

Why am I a Christian?



By Joseph John Hiestand

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Foreword

Joseph Hiestand (or 'Joe' as we know him), is a mountain of a man, not only in stature but in the strength of his character and the courage of his convictions. His commitment to his Christian beliefs is as steadfast as his love for the lush pastures surrounding Taranaki, a land he has farmed faithfully for many years and a part of New Zealand that is full of the rich heritage the Hiestand family brought with them from Switzerland to New Zealand many decades ago.

I can't quite remember when I first met Joe and his wife, Sandra, but some memories stand out as clearly as if they happened yesterday. I remember hearing Joe's stirring whistle ripple out over the worshippers at the Stratford Baptist Church during times of worship there and listening to the messages of encouragement and uplifting testimony of God's grace he shared, whenever he visited the many churches and fellowships dotted around Mount Taranaki.

Although he made his retirement home in Cambridge, Joe's heart has never left his Taranaki farm and he has continued to visit

and work there regularly, keeping alive his love for the land, his cows, his loyal dogs, and his lovingly restored tractors. Often, he has turned up at our home unannounced, sometimes in his red work wagon, sometimes in his hot orange Mustang, enjoyed a cup of tea or two and a few scones and kept us up to date with his many projects and activities.

In every task he takes on, whether caring for his cattle or sharing the word of God whenever the opportunity presents, Joe brings an unwavering dedication that reflects both his deep-rooted faith and his quiet pride in the life he's built. Those who know him best will tell you that his strength isn't merely physical; it's woven into the values he lives by each day. His work is driven by purpose, but even more by a belief in what's right and true, guiding him through both the good seasons and the challenging ones alike.

As you turn these pages, you'll hear Joe's voice—authentic, down-to-earth, and with a lively sense of humour that reveals his sincerity and deep appreciation for the simple joys of life. You'll find someone with a deep conviction of God's love and a fervent desire to serve Him. Joe's stories are filled with faith, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to his family, his farm, and his calling. His stories reflect a life

lived with passion and a faith that has fuelled his every endeavour.

This book honours that way of life. It invites readers to witness the grace, grit, and conviction of a man who finds strength not only in himself but also in the land he loves, the family of which he is so proud and his day-to-day relationship with his Lord, Jesus. His story, captured in these pages, attests to a life where character, faith, and purpose stand as tall as the mountain itself.

Vicki McIvor

Head of English and Literacy

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Chapter 1

In the beginning

I was born in 1945 - my story begins. I am the fifth child, having four older sisters, as well as three younger sisters and two younger brothers, God loves people more than anything.

I was born into a Catholic family. Has anybody in history been able to choose their parents? I was the same!

I was brought up in the Roman Catholic system, with baby Baptisms, First Communion, Confirmation, and other traditions. But God you see, had a different plan, even though I was entrenched.

I clearly recall the Catholic faith Convent School. I was educated in the Convent until Standard 6 (around 13years old), and after that I had two years at Opunake High School.

At the Convent, I was taught by nuns, dressed in black. For most of that time by one tough nun who had to manage a class of sixty-five. Before she was a nun, she was engaged, but unfortunately her fiancé got killed in a motorbike accident.

Boy, she was strict and with a class that size she had to be. She always had a supplejack in her hand, which is a hard vine, often cut to make a good stick, and she knew how to use it. I was the recipient of a beating (the cuts) most weeks.

Confession

I had my First Confession when I was 7 years old, which also formed part of my First Holy Communion. This was the most difficult part for me. It was quite scary having to front up to the confessional booth, on my own, with the priest waiting for me to admit that I had fallen short of the glory of God. It didn't help that I had no understanding of the glory of God. That it was our pride, trying to do things in our own strength. Our lack of conscience in doing the right thing, our lack of trust in God along with many other things that has separated us from the glory of God. If it wasn't for Jesus bridging the gap, we would have no hope of everlasting life and a future in the kingdom of God.

Many people have walked away because of pride and rebellion. They don't understand the gift offered to us through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is so important to understand what you are confessing and why. The Bible teaches us, and the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth.

Nowadays I confess openly to the Lord, with my heart and turn away from the things that are wrong. Often this is only when the Holy Spirit highlights them to me.

As a Christian, our faith is demonstrated by our confession and belief actions.

