kneeling down I could see her face was an ashen Grey color. I felt her pulse on her wrist and under her jaw. There was no heart pulse whatsoever; her body was lifeless. I then stood up and prayed my best Pentecostal prayer, commanding life to return to her body. There was no response, not even the slightest movement.

Walking back to the platform I remembered the two policemen standing at the corner near the church. If they saw this corpse carried from the church maybe an investigation would be carried out and questions raised about the activities in the church. This could get messy. I sat back down on my chair and closed my eyes. My wife leaned closer and said, “Well”? I replied, “Your right, she’s dead”. Then the Holy Spirit said, “Son, why have you given up”. What else did God want of me; the woman was dead. I said quietly, “Lord you see the situation, she’s dead” Again God challenged me; with a directness into my spirit. “You have given up”, He said.

I got to my feet and lifting my hands I began to praise God at the top of my voice for the woman’s miracle. I did not care that I was the visiting speaker or the fact that I was shouting in English in an Arabic speaking church. Time went by, I am not sure how long I shouted praises, but when I finally opened my eyes the woman was just beginning to get to her feet and all of a sudden she came to the altar area and began to dance from one side of the church to the other. This lady was very over-weight, but the Holy-Spirit charged lady was

jumping about three feet high. Back and forth she went and then she stopped in front of the ministers who were seated on the platform and pointing her finger at me said in Arabic, “I’ve just been healed by the power of God and this will never happen to me again”.

At the conclusion of the service as my wife and I walked from the platform, a lady approached my wife and declared loudly, “Last night I had a dream; I saw Sister Donelle in my dream and she was dressed in the same colored dress she is wearing tonight.” We were certainly in the right church; what a confirmation.

As we walked from the church after the meeting, I began pondering. How did that woman know I had prayed for her? She was indeed dead when I prayed for her, and dead people have no knowledge of what is going on around them. What an unbelievable spoken revelation; and that powerful dancing across the front of the church. Oh, what a miracle on our first night of ministry in Cairo. They had wanted us to minister for two nights of meetings and when three nights were finished they asked us to stay for the whole week till the next Sunday night. I declined, for we had not received any love gift; not only that but not one offering had been taken during the three days of meetings, which I reminded them was not biblical.

The pastor and other leaders looked somewhat dismayed and quite some discussion in Arabic ensued. Then my lady interpreter said, “We don’t how to take an offering, could you take the offering yourself; then will you stay till Sunday?” This being the agreement, the meetings proceeded. I told the leaders that only one love

offering would be taken on the following Sunday and those who had been blessed during the week of meetings were encouraged to give into that offering.

## **THE COLOURED BAG OVERFLOWS**

On the Sunday afternoon before we left for the evening service I remembered the vision of the multi-coloured bag and how it was overflowing with money. As we dressed for the evening service, I reminded my wife of the vision in Jerusalem of the coloured bag. “I haven’t seen any such bag”, she said. “Well, do you have any sort of bag we can take to church for the offering”? “Only the one I made at home, I haven’t used it yet”, she said. When my wife handed me her hand-made bag, it was multi-coloured in every respect. “Where did you get this bag; where was it”, I said. “I made it to carry my bible to services; I have not used it till now”, she said.

I could not believe it. This was the very bag described in the vision. God knew we would need the bag for the offering. However, I had no knowledge that my wife was carrying such an unusual coloured bag in her luggage. All we needed to do now was to fill it with an offering.

When we arrived at the church, the church was already full. The men began to place the pews against the walls and stack other pews on top of them. Some pews were removed from the church building altogether. There was standing room only; the crowd stood shoulder to shoulder inside the church and spilled out beyond the rear door as far as the road. Small children had come up

onto the platform to sit and some were now sitting under the pulpit. This was not the normal way to seat the people of God during services, but I could see that a growing hunger to be eye-witnesses of God at work was now generating these unusual seating arrangements. Then I remembered the offering had to be taken and beckoned to my wife to produce the bag. When the offering was brought to the front of the church, I had trouble getting all of it into the multi-coloured bag. Then I remembered the second part of the vision. The bag was overflowing with money; this was another fulfillment of the vision.

At the close of my final sermon, thirty seven people responded to receive Christ as Saviour. To bring the unbelievers to the front during the altar call, I asked people to exit the church to allow some from outside to come inside to the altar for prayer. Many had testified of great miracles that week, the church members did not want the services to end.

That night before we retired we placed the offering on the bed. I carefully stacked the various denominations of Egyptian pound notes in piles; the offering covered nearly the whole double bed quilt. It seemed so much money, but Egyptian pounds were not that valuable at that time. Even so there was US\$600 in Egyptian pounds spread all over the bed. What a miracle; sister Ruth was certainly going to get her money back when we arrived back in Jerusalem.

Now we needed yet another miracle to change these pounds into US dollars. It was Egyptian policy that Egyptian pounds had to stay in the country so it was not

possible to change my offering into dollars at the airport.

The next morning a businessman friend of the associate pastor agreed to exchange our Egyptian pounds for US dollars. Again we had proved that God is a miracle working God.

Before we returned to Jerusalem we decided to travel on the overnight train to Luxor. My wife could not resist Egyptian history and so we decided to take a three day excursion south before returning to Jerusalem. We hoped to visit sites like Thebes and Karnak.

## **THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS**

The next morning we arrived into Luxor and booked into a cheap hotel. Many of the ruins were in walking distance and so with camera in hand we visited the major sites. Our first sites were the Luxor and Karnak temples.

As we walked into the entrance of the Karnak Temple complex I photographed the rams-headed sphinxes and then walked into the main hall area. Here we saw the huge marble columns carved as if men had used giant lathes to turn the rock into perfect cylindrical shapes. As Thebes was inhabited around 3200 BC it was quite possible that Moses had lived in similar massively built palaces. I noticed what looked like a large empty swimming pool to the side. As I readied my camera a young man interrupted me. “Sir, that was not a swimming pool, that was the bath, everything was big during the times of the Pharaohs”, he said. The bath was the size of an Olympic pool.

The next day I rented two bicycles from the hotel and we rode to the Valley of the Kings on the other side of the Nile. Western Thebes had many mortuary temples, but with limited time and money we concentrated on the Valley of the Kings. Looking at my wife I said, "Let's just look at one".

We parked our bicycles and walked to one of the tomb entrances. Near the doorway was a plastic looking mummy lying to the right side of the doorway. It was black and shiny as if it had been clear lacquered. The lady attendant was ready to take our money. "Can I help you?" she said with impatience. "Oh, how do they make these plastic mummies?" I asked. The lady was horrified at my ignorance and said, "That is a three thousand year old king; he was unearthed this morning and has just been put there." There were old rotted rag bandages wrapped around parts of the mummy, but his head was fully visible. What perfect timing; we had just seen a real 3000 year old mummy. We were probably some of the first to see that mummy; we decided there was nothing better to see inside the tomb and continued riding our bicycles to the next site. The next day we boarded the night train to Cairo for our return bus trip to Jerusalem.

The one thing that was firmly fixed in my mind was the incredible riches of ancient Egypt. I saw firsthand what Moses had given up and left behind when he departed Pharaoh's kingdom. The heathen practices of Egypt made no sense to him. Only a committed life to God could save him and protect him and give rise to a miracle working ministry.

That night we returned to Cairo on the overnight



train and immediately boarded a bus for Jerusalem. Having arrived back at the Mount Zion Fellowship in Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem I immediately found Pastor Ruth to repay my loan. I took the money from my pocket and when I put it into her hand she looked at me with surprise. “I told you that I would give you the money when I returned from Egypt; there were a lot of miracles in Egypt, this was one of them,” I said.

## **THE CALL TO PAKISTAN**

I finally arrived into Lahore after midnight. I had traveling nearly 24 hours since leaving home so I was looking forward to a shower and bed.

On arrival at the pastor’s home I was told that dinner would be served momentarily. The last thing I needed that night was food before bedtime. I finished eating at about 1.00am, but as I excused myself, I was informed that I needed to make haste as a congregation was waiting for me. I was told that they had been waiting since 7.00pm. “If you had informed me earlier, I would have skipped dinner,” I said. Fortunately the prearranged house meeting was only a few hundred meters walk.

We walked quickly as the darkness allowed to the small house. As I took my place near the front door the singing became more robust. As I looked around me I noted people sitting cross-legged like sardines squeezed into every room of the house; most could hear me, but not see me. The meeting concluded at 2.30am.

The next day I was taken to a clay brick works. There were numbers of donkeys walking back and forth

like robots to the smoke filled kilns carrying loads of bricks. The bricks were hand-made and men and women worked like slaves. I watched them digging the clay from the ground with large ads shaped shovels. Water was mixed into the clay soil until the desired sticky mud was achieved. Then kneeling down and using their hands they picked up the exact amount of clay and threw the lump into a topless rectangular steel tray. The bottomless tray was then removed from the wet brick and repositioned. This was done at a cracking pace all day long. The brick workers lived in great poverty in cramped conditions in small attached houses in a compound.

Nearing dusk work concluded and the workers returned to the housing compound. The pastor and I sat outside one of the houses and waited for the exhausted workers to gather around us.

Momentarily, singing rang out within the enclave. Later that night some made a consecration to Christ. The pastor had witnessed Christ to these brick workers for some years and now his work was being rewarded.

The next day we went to another brick works further out of the city. There was a similar result as many gave their lives to the Lord.

I enjoyed the return journey home for I was sitting up high on the front seat of a large cart pulled by a mule. My humble means of transport was a source of amusement to truck drivers who waived with enthusiasm when overtaking the cart. Buses were in short supply that afternoon so that large cart was a God's provision.

## THE CEMETERY DEMON

The next afternoon we journeyed by taxi more than an hour. I ministered in the back yard of a house in a small village. There was a 9-00pm curfew so we got started before dark. It was an unbelievable move of God and quite a revival ensued, the people did not want to me to leave and followed me some distance to the waiting taxi. Taking some of the back roads we arrived at the Pastor's house at 9-30pm.

I settled into bed after 10-00pm, I could see the light was still on through a small corner crack in the partition wall, which separated the two rooms. I could hear that most of the family members were in that small room and quite some discussion ensued in the Urdu language. Finally I heard the light switch click and then total darkness.