Romans 10:9 ESV

“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”



Me receiving my first Holy Communion

These days, my time of Communion is much different - a time for personal reflection, a time for a heartfelt thank you for what the Lord Jesus has done for me. It's more than that. It's big, way more than an old man could imagine.

Confirmation

I had my confirmation at age thirteen. At that time, I was asked to make a pledge not to drink alcohol until I was twenty-one, but I didn't take it because I knew I wouldn't be able to honour it. Because I didn't make the pledge, I received the cuts the next day. The other five boys who I was with at the time took the pledge but drank before they were twenty-one.

Confirmation was meant to be a time when you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but in the Catholic Church for most people that has now become more of a tradition than a reality.

Chapter 2

The power of prayer

Well, it involves prayer and God the Holy Spirit. The bottom line is that someone prayed, and I think that all over the world mothers in general pray. You do not have to belong to a Church or a denomination or even believe in God to pray! But most people believe something, even if it's only the world.

In 1944, there was a worker on my parent's farm. His name was Don McDowell, a born-again Christian who prayed for many people. He was a war time prisoner in one of the Wairarapa prison camps because he refused to go to war. He was a conscientious objector (CO). He was on the farm because he was assigned by the defence force as part of their manpower scheme. This was common practice for those that were CO's so they could free up the military prisons for the Japanese prisoners of war (POW's). It was a little-known fact, but New Zealand did house Japanese POW's. My wife Sandra's mother had seen them.

As a baby, when Don was working on my parent's farm, he prayed for me in the Holy Spirit, unbeknown to my parents. He did this

while babysitting my four older sisters and I, while my parents attended Mission Week, which was held every two to three years.

When I was around ten or eleven, I enjoyed mission week, because I got to spend time with all my friends, I loved the food and the general joy and comradery people had, I also really enjoyed being an altar boy with my mates, and the priests used to make a fuss over us.

The preachers at that time would preach hellfire and brimstone and probably scared a lot of people away, instead of preaching love, mercy, grace, and repentance.

All that preaching didn't change me much, having all the same problems as anyone else growing up through adolescence to young adulthood.

In 1985, I was a member of the Opunake and Hawera chapters of the Full Gospel Businessmen Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI). In that year I attended an FGBMFI seminar at Midhirst in Taranaki. The preacher was Ralph Hart, a Dutch immigrant from the Wellington area. During the seminar, a man from the audience shared his story of how he was manpowered onto a farm, by the government of the day. He shared that the

young family on the farm was Roman Catholic and that he had prayed in the Holy Spirit for the baby boy. I stood at the end of his story and said that the baby boy was me. He immediately broke down and sobbed. What a joyous time. Little did he know that I had given my heart to Jesus six years earlier. That was a tremendous day in his life and a clear answer to prayer.

My parents stayed friends with Don and his wife all their lives. I remember visiting their place in the back country in the 1950's. I attended his funeral in New Plymouth in the 1990's, a life well done, preaching, and praying for people.

The following prayer always reminds me of my grandmother Rosa. She taught me about praying. We prayed traditional prayers each night when I stayed with her for about five years during the weekdays.

Someone Prayed (a meditation) by Esther Mary Walker

Someone prayed when my heart was lonely
Someone prayed and my heart grew lighter.

Someone prayed when I was too weary
Someone prayed and You gave me strength.

Someone prayed when my heart was broken
Someone prayed and You healed the wound.

Someone prayed when my cross was heavy
Someone prayed and You made it lighter.
Someone prayed when my footsteps were
weary
Someone prayed and the miles grew shorter.

Someone prayed when my head was bowed
with worry, grief, anger and strife
Someone prayed and I thought of Your life.

Someone prayed when a mother wept, and a father's heart was about to break

Someone prayed and their hearts were lifted to accept God's will and His perfect peace.

Someone prayed when I could not feel Your caring and loving, Your guiding my way

Someone prayed and You held my hand, the sun grew bright, and I knew no fear.

Someone prayed when I lost a loved one and his soul ascended on wings of prayer. And You taught me then through sorrow and loss to reach out to others and shoulder their cross.

Someone prayed and I saw the light You give to those who are willing to share Your wondrous love through the power of prayer.

Chapter 3

Unbelief

In 1977, I was invited by my older sister Mary to attend an event at the Belmont Christian Centre in Hawera. The founder of the Centre was Paul Prentice, a born-again Christian. Paul used to draft the lambs on our family bush farm to go to the meat works. Paul, my sister and a few others volunteered to pray for me. They started to pray in the spiritual language of tongues, and I replied, “You guys are nuts” - because I had no experience with the spiritual language, so I got out of that place. This is a good example for believers to think about before praying in tongues out loud to someone who has no concept of it.

Chapter 4

An encounter with the Holy Spirit

Matthew 3:11-12 NIV

[11] “I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [12] His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Less than two years later, I **was** nuts.

This occurred when my wife Sandra, who was a born-again believer, had invited a couple of friends (our neighbours who also milked cows) over to our house one evening. They were born-again believers. After they stopped milking cows, they pastored the Assemblies of God Church in Hawera as well as Whakatane. Unbeknown to me, Sandra had jacked this up to pray for me to be baptised in the Holy Spirit.

They eventually broached the subject about

praying for me, and my response was, “You can pray as much as you like but it won’t make a bloody difference to me.”

Boy was I so wrong. Everything changed. I mean everything. The Holy Spirit just rained down on me with such joy, I was laughing my head off, then five minutes later I sobbed for about five minutes, then an absolute peace. I could see in the spirit, what I can only describe as droplets of light, formed like crystals, that looked like the big crystals on chandeliers that you would see in a cowboy movie. They were raining down on me.

At dawn the next morning, around 5AM, I jumped on my motorbike to round up the cows for milking. First, I headed over to the kennel to let my dog Roy off the leash. I could see Roy knew I was different. I knew I was different. The air smelled fresher, the birds sounded louder, and they were singing like I had never heard them sing before. I could smell the air around the cows. It was such an awesome feeling. I was experiencing the freshness of the morning like never before.

The next day I picked up my Bible and it just fell open at Ephesians 5. I started reading and verses 8 - 21 just jumped out of the page at me.

[8] “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light [9] (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) [10] and find out what pleases the Lord. [11] Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. [12] It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. [13] But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. [14] This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” [15] Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, [16] making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. [17] Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. [18] Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, [19] speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, [20] always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [21] Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

I felt like such a jerk. I had been kicking against the Holy Spirit for years.

Oh, how the Lord changed me!!

We purchased my dog Roy in 1976, after I had accidentally killed my good dog Buck, who I had trained from a pup in 1971.

Buck was a hard dog, but under command, I would only have to speak, and he reacted. What an asset he was for a young family. No one got in the front gate or into the house if he was on the loose. A great insurance policy.

Roy was 18 years old when I had to put him down.

I loved my dogs and when I think of them, I am drawn to the scripture (Genesis 1:26 & 28), “God has given us (man) dominion (rule, authority) over the birds in the air, livestock on the land and the fish of the sea.”

Genesis 1:26, 28 NIV

[26] Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

[28] God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the

earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

Before I was born again and with that authority in mind, I had no problem with taking the rifle to put an animal out of its misery. But after I was born again, my heart was softened I had to put Roy down. It really upset me, and I haven't had a dog since.

I also used to talk with my cows. I would give them commands and they would listen. They knew my voice. Just like the good Shepherd story in the Bible, **John 10:27 NIV – “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”**

On that morning, after my baptism in the Holy Spirit, Roy was running beside me as I rode the motorbike down the farm. He had long legs like a trotting horse. He looked at me and smiled. It was incredible. As well as the peace of God, which reminded me of the song, “Only A Prayer Away”, by Len Magee. The cows were different too, because Joe had changed. I was different. Everything looked and felt different. God had changed something in me as He can only do.

The devil had left me, just as he had left Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 4:11 NIV – “*Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.*”

Then I truly knew I was baptised in the Holy Spirit and was saved. I was 34 years of age, a husband and a father of three sons at that time. Our miracle baby daughter was born a year later.

The anger I had was gone. I had the peace of God. The Holy Spirit was incredible! I virtually woke up smelling the roses, that is true.

The dog (if you spell backwards, you get GOD), the cows and the family lived and recognised the change.