Just as I drifted off to sleep there was a blood curdling scream. Instinctively, in a spit second I was standing on my feet, my heart pounding. "Pastor Aziz, is everything alright?" I shouted. "Yes, Pastor, everything is alright," he replied. "What was that loud scream I heard?" I inquired. "Well, sometimes when we have a good meeting the demons from the cemetery come to the back window and scream at us," he said. In all the years I had travelled in the nations, this was my first experience of hearing demons screaming outside a window.

The next morning I went to the rear window; I noticed the back wall of the house was built right against the boundary of the local cemetery. The troubled demons

didn't have far to travel to disturb this family. It was abundantly clear that the devil knows what we are doing for God. The devil didn't like the spiritual results in that village and his screams were his way of letting us know.

## **THE CALL TO EAST AFRICA**

East Africa was coming constantly into my spirit and I decided to write to a brother I had met briefly at a conference in the USA. He agreed to meet us at the airport in Nairobi. The taxi took us to the city where we boarded an aging bus. The pastor only mentioned it was a 12 hour bus journey after I had purchased the tickets. This was not going to be pleasant experience; a hotel would have been a much better idea after the long flight from Australia.

My wife and I arrived in Kitale, north-western Kenya at 5.00am the next morning and then waited till 6.00am for the first small bus to take us nearer the pastor's village. The journey wasn't that long and the bus stopped adjacent to a walking track where we walked carrying our luggage thirty minutes to a farm house.

The house where we were staying was about 800 meters from the pastor's house and church. The occupants were house servants of a local farmer who lived near the pastor. Before the pastor returned home he told us to pay for our food and give a small gift to the servant who washed the clothes. What a strange way to treat invited international guests, I thought.

We were now alone in an old rundown farm house. It was now breakfast time; due to two days of travel we were very hungry, but there was nothing to eat in the house. We were so exhausted we decided to stretch out for a while.

I was uneasy about the lack of arrangements, so I decided to walk to the pastor's residence wherever that may be. I was directed to a winding dirt track and soon I passed a deserted homestead. It was a beautiful example of old English architecture just left to the invasion of termites. This did not make sense. Surely someone should move from their mud hut and occupy such a remarkable old home.

The small farms were sparsely populated, but I was encouraged when I met English speaking farmhands along the way. They assured me I was indeed on the right track.

I finally found the pastor inside a circular mud hut. There was a rickety table and chair to one side and a hundred or so Christian books thrown on the mud floor in a huge pile. "Pastor, where did all these Christian books come from?" I asked. "Someone in America sent them to me", he said. He didn't seem that interested to talk to me personally. "You should stack these books on shelving to keep them in good condition, off the floor so termites cannot damage them", I said. He made no response and then I looked back at the books and noticed some great titles, Bible commentaries and such, the kind of Christian books I would love to have in my own bookcase at home. I continued, "You know Pastor, brothers and sisters have given generously in the giving

of these wonderful books; it costs hundreds of dollars to freight these heavy books from America to Kenya. These books need to be stored off the damp dirt floor”. The pastor did not like my advice and walked outside and left me alone in the hut. I immediately followed him in the direction of a small chicken coup.

Then a white man came into view from inside the chicken coup. I was introduced to a British missionary. He was also accompanied by his teenage son. They had built the chicken coup and the previous day had purchased dozens of small yellow chirping chicks. I was told that the raising of chickens would help in the work of God.

I waited till the pastor was alone and asked him why He had invited me to Kitale, given he already had a visiting missionary. “Do you intend to use me in the near future?” I asked. To this he replied, “You can minister in the church on Saturday to some pastors and preach on Sunday morning.” I thanked him and walked to the church to see where I would minister the following day.

I prayed in the church awhile, and then as I walked outside I met the young English teenager carrying a large five liter jar containing some kind of tablets. On inquiry, he told me he had brought the aspirin from home to give to people in Kenya. There were literally thousands of aspirin in that jar. I was now nearing anger as I saw such unbelief even among the helpful missionaries. “Young man, please do not give those aspirins out at the church whilst I am here”. I said. “Why not”, he said. “Well”, I continued “Because, tomorrow I will be ministering in the church and if there

are any who are sick or have need of prayer, I will pray for them and God will heal them without the help of your aspirin. I believe in the miracle work of God and I do want the faith level in these meetings to be reduced with aspirin". The young man showed no signs of comprehension, and so I excused myself and started walking back to the house.

I knew I was now in the wrong place and tomorrow I would be working with people of a different vision. We were in the middle of a real African village and my only Kenyan contact was working with people who were more interested in chicken coups and aspirin than the miracle power of God.

The next day the other missionaries and senior pastor had gone to Nairobi before dawn. I had no knowledge of it until I arrived to take part in the pastor's seminar. I ministered in two sessions during that day and many of the pastors in attendance were appreciative. I hoped that the next day might be more productive at the Sunday morning service.

The next morning two unwashed smelly young men arrived on bicycles to take us to church. We were told we had to ride astride on the rear steel seats behind these rank smelling riders. Thinking we were on our way to the same church we dressed in our usual Sunday attire for service and now we found ourselves riding on bicycles on dirt tracks in a different direction. We had no idea where we were going, but obviously we were not going to the local church where the seminar was conducted the day before. At times we walked beside the

bicycles as the trails were so steep. Along the way my wife's legs were scratched on shrub thorns.

We finally arrived in a grassy field near a solitary tree. We noticed many gathering on the slopes of the field and we were both seated near the shade of the tree. There was a great excitement for the people had not expected white missionaries that Sunday. It was certainly a lovely place for an open-air meeting.

The highland heat was increasing and we would be glad of the humble bicycles on our return journey. The people were very blessed during the church service and many were healed.

On the way back to the house we decided to walk as it was so uncomfortable on the steel racks of the bicycles. A man driving a large tractor stopped and offered us a lift. We climbed up and stood somewhere near the rear axles of the noisy tractor. Lurching forward we began our ride back. All was going well until the pastor now driving a rusted station wagon saw us on the tractor. He was very angry and demanded we get into his car. He took us home without another spoken word. It was obvious we had offended him by accepting the generosity of the farmer.

The next morning the pastor arrived in his station wagon. He demanded we pack our bags immediately for he was taking us to the road to catch a bus. This unexpected expulsion was somewhat inconvenient; we needed to do laundry and apart from that we had no direction from the Lord as to what our next ministry steps should be. I declined his help to the roadway; I



assured him we would walk to the road the next day with clean clothing.

That day I sought the Lord and I felt we should proceed towards Uganda. Some of the local people said this was dangerous and that we would need armed guards to travel with us. This seemed so ridiculous and certainly not a consideration as far as I was concerned. I had the name of a pastor who lived in Eldoret and I decided we would head in that direction the next day.

We paid the house boy to do our washing, however in the rush to get the washing done I had forgotten to take my Kenyan shillings out of my rear trouser pocket. I rushed to the washing buckets but I was too late, the house boy had already stolen the money from the trousers and denied any knowledge of the money.

I had to find a way of leaving this place. Later on that day one of the locals told me that a milk truck drove to the next town at 5.00am the next morning to delivery milk. I walked connecting tracks to the farmhouse and asked the old farmer if his driver could pick us up and drop us at the road. He said, “My driver can take you to the bus station in town; he goes in that direction”. This was God’s provision; it would have been quite a trek with our luggage. It was still dark and cold at 5.00am when we were loaded in the back of the pickup truck with the large cans of milk.

All we knew about the pastor in Eldoret was that his wife worked as a nurse at the hospital. We went directly to the hospital and found her on duty. That night when the pastor arrived he gave us directions to Uganda

and assured us that armed guards were not needed on our way to Uganda. He affirmed there was no real danger if wisdom was employed.

The next day we arrived in Kisumu which was the third largest city in Kenya. We needed some cheap lodgings and the taxi driver took us to the Mona Lisa hotel late that night. The Mona Lisa had very small rooms, but there was a tea-room downstairs.

## **OPEN DOORS IN KENYA**

The next morning I discovered that the post office was directly opposite the guest house. I had the post box address of Mary, a young Kenyan woman I had met in USA. I went to the counter; I asked to see the man who sorted the mail. I asked him if he would mind posting my letter in her post box. He said, "Just post it". I explained the urgency of the matter and before I could buy a stamp for the letter the man snatched the letter and headed to a rear sorting room. I was hoping he did indeed put the letter into her post box. The letter simply stated that we were staying at the Mona Lisa.

That afternoon Mary checked her mail which she did once a week. She didn't have far to walk, she found us prayerfully resting in our room. Mary asked us if we could accompany her to her parent's home for dinner.

That night I ministered the Word of God in their weekly Bible study. The people were so blessed; Mary's father suggested that Mary meet with us the next morning to make sure we caught the right bus heading for Uganda. As there was still a little time before the bus

departed, Mary walked to the post office to talk to one of her Christian friends.

We waited with our luggage on the footpath. Minutes later she returned with her friend who shook my hand and said, “Brother Lawrence, there is a conference in Busia just before the border, you need to go there and preach”. Still shell-shocked from our experience in Kitali, I voiced my caution for surely it was improper for a missionary to just show up without an invitation to a conference and expect to be welcomed with open arms. They both affirmed we needed to go there and ask for a Pastor George.

I took note of the man’s directions and we immediately departed by bus for the conference in Busia. I was a bit bemused by the swiftness of what had just taken place; we had packed for Kampala, Uganda and were now heading for Busia, a border town. I asked the bus driver to let us down at the town hall in Busia.

The bus stopped and the driver pointed to a shabby building. “No, I want the town Hall”, I said. The driver pointed again in the direction of very poorly built two-story building and said with conviction, “That is the town hall”. One of the church members worked at the town hall and she directed me to the church.

We found the church at the end of the street and the conference in full swing. I asked for Pastor George and we were redirected to a hostel, where other visiting ministers were staying. Pastor George was talking to Dan, a Kenyan evangelist who came each year. We introduced ourselves and mentioned the brother from the Kisumu post office. It happened that Dan lived in

Kisumu and had come to Busia for the meetings. He was doing the night meetings. Then George asked, “Can you preach in the next session, it starts in about fifteen minutes”?

We were covered in red dust that had entered the bus through open windows. A young woman was summoned and a bucket of cold water procured so I could wash, dress and proceed to the morning session of the conference.