Then the Holy Spirit put his finger on some bad habits. Within a month the cigarettes had gone - a miracle considering I had my first fag at nine years of age with a mate at Opunake Beach. Back then a pack of 10 De Reske cork tips cost one shilling, I also used to roll my own. I learnt how to roll my own from the Dutch immigrants, who were sharemilkers on our farm. Because I had dry hands, they would get me to roll their cigarettes. We had matches in our pockets for

not only lighting the cigarettes but for lighting fireworks too. I thought I was so cool.

Then the booze went. Drinking was my life. I had a sticker on my old Ford Anglia, depicting a car with a barrel of beer on the roof and a tube coming in through the driver's window and the slogan said, "The car does thirty miles per gallon, the driver does five." That pretty much summed up my life at that time (hard case).

I was a self-righteous, angry and determined man and used to swear a lot when things didn't go my way, although I never took the Lord's name in vain. I was delivered from all of this too.

On the 8th of the 11th 1979, I was born again and within a week, where my attitude had been that "I work hard so I deserve a drink", I started to preach the Gospel of salvation in the pubs instead.

I had the cowshed radio tuned to the local radio station, but three days after my Holy Spirit experience, on the 11th of the 11th 1979, they switched on Radio Rhema in Nelson. I don't recall how I heard about it, but I tuned my radio in to it on that day. I received it loud and clear on the slopes of Mt Egmont in Taranaki.

It was an old valve radio that Sandra's Dad had given us for the cowshed. The tuning dial had rusted onto that station ever since, much to the annoyance of the relief milkers over the years. I became a member of Radio Rhema and have been so ever since; I listen to Derek Prince's teaching and continue to do so till this day (45 years and counting).

Chapter 5

Our transition from the Roman Catholic Church

My wife Sandra was a born-again Christian at the age of 13. She attended church every week. She was an Anglican and I a Roman Catholic, both believers and God, the match maker. Here we were both with our traditional beliefs.

We met on the dance floor at the Okato country dance hall and in December 1968 we had our first date.

We were married on the 13th of June 1970, an unusual date for couples in New Zealand unless you are dairy farming.

We were married in the Catholic Church; our marriage celebrant was the Catholic priest, and the Anglican minister was the MC at our wedding reception. This kept the peace between the families.



This photo was taken on Sandra's 60th Birthday. It is one of the most beautiful pictures taken of us together.

During the first 18 years of our marriage, we fellowshipped at the Kaponga Catholic Church, where I was on the Finance Committee and Parish Council and was heavily involved in the establishment of the church building as it stands now. I also mentored the young people to bring them through to Confirmation.

Through this time, we were flowing in the Holy Spirit ministry and were drawn to the Catholic Charismatic Church in Opunake, which was led by Father Jim Rickard. We attended many prayer meetings there.

When Father Jim retired, we wanted to continue with the Holy Spirit ministry, but there was a lot of resistance for this ministry within the Roman Catholic Church, so we started looking elsewhere. But we kept in contact with Father Jim from time to time until his passing at the age of 95. When attending his funeral, there was a sense of happiness as we knew despite all his traditions, he was with the Lord now.

We left the Catholic Church in 1988 to be part of the Opunake Christian Fellowship. Dave and Maree Hunt were the pastors of the church at that time. I used to go to school with Maree at Opunake High School.

We attended the Opunake Christian Fellowship primarily to do Holy Spirit ministry, which was when I received my first prophetic word from a fellow believer, Chum Moffat. His word was that I would fly on eagles' wings relating to a verse in the book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:31 NIV – “*but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*”

This caught my attention as he didn't know that flying was a passion of mine, when I was at Primary School, I used to put my arms out pretending I was flying, and then when I was 20, I got my pilot's licence. But of course, this was more a spiritual message about me seeing things in the spirit.

Prior to leaving the Catholic Church, I felt no need to be water baptised (full immersion) as I had been baptised as a baby. Sandra had also been baptised as a baby in the Anglican Church and as an adult in the Catholic Church.

However, when we fellowshiped at the Opunake Christian Fellowship we both felt the urge to be baptised full immersion and wanted

to do this as a family. We all got water baptised
on the 16th of January 1990 in the Waiaua River
in Opunake.



Chapter 6

Curses

I have prayed over many farms and businesses to break off ancestral curses. Take out the sin, then the Holy Spirit can flow. No repentance - no salvation. In other words, stay in the world and go to hell. There is no other way. That's why Jesus was crucified for our salvation.

John 3:16 NIV –

“For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Acts 2:38 NIV

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The Egyptian Curse

I got boils on my legs at seven years of age. Disgusting things!! I had about thirty of them. My mother used to put a hot poultice on them and then bandage my legs. I got them again when I was about fourteen years old, around

my middle. How embarrassing, especially at that adolescent age. I got them again when I was twenty-one. On my twenty-first birthday my arm was bandaged up. I don't remember what happened when I was 28, but praise to the Lord, I was saved before I was thirty-five and somebody prayed and broke the Egyptian Curse off me, and the rest is history.

Exodus 9:8-11 NIV -

[8] “Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. [9] It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on people and animals throughout the land.” [10] So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on people and animals. [11] The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians.”

The Curse on the Farm

When I was about 10 years old, Mum and Dad had sharemilkers on the farm. On one occasion I witnessed something unnatural, but I was too

young to realize that this was not of God and subsequently resulted in a curse.

In the early 1980's, after I was a born-again Christian but remained in the Catholic church, we had an Irish Catholic priest; His name was Father Jim Rickard. He used to smoke 40 – 60 cigarettes and drink half a bottle of whisky a day. Until one day, he had an encounter with God and completely stopped smoking and drinking ever since. Father Jim lived until he was the ripe old age of 95.

Father Jim had tremendous encounters with the Holy Spirit and used to have a Charismatic Mass once a month, where every believer in the town was welcome regardless of denomination.

Because of Father Jim's relationship with God and his sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, we knew when we took Holy Communion, our sins were forgiven, a real sense of freedom from condemnation.

In 1974, Sandra and I purchased the home farm from my parents.

Several years later, in 1980, Father Jim was prompted by the Holy Spirit to come and pray over our farm to break off ancestral curses.

While we were praying, he made a statement, which highlighted the event that I had witnessed when I was 10 years old.

The breaking of this curse and others off the farm resulted in an increase in production and we were blessed, not only financially, but with a peace and calmness over the farm. The grass always looked green. The neighbours even commented on how good the farm looked.

Because of what I had witnessed, this curse turned into a blessing not only for us but for others too. Sandra and I have prayed through many houses and over farms and have seen demons come out of walls and animals as well as people.

Unless a man or woman is born again of the spirit, they will not enter the Kingdom of God

John 3:5-15 NIV - [5] “Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. [6] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. [7] You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ [8] The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone

born of the Spirit.” [9] “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. [10] “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? [11] Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. [12] I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? [13] No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. [14] Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, [15] that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

When the Bible came alive in my heart and life (in other words I was born of the Kingdom of God), I understood about ancestral curses. Sandra and I have been ministering in deliverance and healing ever since. That’s God - Praise the Lord.

Chapter 7

The vision of the word TEKOA

I leased a parcel of land for several years, on Skeet Road in the district of Auroa.

One day, the owners, a family of seven, decided to sell the land because for the next generation it would divide into thirty-three owners.

I wanted to buy the land, but it had to go through the Māori Land Court in Whanganui for a European title. After four years of processing, eventually it went through.

My Christian brothers, Rex Bloor and Robin White, who were also farmers, had said to me, “When you get the title, we will come and walk the boundary and pray over the land with you.” I understood the practice well as I had seen this previously when Father Jim prayed over the homestead farm.

We had almost completed the boundary walk when we came to this certain place and discerned an ancestral curse, a word of knowledge. We all stopped and looked at each other. The Holy Spirit had spoken. So, we prayed in tongues (spiritual language)

and to my amazement, the word Tekoa, was superimposed in the cloud formation in front of Mount Egmont (Taranaki), which is seen every day by those that live in Taranaki. The word never left me, so I kept asking people like Bill Snowden and Western Carryer, who were well versed in Bible knowledge, to enlighten me. It is mentioned in several books of the Bible, such as 1 Chronicles and 2 Samuel. However, the reference in the book of Amos seemed to stick with me because of the shepherds - farmers like me.

Amos 1:1 NIV

“The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.”

As a result of this we named the farm Tekoa. We also got a personalised Tekoa, number plate for the car and we named our ministry, Tekoa Ministry.