This conference was held every year and ran for ten days; the sessions ran back on back all day. There were five sessions a day, not including morning prayer which started at 5.00am. The first teaching session started at 9.00am. There were about 700 gathered for the day sessions and more than 1500 gathered at night. There was a special section for the ministers who were given white plastic chairs. The other delegates were seated on timber planks to seat as many as possible. The singing was wonderful with the blended African melodies lifting every soul with purposeful worship. Some would dance on the dirt floor creating a cloud of dust. For the first time since arriving in Kenya I was feeling at home.

The next day we readied to leave for Uganda, however George wanted the both of us to minister that day at various times. We tried to leave for the next three days and each time we were requested to stay one more day. Finally on the fourth day we left for the border, which was only 1.5 kilometers from the church. We paid our money for the visas, but the man only allowed us a few weeks in Uganda.

Once we had passed through immigration we headed towards the customs building. As we walked, a young boy with a rickety old wooden luggage cart approached. He suggested it was a long walk to the bus. I did a deal for less than US\$2 and was glad I did as indeed it was a long walk to the customs building and then some distant to the bus stand. There were fruit and vegetable vendors near the bus stand and I purchased the biggest orange colored pineapple I had ever seen. It was as big as a rugby ball and securing it in the bus would be difficult.

As we waited for the bus I decided we should try a piece of the pineapple. It was that good we both ate the whole pineapple before we boarded the bus.

## **OPEN DOORS IN UGANDA**

Someone at the Busia conference had given us the name of a Christian man who worked in the post office in Kampala and on arrival at the bus stand I asked for a direct route to the post office. The bus stand was like a muddy pool of ankle deep red slush with a glue-like consistency. We quickly carried our luggage out of the confusion of hawkers and pushing travelers and made our way out of the slippery mud onto a better roadway and then to the post office.

Having found my new contact, he suggested I meet another man who worked at the immigration office. He helped us carry our luggage to the building which was riddled with bullet holes. In fact most of the buildings in down town Kampala at that time were

damaged by bullet holes. There was a park near the immigration office and we were asked to sit and rest whilst the man summoned his friend.

Within minutes a very official looking man came and after introductions sat next to us in the park. He was a pastor, who held a senior position in the immigration office. He asked about which border we had used to enter Uganda. He was not impressed when he found out we had only been given a two week visa and were both charged US\$50. He asked for our passports and after perusal he told us we should not have been charged for such a short stay. I told him I wanted to stay longer, but that the officer at the border had only given us two weeks. He retorted, "I'll fix that"!

He summoned a much younger man and gave him instructions concerning new visas. I became apprehensive when I saw our passports disappear with the young man into the bullet damaged building. I inquired about the cost of the new visas. He told me there would be no charge for servants of God. He then asked where we were staying. He recommended the Church of England guest house and offered to pay every second day of our lodging. We could not believe what was happening. We had been in Kampala what seemed like minutes and we had been given 90 day visas and a promise to meet half of our guest house expenses.

A short time later the pastor took us to the guest house and booked us in; just as he promised he paid every second day of our stay. He arranged outreach meetings in slums, churches and Bible studies.

We became popular speakers in a daily lunch-time meeting near the immigration building where believers who worked in the city gathered every lunch time. It was as if we walked into daily ministry that had already been planned. Every day we experienced a miracle. Some introduced us to Pastors, whilst others took us to lunch or provided our need of transport. The incidentals were beyond mere chance. We could see God at work as increasing invitations filled our ministry calendar.

One such miracle occurred when scratches on my wife's legs turned into tropical ulcers. The sores got larger and deeper as time went on. We had to do something soon or we would be forced to cut our trip short and return home to Australia.

One morning whilst visiting a Bible school, I felt impressed to approach the director of a Bible school about a good doctor for my wife's leg ulcers. We were directed to a doctor nearby, who we found out was an expert with tropical ulcers; he scrapped out the rotting flesh and gave instructions about the antiseptic tincture that needed to be applied every day. I was no nurse, but I dabbed the tincture on the leg every day. Within days the ulcers began to heal and we made our way to Lira, an eleven hour bus ride north.

## **REAL MISSIONARY WORK**

Lira was a little spread out town with numbers of old buildings. Government jobs were prized positions and many Christians boasted of this blessing of

employment. Some of the senior positions came with the incentive of large four-wheel drive vehicles.

There were not many shops; the local fruit and vegetable market was where one purchased daily provisions.

On arrival we were directed to a guesthouse attached to the Pentecostal church a short distance from the bus stand. The church boasted of a bible school with thirty students attending. We located the pastor some streets away and he asked us to teach in the school the next morning at 9-00 am.

The students seemed to be a ragtag bunch and when I asked how many students were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues one of the students immediately got up and left the class. I looked around to find only one hand lifted. I told the class that I was a Pentecostal missionary and I believed every word written in the Book of Acts; including what was written in the second chapter. I boldly stated that it was not possible to get the best outcome from their studies in a Pentecostal Bible school if they were not filled with the Holy Spirit. “So let’s believe God right now before I start the first lecture”, I said.

I taught the students a simple method of how to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and steered them in that direction as quickly as possible. Minutes later all 28 students received the Holy Spirit with new tongues being spoken as evidence. Now we had 29 students out of the 30 students filled with the Holy Spirit. Now I felt I was in a real Pentecostal Bible School and began the first lecture.



The morning classes finished and we went back to the guest house for lunch. An English woman came and sat down at our table. She was curious about our travels so far north as there were not many white people in that region of Uganda. We told her we were missionaries just passing through. She told us she was living in Lira as a missionary and working in northern Uganda. My wife began to talk with the lady and within minutes she was told that she was teaching the locals how to make soap. I interrupted her and said, "Excuse me sister, did I hear you correctly, you are teaching people how to make soap." Her story got even more unusual when she told us that her home church in England was supporting her financially in this venture.

Of all the different classifications of missionaries I had met over the years and now another one. I suggested that her time would be better spent preaching the gospel.

## **PRISON REVIVAL**

The next day I was taken to a local prison on the outskirts of town. The pastor was well known to the prison officials and he was sure I could minister to the inmates. We used the services of the "border-border boys" they were the boys whose bicycles had a rear seat for passengers.

On arrival the pastor approached the main gate. Looking through the little peep-hole he asked if I could be given the opportunity to preach to the inmates. However, he was refused entry, so I went to the closed

peep-hole and knocked loudly. When the peephole opened I demanded I be given the opportunity as this was the only time I had to do it. The man inside seeing a white man's face was a little intimidated. "I can only allow you in for twenty minutes", he said. "That will be fine", I said. He turned around and took the keys from a hook and opened the outer small door.

My interpreter followed me in and we were immediately taken to a court yard. An announcement was made and about seventy inmates gathered quickly. I was immediately introduced as an Australian missionary and I began my message. I had just started when about twenty five ladies from the ladies prison next door walked in and without fuss sat down adjacent to the men. Surely this was not happening, it definitely wouldn't happen in Australia; men and women inmates gathering together to hear a gospel message in a prison facility.

My time was ticking away, so my message was direct and to the point. At the close of the message thirty five hands were raised to receive Christ as Savior. Tears were flooding down many faces; even the hardened men showed signs of emotion. It was the shortest service I had ever done, yet the outcome was a wonderful revival in the confines of a prison yard.

## **HOW TO START A CHURCH**

The following day I ministered in a small church near town. We had just returned to the guesthouse when a pastor knocked on our door. He asked if I could preach in his village. He borrowed an old single speaker sound

system and microphone and we rode astride with numbers of border-border boys to the venue. During our preparations someone told me the village was where General Idi Armin had lived before he assumed power years earlier.

On arrival I was led to a smooth swept area of ground surrounded by a number of round mud houses. There was not a blade of grass anywhere; the men set the solitary speaker box and microphone under the shade of the only tree. A few people had gathered and I began my message. Four people responded to the gospel message, however later that day another three who attended the outdoor meeting decided they also wanted to make a commitment.

The next year I was invited again to that village. I found a very small brick church built nearby with about forty members. The original seven converts were the older members of the church.

## **MORE THAN DAILY BREAD**

I was running out of Ugandan shillings and when I tried to change my Australian dollars; the tellers just perused the strange looking plastic notes and pushed them back under the glass barrier. They would ask if I had US dollars or English pounds.

To conserve our remaining shillings I went to the local market and purchased some bread sticks and bananas, which we ate for some days. Then on the third day, the manageress of the church guesthouse noticed we were not eating in the restaurant. Upon her inquiry I

explained our situation only to receive an unusual reply. “You and your wife come and sit in the meal room and I'll feed you free whilst your here with us,” she said. That night we put aside the stale bread sticks and over ripe bananas. We enjoyed the simple guesthouse meal.

The next day the pastor of the church summons us to his house. I was very puzzled as to why he wanted us to visit him. Within minutes he gave me a good portion of his tithe and told me that God had spoken to him to give it to us. This was God's provision and now we could pay for our meals. A few days later we made our way south to Mbale.

## **THE PROPHECY OF SICKNESS**

During one of our pastor's seminars in Mbale many young people had joined the classes unexpectedly. We even had an older white missionary from USA who was running the only Christian school in the township. On the final day I announced that the last session of the seminar would be a workshop for receiving the gift of prophecy.

After lunch I proceeded with another hour of teaching. At the close of the session a blackboard with chalk was moved into position so I could record the content of any prophesies spoken. A further encouraging word was given to my hopeful students and then I laid hands on everyone in attendance. I was pleasantly surprised when some very mature and meaningful prophesies began flowing like rivers from people who had never attempted to be used of God in this manner.

Every person spoke except one very young teenage girl who looked spellbound. I said, “Is there anyone else, take a step of faith and speak”. I knew she had a prophecy from God so I waited patiently.

Then in a strong Ugandan accent she said, “The sickness is coming, the sickness is coming, thus says the Lord the sickness is coming”. I wasn't sure of what to think; it sounded so negative. I looked back at the girl and sure enough the spirit of God was all over her like fire. There was just enough space at the bottom of the blackboard, so I managed to squeeze in the last prophecy of the day. Everyone had that look of personal achievement and quickly the delegates dispersed.

The next day I was given an English newspaper. The front page caught my attention; in very large print that took up the whole front page, I read, “Ebola Virus Crosses Into Uganda”. That unusual last prophecy spoken in the seminar the day before troubled me no longer. I was pleased I had written the young woman's prophecy on the blackboard for now I was assured that the spiritual gifting of prophecy by the laying on of hands had truly taken effect on all the delegates who attended the seminar. We indeed heard the word of the Lord.