Tekoa in Israel is located just south of Bethlehem.

The word Tekoa in Māori means “joyful one” or “joy.”

One day I was filling my car up with fuel in a petrol station in Rotorua, when a big Māori man walked around the car and then asked where I got the word from. I think he was surprised to see that I was a Pakeha (European New Zealander). “Out of the Bible bro”, was my answer and then he told me the significance of the word in the Māori language.

Because of the vision of the word Tekoa, and the significance of the word to the Māori people of the eastern Bay of Plenty, (Rotorua eastward and down to Opotiki and around the coast), we discussed this with Rodney Francis when we met up with him in the late 1990’s. He was excited to go there, and the Holy Spirit was with us ministering to the people in that area. God blessed many people through the vision of TEKOA.

Chapter 8

Rodney Francis Crusades - Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry (known as GFM)

In 1999, I don't recall the exact reason, but someone asked us to come to Elim Church in Cambridge for an Equipping Convention, which was held over three days. Rodney Francis was a guest speaker there. He was an amazing man of God, and he shared his ministry experiences with us all.

During the event we received a prophecy from one of the brothers who was serving at one of the stations. The prophecy was that we would minister in nations with dark skinned people.

Around this time, I had graduated from Bible College, and Sandra and I were searching for God's call on our lives. We felt that the Lord was calling us to be part of the ministry team God had called Rodney into. We were introduced to Rodney and the Lord surely used us in ministry from there. What a journey the Lord had opened for us. We met some incredible people and had some amazing experiences with the Lord.

Through GFM, the prophecy came true. We served in Fiji, Tonga, Malaysia, Nepal, Kenya and Uganda.

We also served in England. We spent four months with Rodney and Jean ministering in Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and various Pentecostal Churches. After England we went to Berlin in Germany and ministered in a Lutheran Church. All these churches were hungry to know more about the Holy Spirit ministry.

We witnessed some amazing works of God. People being healed through words of knowledge and laying on of hands as well as people being delivered from demonic oppression.

This ministry also gave us some amazing lifetime experiences we wouldn't have had otherwise. Apart from the amazing ministry work we were part of I experienced different cultures and historical milestones. One that sticks with me is when I was standing where the Berlin Wall had been taken down.

For those of you who are reading this right now, you can see how God has used us and he also wants to use you. Your journey will be different, but the result is the same. God loves people

more than anything and he wants to use you to help people and to help to call them home.

I urge you to seek the Holy Spirit to highlight His call on your life.

Nothing is impossible for God.

Mark 10:27 NIV

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”

I found the following excerpt from Rodney Francis’s book, “God’s Call Can Be Fulfilled”, to be challenging and encouraging I hope you do too.

Today I prayed: “Disturb me, Lord, when my dreams come true, only because I dreamed too small. Disturb me when I arrive safely, only because I sailed too close to the shore. Disturb me when the things I have gained cause me to lose my thirst for more of You. Disturb me when I have acquired success, only to lose my desire for excellence. Disturb me when I give up too soon and settle far short of the goals You have set for my life.”
(Author Unknown)

In light of the above, ask yourself:

Do I dream too small?

Do I sail too close to the shore?

Have I lost my thirst for more of Jesus?

Have I lost my desire for excellence?

Do I give up too soon?

Do I settle far too short of the goals I have set?

Am I disciplined enough to fulfil my dream? My call? My destiny?

Am I persistent enough?

Am I maintaining my determination to press on regardless of the obstacles in the way?

Am I fueling my passionate pursuit?

Honest assessments like these help us to know where we are wanting / needing to go, and whether we have what it takes to get there.

Press on! **You will never be disappointed in the fulfilling of the will of God for your life.**

“And say to Archippus, see that you discharge carefully [the duties of] the ministry and fulfill the stewardship which you have received in the Lord”.

Colossians 4:17 AMP

Chapter 9

Accident and Alzheimer's diagnosis

In 2019, I was struggling with ringing in my ears. I went to the doctor, thinking it was related to all the years I had been operating machinery. I also had felt weakness in my arms. I couldn't do some of the things I used to do. My doctor sent me off to get an MRI scan. Thankfully they didn't find saw dust given my earlier career as a carpenter. Unfortunately, there were early signs of the onset of Alzheimer's. I was shocked on hearing this news, this wasn't what I had planned for my retirement, but I put my trust in the Lord that he would heal me, or he would make something good out of my situation. I also didn't really understand the consequences of my diagnosis.