## **A BETTER INVITATION**

The next year I was invited to be a guest speaker in a conference in Busia, Kenya. I invited some friends from USA who had accompanied me on other trips. We

traveled together from Nairobi to Busia by bus; the connections took us two days.

When we arrived in Busia the senior pastor told me I was no longer needed in the conference. “Pastor, you invited me and I accepted your invitation, I have your letter with me,” I said. “I am sorry, but I will not be here, for I have an invitation myself in a conference in Uganda; I am leaving tomorrow at 5.00am. You can come with me if you want to,” he said. “Pastor, there are four of us in my team, two of my friends have come from USA,” I said. There didn’t seem to be any other options as I had no other bookings for some days, so reluctantly I agreed.

The next morning we crossed the border into Uganda and began our journey in a small bus; the last leg of the steep climb into the mountains was by 4X4 Jeep using low range gearing. Once at the top of the snaked road, the jeep came to stop outside a high school. One could hear the loud sound of a conference in full swing.

Still brushing red dust off my clothes I was introduced to the conference convener, who had no hesitation in asking if I could preach in the next session. “Pastor, I am covered in dust, is there somewhere I can wash?” He asked one of the ladies to assist me and I was directed me to a room near the staff room. She hurriedly bought me a bucket of water and as quickly as I could I washed and dressed for the service.

Heading in the direction of the loud harmonious singing, a large tent came into view. As I walked into the tent the heat of stale air trapped under the tent engulfed

me. There were at least one thousand people crammed under the tent and many others outside at the rear. As I took my place at the front with my wife and friends I tried to relax into my new surroundings. In a few minutes I would be invited to minister; what was I going to offer this energetic hungry crowd. As quick as a flash into my spirit came the words, "Preach about the river of God." I flicked over to the Book of Revelation and found chapter 22; just as I found the right scripture reference I was invited to the platform.

I had been traveling for nearly four days and I was quite sure I needed more preparation to do a proper job. I walked up a few steps onto the temporary podium and began. Towards the end of my message heavy rain began to fall. Many hungry souls were now gathered at the front. One man took hold of a pole to push under sections of the tarpaulin roof; this released gallons of rainwater which was buckling the tarpaulin.

There was an incredible anointing at the front and those gathering could not stand. There were so many slain on the floor that others could not make their way down the aisles. To make matters worse there were twelve teams each with three helpers. The helpers began to carry each person to the sides of the tent. Sometimes they inadvertently stood on those on the floor.

Then I saw something even more disconcerting to a missionary; these 36 team members took the slain delegates outside the tent and threw them on the ground in the pouring rain. Then they ran back and grabbed another man or woman and threw them on top of the other men and women. I asked the team members to be

more careful, but they said, “Pastor we don’t have time, there is too many slain and others want prayer.” I looked back outside at the increasing height of the pile of bodies. I decided just to allow fifty at a time to come to the front for prayer. Using hand signals, I tried to get my wife and friends to help me pray for the people, but they insisted that the river of God was moving too quickly. I decided to just let God do what He needed to do Himself.

Later I heard that many of the young people who came to the altar were affected with the AIDS virus. Many of these sensed that they had been healed during the service. As the session finished the rain ceased.

As I walked to my room, the senior pastor followed me hurriedly. “Pastor Lawrence, I just wanted to say I have never seen such impartation of the Holy Spirit.” “Pastor, there may have been impartation, but that was simply the power of God’s river flowing without restriction”. He wasn’t the only person talking about the wonderful things God had done that morning during the service.

If no other doors had opened that trip, it would have been worthwhile coming for that one service.

## **OVERCOMING DISAPPOINTMENTS**

The next year I received a letter postmarked Kisumu, Kenya. On opening the letter I found an invitation for ministry. It was signed Bishop. I had used Kisumu on previous trips as a stop off point on our way to other destinations.



The Bishop's address and other details being in hand I made my long journey to Kisumu. I arrived at the bus station late in the afternoon and then walked to his office. He welcomed me and then asked me to go with him to see his church. "Pastor, I have been traveling two days; I could do with a shower?" I said. "Just leave your bags here, it's not far", he said.

Moments later I was sitting in his Mercedes Benz and driving to his church. The vehicle stopped near a large tent on a very large parcel of land. "We are trusting in God to build a large church where the tent is standing," he said. As I looked more closely at the tent he asked, "How much money will you give me towards the church?" "Well, Pastor I have only just met you, at this moment in time I cannot help you financially," I replied. Instantly the bishop's demeanor changed; abruptly he retorted, "You won't be preaching in my church tomorrow, let's go back to my office and pick up your bags." It was obvious that this bishop saw white missionaries as an opportunity to get large love gifts; if not from me then someone else.

On arrival back at his office the bishop went into his office and shut the door. I sat in a chair opposite his secretary, who had no idea what was happening. After twenty minutes the bishop reappeared and said, "Why are you still here, we are done?" I looked at him sternly and said, "That's where you are wrong pastor, you wrote and invited me to come and minister. Now that I am not able to give you money, you have changed your mind. I am not leaving your office until you arrange ministry in a church for me tomorrow."

He went back to his office and moments later informed me that a pastor from Kakamega was coming to pick me up. One hour later Pastor George arrived from Kakamega. He was one of the area supervisors of the western districts. We traveled by mini bus more than an hour and soon I was settled in a hotel room opposite his church.

The next morning a young man came to take me to the service. The church building was like an old corrugated iron factory. There was nothing pretentious; I could tell that these people meant business with God. The worship was heavenly, numbers of members were weeping in the glory of God's presence. I purposed to push aside my weariness and the disappointments of what had taken place the day before and join them wholehearted.

Moments later I was introduced as a Prophet from Australia. This was a most unusual introduction; the pastor did not know of my ministry personally. Then he said something even more unusual. "If this man of God says to stand on your head against the back wall, then I want to see every person in this church standing on their head."

As I walked onto the platform, I genuinely felt I was most welcome to minister in their church. My message concluded I began to minister to those standing at the altar. Then Mary, the pastor's wife stepped up as the last person seeking prayer. God told Mary that she would bare a son. George and Mary had no plans for any more children for they were both fully engaged in the work of the ministry.

## THE MIRACLE BIRTH

The next year I returned to Kenya. Mary had indeed given birth to a baby boy. For some reason they considered me a close ministry friend and Mary wanted to share her story of the miracle birth of her son. “Last year when you gave me that prophecy I did not believe one word of it,” she said. “However, the following week I found out I was already pregnant.

Some months went by and one night I had a dream and you were in that dream. The next night I had the same dream and in that dream you walked down the hallway.” I interrupted, “You mean the hallway that leads to your bedroom near the toilet?” “Yes”, she continued. “In my dream our bedroom door was open and George and I were lying in bed. When you got to the doorway you stopped, turned and looked into our bedroom and pointing your finger at me you said “Everything will be alright!” A little shocked, I said, “Sister Mary, I would never look into someone’s bedroom.” Mary continued, “I know that brother Lawrence, but that’s what happened in my dream. I didn’t understand the dream, but for some days your words kept coming back into my mind. Some days went by and George went out of town to preach. He left home very early before I got out of bed. When I went to the restroom that morning, I suddenly realized that something was very wrong. I went back to the bedroom and pulled back the bed sheet and discovered my waters had broken during the night. I didn’t know what I should do as I had no vehicle. I wasn’t sure when George would

return to help me to the hospital, so I rested until the afternoon but George did not return.”

“Later that day I thought I must be in the early stages of labor, so I decided to get a taxi to the hospital. I was given a bed in the maternity ward. I had no way of letting George know I was in hospital. Then a doctor came to examine me and said he would be back later to see me. When the doctor left, the attending nurse told me to change hospitals because every woman that the gynecologist had worked on had died. Now I was really worried, I was hoping George would somehow find me before that doctor returned. George finally arrived about 5-00pm and on hearing about the doctor set about getting me discharged. Whilst I was getting ready to go home with George the doctor heard I was leaving the hospital and demanded I stay; he told George that if anything happened to the baby he would hold him responsible. George told him that he would rather that the baby died at home than in the hospital. George said, I’m taking my wife home whether you like it or not and then we left the hospital.” Sister Mary’s story was told with such passion that I didn’t want to miss one word of it.

“I rested at home just believing God that He would protect me from infection as the unborn baby was at least three months premature. Many times I was reminded of your words in my dream. I began repeating those words over and over; everything will be alright, everything will be alright.” Mary told me every detail as if I was her only friend. “I was at home in bed ten days and when I felt proper labor pains had begun George took me to a different hospital. When my baby was born,

he was so small they put him into a humidicrib. However, the next day the doctor took my baby out of the crib. He told me that there was nothing wrong with the baby; even though my baby was more than three months premature I could take him home.”

“Wow, what a story, your son certainly was a miracle child; how did George find you in the hospital?” I queried. “Brother Lawrence that was the other unusual thing, a man unknown to George came with an urgent message telling him that I was in that hospital.” “Maybe the man was an angel sent by God to help George find you,” I said. I was so blessed by her testimony.

## **BELIEVE THE PROPHETS**

I was heading to the Chennai airport; the horn-honking taxi arrived at the front gate and the driver was looking impatiently through the open front door down the hallway of the house. It had been a busy day at a pastor’s seminar. Pastor Deva had convened the meeting and paid for the food for the pastors. He was a poor man who lived by faith. Offerings were usually just a few rupees and I had given him all my money bar the taxi fare to the airport.

As I spun around to grab my luggage, Deva said, “Wait, I want the apostolic anointing.” He knelt down in front of me, his wife ran to a bedroom and returned with a head covering cloth and knelt beside him. “Pastor Deva, the taxi is waiting”, I said. “The taxi will wait, pray for us Pastor Lawrence.” He sounded somewhat desperate. My immediate thought was a quick final

prayer before leaving, however just as my prayer finished, I began to prophesy. The wording was most unusual for there was mention of travel to many nations. I bid them farewell and took my place in the rear of the taxi. On the way I began thinking of that prophecy; how would Deva travel to other nations without money?