Two years later I had an accident. I slipped off the ladder and broke my ankle. Reflecting on that now, it was the start of my condition affecting my co-ordination. It took about four months for me to walk properly again.

Almost two years after breaking my ankle, I was on the same ladder, on the back of the same truck and I fell off it again. This time I broke my

femur on the same leg, I spent five weeks in hospital.

During this time, I had another MRI which showed further deterioration of my brain. My neurologist explained what was going on with me and said I was an accident waiting to happen. I had a better understanding at this point. Thinking now, I still have that ladder. I must get rid of it.

It's been twelve months since getting my second MRI and receiving further news of the deterioration of my brain. My body has changed substantially since then. I love driving, working on the farm, whistling and many other things, but I can't do these things now. I need a lot of help. Thank you to my lovely wife Sandra.

Now that I have less time on the farm, I spend most of my time reading the Bible, listening to Bible teaching, praying for others and getting involved in church and ministry locally. Regardless of my situation the Lord deserves every effort I can muster to fulfil His purpose for me.

Chapter 10

Our circumstances don't stop God's plans for us.

While I have always preached the gospel in my interactions with people over the years, I felt that God had given me a calling for my retirement, that from 80 years old onwards, I would preach the Gospel up and down the country. My medical condition has limited my ability to do this. I can't speak or move around as well as I used to, and I am no longer allowed to drive so I am reliant on others to take me to where I need to go. However, God still uses me. He gives me words of knowledge for people and so I continue to be involved in ministry in the Waikato and Taranaki. I have rejoined the Full Gospel Businessmen's Ministry, and I still attend as many GFM meetings as I can. I am fully involved in my local church and fellowship regularly with fellow believers from our local church to pray with and to encourage one another, to study the Bible and to worship as well as supporting each other in our daily lives.

I'm always learning. In recent times I have learnt to be more adept in waiting on the Lord for everything.

Even though some days I feel like I am on the scrap heap, I find it important to maintain a sense of humour. A little rhyme we used to use as a signature back in the day gives me a chuckle. “Can’t think, brains numb, inspiration won’t come, Can’t write, no pen, That’s all - Amen”.

I’m certainly not dead. People have put me on the scrap heap but as long as I have breath in my lungs, I will endeavour to carry out the Lord’s plan for me.

Chapter 11

Faith & Grace

When reflecting on the traditions I grew up with in the Catholic Church and having no relationship with the Holy Spirit, I can see how easily I was trapped into thinking I can earn my salvation. There is pride in thinking this way - I can do it in my own strength. My experience with the Holy Spirit helped me to be free from all of this.

The circumstances around my freedom will be different to yours, however, the message is the same. Through **faith** in who Jesus is and what He has done for all of humanity, we receive His grace to become children of God

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NIV

[3] “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, [4] that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,”

1 John 3:1 NIV

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.”

The following is from a book called, “My Journal special edition, Alive” by Dr Michael Youssef

“Without the resurrection, Jesus would have merely been a good teacher or a guru who died for a good cause. But when he rose from the dead, he declared victory over sin and death once and for all. No other world religion can make this claim.”

I also read a book by Derek Prince a few years ago called, “By Grace Alone” which may help you. The following two excerpts are from this book:

“You may have come to the realisation that in some measure you have been trying to earn or become worthy of the blessing of God in your life by keeping rules, or by endeavouring to measure up to some standard of what a good Christian should be. You may feel at least in some areas of your life, like a tree in the desert, never fully experiencing the presence of God’s grace and favour in the atmosphere

surrounding your life. If you can identify with this in any way, then I would encourage you to make a decision to stop working and to receive by faith the grace that God has freely bestowed on you in Christ Jesus.”

“The will of God will never place you where the grace of God cannot keep you.”