The next year I started my visit in Chennai. I arrived at Deva's house well after midnight. I had been travelling about twenty hours and was looking forward to retiring. Deva was so excited; he wanted to tell me something that had happened since my last visit. "Deva can it wait till tomorrow, I'm a little tired". "No, I have to tell you now", he said with impatience. "OK, tell me", I said. "Last year after you prophesied I went to the bank and borrowed money for a ticket to South Africa". "Let me get this right", I said. "Your bank manager gave you money for a ticket even though you had no collateral". "Yes", he said. "Wow, so why South Africa; most Indian pastors want to go to America or some other rich country"? Deva looked at me and said, "God told me to go to South Africa, however the bank manger only gave me money for the ticket". As his story continued my weariness abated. "So you went to South Africa without money", I said.

Deva continued his story excitedly, "I stood outside the Johannesburg airport and prayed. Everyone that was on that flight had left the airport, but having no money I stood outside the building waiting alone. I didn't know anybody in Johannesburg. Then, the man that stamped my passport came out and asked why I was still waiting. I told him I had no money and wanted to go

to a Pentecostal church. He was a Christian and offered to take me to a church. He took me to an Indian church; however after five weeks of ministering in Indian churches I had not received one offering. I needed a miracle as I needed to pay off the bank loan when I returned home. On the last Sunday I preached for a white South African pastor. The pastor took an offering for me and it was enough to pay for my air ticket and I had money left over and I purchased the bed you will sleep on tonight. We wanted you to be the first to sleep on the bed because you prayed for us.”

It was a wonderful story of faith. He wholehearted believed my prophecy and stepped out by faith. Deva went on to preach in South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and other nations in Europe.

## **PACIFIC ISLAND TRAVEL**

On one occasion whilst in the Solomon Islands I found limited opportunities for ministry. One morning after teaching in a Bible school class an older student approached me with a request to accompany him to his home on another island to minister at his Friday night meeting. He told me I could stay in his house overnight and the next day after lunch arrange my boat trip back to Guadalcanal. I checked with his senior pastor who simply said, “It’s a bit rough over there”. I assured him I was a seasoned campaigner.

Excited at the prospect of the ministry on a distant island I excused myself and left the Bible class hurriedly. I hastened the driver to his vehicle and on

arrival ran up the pathway to the house, grabbed some personal items and a change of clothes and made my way to the dock to meet my younger colleague.

On arrival I found that the long narrow fiberglass boat was already full of people and cargo. Having found me a little space on one of the seating boards in the middle of the boat the 15 hp motor was started and we headed off towards the horizon. The small boat began pounding into the waves and everyone was getting very wet. The pounding was so severe I was sure the young captain had absolutely no regard for the comfort of his passengers.

Then I noticed something quite serious, there were large stress fractures right where I was seated. The boat was actually splitting in half; both circular handrails used as reinforcement were split. To stop myself being launched from side to side and to try and reduce the bruising to my rear end I was holding on vice like to both sides of the this torpedo like boat. Each of my hands was only centimeters from the flexing fractured fiberglass fabric. I knew if my hands moved into the mouth of the fiberglass crack when it closed up on the next wave I would be cut severely. Although uncomfortable the slow drenching in cold salt water was a welcome change from the tropical humidity.

As the land disappeared behind me the young captain opened up the throttle even more which made our conditions more like sitting under a cold shower. This missile shaped craft was going through the waves not over the waves. Making eye contact with my companion, I shouted out, "How many nautical miles is



it to your island”? “About twenty five”, he said. “So you’re not concerned about the condition of this boat”. “Oh no, we use this boat all the time”, he said.

For the next two hours the outboard motor screamed until we started dropping off passengers and cargo at different beaches. The rugged ride was behind me and those words of relief came, “Pastor we get down here”. The captain steered the boat around the coral formations and then steered the boat up onto the beach.

## **THE ROUGH ISLAND REVIVAL**

I stepped out onto a lovely little white beach and was directed to a nice little house only meters from the water’s edge. Behind the house was a walking track and beyond that was thick jungle. This was not at all rough, I thought to myself.

The sun was going down and as I stood on the little balcony looking in the direction of the jungle all of a sudden a well-endowed bare-breasted woman appeared from the tree canopy carrying two coconuts. We both saw each other at the same time and she immediately crossed her arms still holding the coconuts as a covering passed me by.

Minutes later she was walking back past my veranda; this time she gave me a big smile as if to say I’m dressed now. Surely people wore clothes on this island in this day and age. From a preachers point of view she had nothing to smile about for she was wearing a very small black brassiere about ten cup sizes too small which covered very little.

Just then my young friend returned. “Brother, are all the women folk on this island bare-breasted?” “Pastor, when they get saved they put on clothes”, he said. “What about those people who are unsaved who attend meetings?” I queried. “They know to put clothes on before coming to church meetings”. With a smile, I said, “I’m pleased to hear it”. I was beginning to understand why the pastor in Guadalcanal had said, “It’s a bit rough over there”.

It was now getting dark and we readied ourselves for the outdoor meeting adjacent to the main walking track.

Lusty singing soon echoed around the small village and people began appearing from dark trails to sit and listen to the word of God. The message concluded and many made their way to the front to surrender their lives to Christ. Many were filled with the Holy Spirit; those that were healed testified of total deliverance at the close of the meeting. One young couple received an unusual prophecy. God had confirmed a total change of direction in their lives; they were thrilled at what God had said.

The next morning my colleague said he had to visit his parents on a nearby island. On the way our boat skipper steered towards Tulagi so that my friend could check his mail. It was obvious that Tulagi's post office serviced dozens of nearby islands. Many friends chatted endlessly before concluding their business; there was no hurry on Tulagi. Being a small island we walked to the post office in minutes. The rundown timber buildings

including the medical clinic needed renovation and a thick coat of paint.

Whilst the locals chatted I walked to the shoreline to look at the stunning view. It was an untouched beach paradise lost in time. Before we left Tulagi I was shown a huge cool room full of huge Tuna fish up to two meters in length. Fish was a valued source of food in the Solomon Islands. Minutes later we walked back to the boat and made our way to a small island to visit the pastor's parents. The boat docked near mangrove trees and we walked into the jungle away from the shore. This island was nothing like Tulagi. The surroundings were so grubby and unkempt I would describe the living conditions as very rough. I now agreed with the pastor on Guadalcanal. The women including the pastor's mother were bare-breasted and made no attempt to cover up. The women dressed only in grass skirts and they were not going to change their ancient lifestyle even for a white missionary. The unusual thing was that everyone spoke very good English and yet it was obvious that the clothing issue was something they were not prepared to address or change. I offered a quick prayer for the family and we retreated to the boat and headed back to the other island to collect my belongings.

That afternoon I boarded the same boat and made my way back to Guadal Canal. I recalled what the young man had told me about the ninety battle ships of all classes that laid on the ocean floor beneath. The thousands who jumped from burning ships during the second world war either drowned or were eaten alive by

sharks. Thankfully my mission was much more peaceful, to bring to the islands spiritual revival.

That night I was given the name of a pastor on Gizo Island. The following morning my scheduled flight was at 8-00am, however I was far too early for most flights rarely left on time. It was company policy for the pilot to wait till all seats filled before taking off. After takeoff the aircraft tracked over dozens of coral reefs towards Gizo.

On arrival I discovered the airport wasn't on Gizo, the aircraft landed on another small island. The passengers walked to a nearby jetty to board small boats for the ten minute journey to Gizo. I walked up and down the very small township and finally found the pastor. He informed me that his house was on another island. What I thought was going to be simple transit was becoming increasingly complicated.

To get to his house I had to rent one of his friends' boats. We loaded his groceries and my bag into the small boat and set off. It was a glorious day and the scenery was stunning. After more than an hour we alighted on a beautiful beach; the pastor pointed in the direction of the jungle and said, "That's my house there."

What a spot to live, there was nothing but the beach in front and the jungle behind. But where was the church? I couldn't see anything but beach and jungle; hence my immediate inquiry. "Oh, we go to church by boat", he said. I couldn't believe it; I had spent most of the day in boats going from island to island.

The church was indeed on the other side of the island and to access it that night we traveled with a

church member whose runabout was slightly larger. On our way I pleased I was seated in a better craft for we encountered a treacherous fast moving tide at the mouth of the inlet.

Safely on solid ground we found the walking track to the little church with flashlights. At the conclusion of the service many of the locals testified of a personal blessing or healing. The pleasing result was an encouragement given my full day of island hopping from morning till night. Our return to the other side of the island would be interesting given it was now as black as pitch. I remembered the awful twisting tidewaters at dusk and I was wondering what the return journey would be like given the little runabout had no lights.

At first the waters were calm but when we got to the mouth of the inlet the boat began lurching in all directions. I held onto one side of the boat whilst trying not to collide with the person sitting next to me. There was not one visual reference in this void of darkness. I hoped my Bible wasn't getting wet as the incoming spray was increasing as we headed directly out to sea against the waves. This would make a good faith paragraph in a sermon, I thought. One had to have complete confidence in the helmsman. Most people would not even consider coming to church in these conditions. I was intrigued how this man could navigate in such darkness as there was not one light on land or sea.

Some time went by and the pastor informed me we were now running parallel to the beach. I was more interested in how he would find his house. Then the boat turned, with the churning surf running with the boat, the

motor was cut and the waves beached the boat right in front of the pastor's house.

The next morning the pastor and his wife rose very early and by the time I made it to the meal room I was told that the pastor had gone to their garden to work. The lady pointed to a track that led into the forest. It didn't seem important that I had limited time and that an opportunity was at hand for them to hold services. Surely the pastor didn't think that a visiting missionary was going to sit around all day and look at the ocean. It would have been different if I was a tourist. One couldn't get a better place than this. It was like a paradise lost.

Late in the afternoon the pastor returned. He told me that his farm was a one hour walk from the beach. I asked him why his farm was so far away. He told me the soil was too salty near his house and so the long walk was necessary to find suitable soil to grow vegetables.

I was keen to find another ministry opportunity in paradise but the pastor made it clear I had already finished my work on that island. He said the only other church he knew was on the island of Choisel. To access that island I had to return to Gizo and ask the same man if we could rent his boat.

The next day on my return to Gizo we passed a lovely little island with white beaches and palm trees. "What a lovely little island," I said. "That's my island," he said, "You can buy if you like." I must admit I took a second look at it over my shoulder as we passed by.

The man on Gizo was not that keen on taking me to Choisel. He claimed that the gearbox drive on the outboard motor was old and may fail on the three hour

journey leaving us stranded in the ocean. I told him I had faith that we could make it there and back. “I will pay all the fuel expenses”, I said.

He finally agreed and after filling the fuel tank we began our journey. There was no compass, oars or life jackets; just our small bags for the one night stay.

After forty minutes on the ocean waves I could just make out a bit of the island that momentarily disappeared. This was definitely not a good idea at 2pm in the afternoon; what was I thinking of. At my request the 15 HP motor was set at about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of full power to lessen any stress on the motor, not that I knew anything about outboard motors.

An hour into the journey schools of flying fish came from the starboard side; dozens broke the light chop and flew right across in front of the boat. At times I flinched thinking I was going to get hit in the ribs.

Another hour passed and we could see the long island of Choisel. The skipper headed for a particular landmark, but after some time he realized he was heading for the wrong beach. Making an adjustment starboard we headed for the new landmark. If only I had known I would be using small boats in high seas with no compasses, I may have put a compass in my luggage. I said I had faith, now I had to prove it.

Then some fishermen in very small dugout canoes came into view. There was one man to each canoe; they fished using one hand-line. I could see land, but nothing clearly. These fishermen had rowed these unstable hollowed out logs many kilometers with one oar.

It was nearing dusk when the skipper beached his boat. Small houses lined the whole beach. The houses fronted the beach with the dense jungle only meters from the back door. I was taken to the biggest house as this was where the meetings were held. There was an ocean view from the front windows, so I sat for a few moments to survey my surroundings.

Soon people began to arrive and the small meeting got under way. Visiting Pentecostal ministers were a rare event on Choisel so those in attendance were very excited to see God at work that night. It was certainly worth the effort to come to Choisel, even if it was for one night. Many eagerly responded to the ministry.

At the close of the meeting dinner was served. One of the fishermen we had passed by earlier donated his biggest catch. There on my dinner plate was a large red fish; the head and tail hung over both sides of the plate. "Excuse me sister, I can't possible eat all this fish," I said. "It's all for you Pastor." I only ate one side of it; it was the most incredible tasting tropical fish.

The next morning fueled up, we left that island paradise. One thing was certain; a lot more missionaries would be needed to impact the thousands of islands in the Pacific.

## **SULAWESI, INDONESIA**

In 2001, a friend of mine telephoned me requesting that I pray about accompanying him to Sulawesi in Indonesia. This was my friend's first



missionary trip and so to get ready for the trip we prayed together for a month before departure. There was some concern by friends for it was only a few weeks after the Bali bombing, not that Bali was anywhere near Sulawesi. The flight to Manado was very spacious for there were only eleven passengers on the 737 aircraft.

On arrival we booked into a hotel about 30 minutes from the airport. Being late in the day I suggested we investigate the locations of the local restaurants and get our bearings before dark. In relation to churches we had no idea where they were or how we were going to get started. As we walked back in the direction of the hotel I recognized a Christian song coming from a small shop. "Let's inquire in here, that's Christian music," I said. The young saleswoman didn't speak English, so she called her boss. He spoke a little English; however he could not understand me when I asked him where we could find a Pentecostal church. "Gereja Pentecosta," I said. He replied by saying, "church?" "Yes, gereja, church," I repeated. He found a scrap piece of paper and sketched a few lines and pointed down the street. It was now dark, so we set off smartly.

On arrival to the church we found a birthday party in progress. The Chinese pastor invited us to return at 5.00am for Morning Prayer. The next morning we arrived on time and during the prayer meeting I was asked to teach for a while. The Chinese pastor was impressed and he telephoned another pastor who met us at the hotel. He arranged meetings in various places for

the next two weeks including day sessions in his own bible school.

## **THE CHRISTIAN CAMPS**

My friend decided he would travel further south for the next ten days. I concentrated on the open doors around Manado. Before he left we visited numbers of Christian camps. These camps were built from scrap materials to house thousands of displaced Christian people from the many islands near Sulawesi. We were told that Muslims had forced these people from their homes, which were then set on fire. Manado, which had a large Christian population, was considered a safe haven. Many of the displaced had missing hands, arms, feet, legs. These were the fortunate ones who escaped being murdered by those wielding machetes; we saw huge ugly scars to many parts of their bodies. We went to three camps; many lined up for our prayers. This was my first encounter of the hidden brutality in Indonesia.

A Christian businessman arranged meetings in numbers of his spacious service station buildings. On three occasions I preached inside the service station buildings. The speaker boxes were set up in the open doorway and pointed in the direction of the petrol pumps. Those pumping fuel to their vehicles were also hearing the word of God.

Other meetings were arranged in villages an hour from Manado. These were amazing home meetings. Those in attendance melted into a heavenly glory; there was a sense of submission in their worship. Holiness was

a key component among the leaders; this seemed to pave the way for a great move of God.

One lady invited me to minister at her Friday evening ladies meeting. Because I was the only male in attendance she invited her brother, a businessman who was visiting from Jakarta. Before I preached the lady asked me if her brother could give a testimony. “Absolutely,” I said. The following story was shared with the ladies that night.

“Last week I was in Western Timor. I attended an outdoor meeting which was held near the Eastern Timor border. There was a visiting Evangelist in attendance sitting at the front. There had been a skirmish near the border and numbers of soldiers had been killed. Numbers of the dead soldiers had been brought to the meeting by wives or relatives and laid on the ground at the rear of the congregation. They planned to ask the Evangelist to pray for the dead soldiers at the end of the meeting. During the worship there was a wonderful presence of God and every person including the grieving relatives were caught up in the glory of the Lord. When one of the wives opened her eyes her dead husband was nowhere to be seen, then others opened their eyes and found their lifeless corpses were also missing. The dead soldiers were gone; they wondered if they had been kidnapped during worship. Then to their joy they found the soldiers standing with their hands raised in worship before God. They all had been raised from the dead during worship”, he said. That story seemed to set the tone for the rest of the meeting. It was glorious.

When my friend returned from southern Sulawesi I shared this remarkable story with him; he retorted by saying, “I’ve got one that I heard the other day.” During a Muslim uprising, a young Christian man’s head was nearly severed and consequently he died. His body was taken to the morgue whereby the attendant stitched the man’s head back on ready for burial. The dead man lying on a stainless steel table experienced going to heaven and being there for some days had seen many of the wonders of heaven. However, he was shocked when God told him he had to return to earth for he had more work for him to do. The man was reluctant for he was enjoying his new surroundings. Within moments the man saw his spirit coming back to earth and pass through the roof of the morgue and reenter his dead body.

When he revived on the stainless steel table, the attendant was in shock because he knew the condition of the body when it was bought to the morgue. The man’s head was just dangling by threads of skin. After a drink of water the man left the morgue and from that day on became a powerful evangelist.

After a short time he became well known to the Muslims who often threatened him with automatic rifles when caught preaching Christ. The man would retort, “Go ahead shoot me; I have already been to heaven. It is a wonderful place. I want to return to heaven, so shoot me.” Because of his fearless faith in God they were fearful and decided not to touch him. He was able to continue doing his evangelistic work that God had sent him to do.

## FAST WORKER

Some years ago I was invited to minister in an Anglican church. I had known the pastor for many years so this was certainly not my first invitation. I was feeling reasonably relaxed waiting in the foyer until the first more traditional service was concluded. The large glass doors to the new sanctuary opened and the congregation began to exit. As one gentleman walked through the glass doors he looked up and said, "Aren't you that preacher from Australia that was here some time ago." I smiled and gave him an affirmative reply. "Well, we're staying then", he said. And with that he spun around enthusiastically and took hold of his wife's hand and pushing against the exiting crowd led his wife back inside the church for the second morning service.

I walked into the church and took my place on the front pew. I looked at the long cushions on the polished timber kneeling rails where many would kneel to take communion at the close of my message. Just then the pastor approached me and putting his head near mine he whispered near my ear, "You can have twenty minutes this morning".

I was astonished; I couldn't understand it for I had known the pastor for fifteen years. We had driven an hour including the ferry shortcut. Just then I heard God speak to me. His instructions were simple; I was to minister for twenty minutes.

When my allotted time came I walked a few steps from the front pew and took a position in front of the altar rails. I preached for only sixteen minutes, my

shortest message ever and then made an invitation for those wanting prayer to join me at the front. Unexpectedly half the congregation came out and lined up the full width of the church.

Seeing so many Anglicans lined up made me feel a little under the pump. I decided to start from one side and work my way to the other side. To speed up the process I prayed short prayers; however people began being slain on the floor. The Holy Spirit was indeed at work and there was nothing I could do to hasten His work. Both teenage daughters of the junior pastor were also slain and one of them stayed on the floor till half way through communion. Unbeknownst to me both girls needed a miracle. The youngest had undergone surgery to her elbow some weeks earlier; her arm had been frozen and immobile since. However, whilst on the floor her arm immediately freed. As she stood up she looked at her father standing on the raised podium and pointing at her arm began flexing the elbow freely in the air. She announced in a whisper that God had healed it. Her father then announced to the congregation that God was doing miracles. Then he noticed his elder daughter on the floor nearer the aisle. She had suffered with Coeliac Disease for many years.

At the close of service she was invited to lunch and I watched her eat as much as everyone else without discomfort. God had healed her. The man who had taken his wife back in side for the second service stood at the rear and announced loudly that God had healed him of leukemia. On hearing this, the senior pastor stood and said, "Are you sure about that"? Obviously without

further tests there was no proof. The man retorted, “I am absolutely convinced Pastor”. Later as I was shaking hands in the foyer, the youngest daughter of the pastor approached and taking off her coat showed me her elbow. I saw a large 15cm scar on the elbow. She then flexed the arm in and out to prove that she now had proper movement. Her father still dressed in his clergy robes joined the excited group; they were all amazed at what God had done so quickly.

## **MANIPUR, INDIA**

Five years ago I was invited to minister in Manipur state. My contact was a young man who had been my dean of students in our small Bible school in south India. On returning home to Manipur he asked me to attend their church conference during Christmas. I asked him how long I needed to trek to his village and he said, “Only one hour pastor.” I spent one night in Senapati and before the jeep arrived I visited his orphanage nearby. The jeep was loaded and we departed.

Five hours later we were still grinding our way on treacherous unsealed roads from mountain to mountain. Without notice the vehicle came to stop. “Why are we stopping here?” I asked. “We walk from here pastor.” Then pointing to a distance mountain showed me where we were headed. I knew it was going to take a lot longer than an hour. The jeep was parked off the road down the walking track a short distance and our small party emptied the vehicle of all bags and other goods and began walking downhill.

Ninety minutes later and still walking downhill on rutted tracks we were met by some of the men from the village. They were carrying a red and black handmade vest. This prized gift was then presented to me. It seems as if I was now accepted into their family. I put the vest on and after a few photos were taken I removed the vest as I was ringing wet with sweat. We continued another hour before we came to cable bridge.

As we crossed the river on the swaying bridge a timber mill came into view. I was then told we were halfway to the village. I was already exhausted and the prospect of climbing the vertical slopes up the other side in thick jungle was daunting. After some tea was served an elephant was rounded up. I was told this was my ride to the village. The female elephant was pregnant and wasn't overly enthusiastic about making the journey up the mountain with a white man sitting on top. The small Indian driver had a pointed stick which was thrust into the back of the elephant's ear to make it move. I was sure it would be a most enjoyable experience if I was traveling on level ground. However, there was no cage on the elephant's back; my personal anchor point was a rope which was tied around the midriff of the elephant so tightly that a permanent grip between the rope and her back was not possible. The rolling motion on the steep trails was quite dangerous when the elephant passed under low tree branches.

Every now and then the elephant would press down on the soil in front of her using her trunk to check if the narrow track would support her weight. At other times using her truck in a twisting motion she would



snap large fallen tree branches and discard them down the sides of the mountain. One tree was so big the elephant walked over the top of it. By now I was sliding from side to side, struggling to stay on top.

Finally, I decided to jump from my lofty perch and walk with the rest of the group. I was certain that the elephant would be much happier walking downhill to the lumber mill. After another hour my legs unconditioned to the torturous climb began to stiffen.

After some time we rested near a pool of water. It had rained the night before; the water was appreciated by the locals who drank freely.

Our group then took a detour on a new track that had an easier sideways incline. I was told that this was a shortcut track that was cut a few days earlier by the men in the village so that I could access the village more easily. Even walking on the new track I was slowing up the group who decided to stop and massage my cramping legs. After a short rest three of the young men decided it would be quicker to carry me up the mountain. They took turns to piggy-back me up the last of the steep tracks.

Finally, nearing dusk I walked with cramping stiffened legs into the village. My room was located at the other end of the village near the church. The veranda outside my room had a great jungle view. I could see villages on other mountains and Nagaland in the distance.

The next morning the first service started at 7.00am. I couldn't see the distant villages as low cloud was in all the valleys. As I was walking up the rise to the

church I noticed a large commendatory stone. This represented the day some years earlier when every person in the village attended church. I had never heard of such, this must be one of the only churches in the world where a pastor could boast 100% attendance.

Inside the church was a fresh aroma of wood shavings. Then the newly made pulpit came into view. I would be the first one to use it. Such a lot of effort had gone into the preparations of the conference. Through the windows a thick white fog prevented the wonderful distant view.

After the first service I saw young men coming into the village carrying whole sides of butchered pigs. Later I saw dog meat being prepared; this was a great delicacy in Manipur and Nagaland. All kinds of fruit and vegetables were being carried into a specially made compound to be cooked with the meat in huge pots on the fires. It looked like most of the people in the village were involved; this was going to be some Christmas lunch.

I could hear hymns being sung in other villages; the loud speakers sound echoed across the valleys. Nearly all of the churches were of Baptist origin. The villages were some of the most remote and yet there were Baptist churches in nearly every village particularly in Nagaland.

The next day there was a mid-morning service. Everyone was dressed in their tribal colors. I wore my new red waistcoat. Across the valley the low clouds were thickening. The open windows were no problem to the locals; I was the only one feeling cold. Then the misty

cloud passed through the windows on my right into the midst of the congregation and out the windows on the other side. If only this had been a glory cloud. The fact was that some of the churches were celebrating fifty years of continual attendance and yet there seemed to be little knowledge of anything beyond a traditional Baptist service.

Late that afternoon many visitors from other villages who had heard about the conference were arriving. Some were elderly and yet they had been walking since early morning. That night the church was filled to capacity. The enthusiastic delegates sung the familiar hymns with vigor and feeling. As I looked from the platform I thought if only the Holy Spirit could intervene, it would be carried all over these mountains.

Then one of the visitors stepped out into the aisle and with her eyes closed began twirling as if being guided by someone unseen. Then some others joined into this flowing liberty of the Holy Spirit. They weren't Pentecostals but they danced as if they were. I had never seen such Holy Spirit liberty in a traditional Baptist church. Then some of the leaders on the stage forgot their usual protocols and took an active part with joy and liberty. I wasn't sure what the other leaders thought about this unusual service, but when I finished my message I prayed for the sick and God healed them. There was quite a revival that night and many spoke of it all the next day.

Then an invitation came from Nagaland. We left Chakha and walked back down the mountain and I crossed the swollen river on the back of a different

elephant which took a much more vertical and dangerous route to the waiting jeep. At one stage there was no track; the elephant went through thick undergrowth that dislodged my spectacles. The walkers had a job finding them as the elephant had disturbed quite a bit the soil.

I had an unrestricted view from the elephant and finally a dozen more well-wishers who had attended the conference came into view near the jeep. My friends loaded the jeep quickly and after prayer we drove across the river border bridge into Nagaland. I arrived just in time for the night service.

That night I preached in a much larger church, however it was obvious that the church had had a much larger congregation in a bygone era. There were many pastors from other villages who were in attendance; they witnessed many rededicating their lives and others being healed. Although there was no change to the traditional church service and the usual well-known hymns were sung from the aging hymnals; God had His way. In the closing moments of the service it was anything but traditional for everyone had a taste of revival. Many members lingered with excitement in the old church.

When the service concluded I was taken to the pastor's house where many pastors and leaders had gathered. As we waited for the evening meal to be served there was some discussion about what had just happened in the service.

Then suddenly, the pastor of the church looked at me and said, "Forty years ago we used to experience the Holy Spirit in our services." Other senior men in the room began to agree with him. I interjected by asking,

“Well what happened in Nagaland that changed your church services?” Again the pastor looked at me and said, “We forgot how to do it.”

I could not conceive how any pastor could come to that conclusion. I had not seen such zeal for the organizing of numerous programs. The committee members kept minutes of the meetings in large bound books. This was a most unusual thing, given I was in the middle of the jungle. It was obvious to me that these ongoing numerous activities and organized programs had hindered ongoing revival. These were some of the most zealous church goers in the world and yet the simplicity of revival had been forgotten; the move of the Holy Spirit was now merely stories of the past.

I prayed that younger missionaries with apostolic anointing would come and work with these leaders to stoke the coals for revival.

## **MEAL TIME STORIES**

Over the years some of my co-workers have shared some interesting miracle stories at meal times. I have selected just a few faith stories to honour them.

I have known Pastor Mercy since 1980. At that time she was one of the faculty teachers at Miracle Bible College. Recently, during dinner Mercy shared some of her miracle stories with me. After graduation from Miracle Bible College in San Fernando, Mercy taught as a Bible teacher in the same college for three years.

In the mid-seventies Rev Shields, an American missionary, who had founded the Bible college had a

vision to take numbers of graduates on a world tour for the purpose of ministering in churches. Seven of the eleven Filipinos in the group had head-hunter ancestry. Their grandfathers had engaged in this practice. Mercy told me that her grandfather had eaten the flesh of his victims.

Getting ready for the trip didn't just mean getting passports in order; for Rev. Shields had also given instructions to practice their ancient head-hunter dances and make ready their tribal dress. The men had packed some unusual inclusions into their luggage, gongs and shields and G-strings; the ladies packed their handmade tribal wrap-around skirts.

The first step of faith was the official permission to travel as during the Marcos era Marshall Law was a great restriction and Filipinos were forbidden to travel. With such a large group traveling together this would indeed be a great miracle. Rev. Shields was a great communicator and many interviews with officials were needed before permission was finally granted.

Their first stop was Pasadena, California, where they all stayed with Rev. Shield's daughter. Soon many doors were opened to this greatly anointed singing group. The ladies looked like royalty; their hair was tied up with great attention given to dress and grooming. They ministered all over USA and Canada.

In Toronto, Canada they ministered in a large church. A lady dressed in a Salvation Army uniform inclusive of hat sat near the front. As part of their ministry performance, the group would sing their wonderful anointed songs. This done, one of the group

would give a word of testimony while the other seven went to change into their head-hunter costumes.

Four men with G-string dress would then rush from the rear with spear and shield with the loud noise of the gongs beating. Their fierce and rapid approach to the front of the congregation was too much for the uniformed Salvation Army lady; she ran to the rear of the church looking for a place to hide. Mercy confessed she had laughed at this sight. However, it caught the eye of Rev. Shields who later rebuked mercy for her lack of professionalism.

The management of the PTL television studio heard of them; and immediately invited them to make an appearance inclusive of the head-hunter dance. The broadcast went live to air and soon dozens of people drove to the PTL studio and waited outside hoping to meet the head-hunter dancers. Mercy told me they wanted to touch their skin and look at their teeth. They assumed these young Christian warriors had also eaten human flesh.

Many times in services people were so affected by the Miracle Choir that many would rush from their seats and place money in the men's shields. These monetary gifts helped the group to cover their travel and accommodation expenses. Some would ask Rev. Shields where he got the money to care for eleven Filipinos and four Americans. "Oh, we live by faith", he replied.

Once, whilst in transit down the highway, his old stretch Cadillac broke down and came to a stop. Rev. Shields left the group and walked to a service station phone booth. Opening the phone book his eyes fell on

the name Bishop Cody, a spirit-filled Catholic priest. Unknown to Rev. Shields, the Bishop had given instructions to his parishioners he was not to be disturbed during that week. The phone kept ringing and the Bishop did not pick up.

Finally, the Holy Spirit told the Bishop he may be entertaining angels unaware. On answering the phone, Rev. Shields asked him for his help. The Bishop sent another priest in his stead. On seeing the man dressed in a robe with a long beard, Rev. Shields looked back at the group and said, "Look at that man, he looks like Saint Peter". When the man came closer, he introduced himself as Peter.

Peter took the stranded missionaries to meet Bishop Cody. That weekend they ministered to the Catholic Charismatics. Even the nuns wanted the Filipino prayers. Subsequent to the blessing of the Miracle Choir ministry; God spoke to the Catholic Bishop to purchase a new van for the group.

On arrival at the car dealership Rev. Shields picked out the van and the Bishop paid for it. It was indeed a miracle van. The Bishop then dedicated the van and the team was on their way. They visited 43 countries in three years. The van was transported from New York to Norwich, England. They even visited Iceland. Whilst in England they visited Balmoral. The Queen received them into the royal residence. Queen Elizabeth asked if her people were treating them well. Such promotion is possible with God; from a tribal headhunter ancestry to the hallways and rooms of a Royal palace. I am sure the Queen enjoyed their visit as much as they enjoyed of



opportunity of sharing fellowship with the Queen at Balmoral.

They traveled right through Europe and entered Israel via Jordan. At first the group was refused entry. They were told that since 1972 no foreign vehicle had ever entered Israel. The border commander refused Rev. Shields whereby he returned to the van to request special prayer from the team.

On returning to the gate the commander changed his mind; Rev. Shields gave a victory signal, the team had received their much needed miracle. The border was opened and the van was allowed entry into the land of Israel.

During their three month stay they met Ruth Heflin, the pastor of the Mount Zion Fellowship. Sister Ruth, who was renowned for her teaching on Praise, Worship and Glory invited them to minister every Saturday night at the Catholic Church named Saint Peter-en-Galacantu. Ruth requested that the team cook their favorite dishes so that her visitors could enjoy the Filipino cuisine.

Immediately after the world trip Mercy returned to the faculty at Miracle Bible College. One night a young man knocked on her door. Mercy asked his name and the purpose for being on campus. He said he wanted to enroll as one of the students. Mercy could see that the young man was not a committed Christian and on further inquiries discovered he was very sick; he had been admitted to many hospitals. For some reason he thought if he came to Miracle Bible College he may be healed. Later that night he accepted Christ as Saviour.

Although the second semester had already started permission was granted for the young man to start classes. The student body prayed for him every day at chapel services. His head aches were so bad that the staff believed he could not work physically on campus. However, the young man determined to work as hard as his class mates; and finally after two years he graduated totally healed.

Another student had hidden the fact that she had breast cancer. She was in such pain that she would strike her head against the walls. One day one of the students ran to Mercy's house to inform her that the girl would not stop banging her head against the wall.

Mercy rushed to the girls' dormitory and finding the girl shouted, "What are you doing?" The young woman stopped banging her head and looking around embarrassed said, "Mame, I have breast cancer and the pain is too much". Mercy inspected her breast and found it black, the cancer now at an advanced stage. Every morning at chapel service the students and faculty would pray for the young woman's healing. After a period of time the pain ceased and her body returned to normal. She subsequently graduated in the second year.

## **COBRA BITE, NO PROBLEM**

In 1989 I met Natubhai Gamit and his wife in their home which was adjacent to their church in Mandel, a town in Gujarat, India. He was one of the only pastors in that region that had enough English to help me in the larger altar calls. Last year I went to see him and

whilst waiting for morning tea to be served Natubhai shared the following miracle stories.

Twenty years ago I was away preaching. My wife Natuben was at home in Mandel. In the middle of the night she was awakened; God was speaking to her. She was every tired that night and for that reason was very slow to move from her bed. Three times God spoke telling her that there was a snake in her bed. On hearing God speak to her the third time she immediately arose and quickly took hold of her two small children who were asleep with her in the same bed. When she pulled back the bed covers to her amazement the snake that God had spoken of slithered away and out of the house.

Natuben raised the alarm of the poisonous snake with her nearby neighbours. At first they thought she was imagining things; however a search outside the house found the snake. They killed the snake and went back to bed”.

Had Natuben not been sensitive to the voice of God; Natubhai’s story may have had a tragic ending.

Some years later in 1998, two women were both bitten by snakes. Both were near death when Natubhai was summoned to come and pray. After prayer both women made a full recovery.

In the same year another woman named Jiraben was bitten by a Cobra snake two kilometres from the Natubhai's home. He prayed and the woman immediately revived; she is still alive today.

One night whilst preaching in Dhajamba village, two women came to inform Natubhai that a woman had been bitten by a Cobra snake. The snake had struck

whilst walking near a water Canal. Natubhai took twenty church members with him to pray for the woman. They all prayed, but after prayer there was no result. The woman had already expired. The people discussed the possibility of getting another pastor to come and pray for the deceased woman. Natubhai informed them that another pastor would pray in the name of Jesus just as he had done. After three prayers the victim who was a witch doctor's wife was still not moving.

After some time the witch doctor came home and with an intimating manner said, "If you can't do something after three prayers then I will do something". However, Natubhai told the people to pray in tongues and when they did the dead woman came back to life. She then walked back to the church with the church members, a distance of one kilometre. The witch doctor did not want his wife to come home due to the complications that usually occur after being bitten by a Cobra snake. Usually there were markings on many parts of the body, nose bleeds and so on.

It so happened that there was a three day conference at Natubhai's church and so the woman stayed to enjoy the fellowship there at the church and after three days no further effects of the Cobra bite were noted on the woman's body, so she returned home.

## **IT TOOK TWO PRAYERS**

On another occasion I had crossed into Maharashtra state and while waiting for some tea to be served Bishop Jacob leaned over and said, "That's the

pastor that I told you about last year, the one that raised the dead man”. I looked at the pastor and thought to myself, he just looks like one of the members of the church. A few minutes later the pastor joined the small group of men as we sipped tea. I asked Jacob if he would mind interrupting for me so I could hear his story. This is what I was told.

One morning three men from his village went out to cut some lumber in the forest. It took some time to get to the bigger trees for they were using oxen with a two-wheeled cart. They had only been cutting a short time when one of the men was bitten by a snake. They immediately helped the man onto the cart and started back as fast as the oxen could run.

However, on the way the man died and they decided it was pointless rushing back as their friend had expired; so they proceeded at a leisurely pace. As they neared the village one man said to the other, “Let’s have some fun with that pastor”.

When they got to the pastor’s house, they stopped outside and lifted the dead man onto his front veranda. One of the men knocked on the door and waited. When the pastor opened the door the two men began to ridicule the pastor. One said, “You tell us God heals the sick; heal him.”

Without hesitation the pastor lifted the dead man and carried him into his house and shut the door.

As I listened to the pastor tell this story other members of the church sat listening. One man in particular kept interrupting excitedly. He affirmed that

the man was still alive and serving as one of the elders in the church.

The pastor was such a humble man and trying to take the attention off himself whilst continuing his story said, “But it took two prayers”. “What do you mean that it took two prayers”? I asked. “Well, after my first prayer his skin got warm, but after my second prayer he opened his eyes and asked me for water. After drinking water we walked outside. The other two men were still at the front veranda and when they saw their friend walk from the house they both knelt down and wanted to get saved”.

Then one of the men said, “Pastor, tell them about the others that you raised from the dead”. The pastor looked at the man and said, “What others”? They began to refresh the pastor’s mind for apparently years earlier there were many occasions when he had raised the dead. “Oh, yes, but that was when we had started the church and God was doing many miracles”, he said trying to distance himself from the increasing attention.

The miracle stories were becoming more astounding by the minute. The pastor genuinely had forgotten numbers of times he had raised the dead. He seemed to have the attitude it was all in a day’s work.

Later I spent a few minutes with Bishop Jacob, he had no knowledge of the numbers of times that this pastor had raised the dead. Truly, I had met one of the most humble men of God in India.

## IT BEGAN WITH FAITH

Once whilst staying with Bishop Jacob Raj in Maninagar, Gujarat, India. I looked down the hallway. Outside the old clinic room I noticed a plaque on the wall which detailed the faith statement of the Full Gospel Federation of Churches. As I read, two words caught my attention; “self-funded”. I was amazed with this statement of faith as there were about 180 churches in the federation. “Jacob, tell me, do all the pastors in your federation live by faith without a salary”, I asked. “Yes, my father taught them these things from the beginning. He taught tithing and giving as well”.

Later, at a more appropriate time I asked Jacob how the work was started. He told me that his father, who was a medical practitioner, had a desire to preach in that region of Gujarat among the Gamit people. In those days travel to the Gamit villages was very difficult, for once one reached Vyara train station, you needed to walk to the remote rural villages. The region was so poor that once when Dr. Raj arrived in Tokarva tired and dusty, he asked for a cup of tea. They told Dr. Raj that they had no tea. “You mean you don’t even have enough tea for one cup”. The poor village folks were embarrassed to admit it. Dr. Raj sent a young boy to Songadh to purchase tea leaves.

It was a long walk and when the tea finally arrived, Dr. Raj said, “Keep some of the tea for my next visit. His first convert in Tokarva was a man named Palia. Like many in that region, he was illiterate;

however on hearing the message of the gospel he decided to follow the Lord.

Palia's first test of faith came when his surrounding neighbours decided he could no longer draw water from the village well. This meant that his family members had to walk many kilometers to carry water in urns for the household needs. Palia prayed the way Dr. Raj had taught him; during which he saw a vision of the corner of his land. He was convinced that God was showing him the place for a new well, however much of his land was prone to sub-terrain rock formations.

That day he began digging, but after three days he struck rock. He walked into his house and sat down. Moments later God asked, "Why did you stop working"? Palia said, "Because I've struck rock". God told him to continue digging. Palia was mystified why he should continue digging into hard rock.

After many more days of solid digging he finally broke through the rock and water gushed into the well. For some reason the village well dried up and the people had to humble themselves and ask permission to draw water from Palia's well. Palia willingly shared his water and from that day he became a respected and trusted man of God.

Later he donated some of his land for a church. The new church building currently seats seven hundred people. Last year I visited Tokarva for an hour. Whilst waiting on hot tea, I spoke to Palia personally. Now much older he told me that he was still pastoring the church.



## CONCLUSION

It is not easy to finish this book for there are many more stories and chapters that have not been written. A few notable stories of my friends and co-workers have been included at the end of this book. Many other miracle stories should have been told, but one has to finish somewhere. I selected a variety of stories from many nations. I trust that these stories of God's provision, His healings and miracles in distant lands will be the catalyst to challenge others to step out and believe God. If we make ourselves available, he will provide for the journey. Thousands of years ago, God spoke to Abram and told him to leave home and be a blessing. Like Abram we can take a step of faith. We now live in the jet age. The nations are only hours away. **“Go somewhere and be a blessing”.**