Ephesians 2:8 NIV

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God”

Faith in action: When we are living by faith we are in a fully committed relationship with the Lord, that is, regularly communing with Holy Spirit, spending time with Him in His word, praying in the spirit and thanking / worshipping Him. We start to demonstrate the fruit of the spirit. We haven’t earned this, it’s a transformation, an outworking of our faith in and love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

[22] “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

Chapter 12

We all need saving, whether we believe it or not

If it wasn't for my encounter with the Holy Spirit, I wouldn't have known God the way I do now. I wouldn't have committed myself to work in his Kingdom and I wouldn't have been sharing the Good News with others as I have done over the years.

It's important to remember; Good people don't go to heaven - saved people do.

I have used this message several times over the years as the Holy Spirit has prompted me. In doing this I am truly loving God and loving others, for he has commissioned us to share the good news of salvation for mankind.

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

[19] "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Being a born-again Christian has enabled God to

use me to pray for my family as well as others.

I saw my parent's grief when they buried my oldest sister Mary, their first born, in 1986. Mary was Spirit filled, the first to be saved in our family. She was the sister who encouraged me on my journey with God.

Before my parents passed away, my sister Carolyn and I encouraged them to become born again Christians despite all the traditions of the Catholic faith. They did. You can be a Catholic and still be born again. However, in my experience there was more religious tradition than being led by the Spirit. The religious spirit is difficult to deal with.

John 3:5-6 NIV

[5] "Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. [6] Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

I have also had the privilege in helping to lead four of my siblings to be born again and baptised in the Holy Spirit. All have gone home to be with the Lord now.

Of my four remaining siblings three are yet to be saved and I take every opportunity I can to encourage them to take that step of faith.

Chapter 13

Prayer covering

In 2004, I don't recall who gave me the following prayer. It was someone from the Hawera area and it was when I was going through a rough patch in my life. I prayed this prayer in full every day for about 10 years, but nowadays I rely on the Holy Spirit to prompt me what to pray for, which has led me back to this prayer on occasions. I have given out numerous copies over the years. I hope this prayer helps you and I hope the Holy Spirit speaks to you about these things as and when they are needed.

Matthew 18:18 NIV

[18] “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Dear Heavenly Father, I pray this prayer in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the name of Jesus Christ I bind, rebuke, and bring to no effect, all division, discord, disunity, strife, anger, wrath, murder, criticism, condemnation, pride, envy, jealousy, gossip,

slander, evil speaking, complaining, lying, false teaching, false manifestations, lying signs and wonders, poverty, fear of lack, fear spirits, murmuring spirits, complaining spirits, hindering spirits, retaliatory spirits, deceiving spirits, religious spirits, occult spirits witchcraft spirits (including Jezebel, Delilah and Apollyon), intimidating spirits, words spirits, lustful spirits, spirits of unbelief, spirits of death and hell, and spirits of antichrist. I cover myself between each one with the blood of Jesus Christ.

I bind all curses that have been spoken against me. I bless all those who curse me, and I pray blessing on those who spitefully use me. I bind all spoken judgements made against me and judgments I have made against others. I bind the power of negative words from others and I bind and render useless all prayers not inspired by the Holy Spirit; whether psychic, soul force, witchcraft or counterfeit tongues that have been prayed against me.

I am God's child. I resist the devil. No weapon formed against me shall prosper. I put on the whole armour of God. I take authority over this day in Jesus name. Let it be prosperous for me. Let me walk in your love Lord. The Holy Spirit leads and guides me today. I discern between the righteous and the wicked. I take authority

over Satan and all his demons and those people who are influenced by them. I declare Satan is under my feet and shall remain there all day.

God, I pray for the ministry you have for me. Anoint me God for all you have called me to do for you. I call forth divine appointments, divine favour, open doors of opportunity, God ordained encounters and ministry positions.

I claim a hedge of protection around myself, spouse and children (names) throughout this day and night. I ask you God, in the name of Jesus, to dispatch angels to surround me, my spouse and my children today and to put them throughout my house and around our vehicles, souls and bodies. I ask angels to protect my house from any intrusion and to protect me and my family from any harmful demonic or other physical or mental attacks.

Release your legions of ministering and warrior angels.

I ask this prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Chapter 14

Be alert and of sober mind.

1 Peter 5:8 NIV

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.”

We have an invisible enemy; his sole purpose is to keep us from the truth. All believers must be vigilant in learning to recognise the tricks of the devil. He can be seen in false teaching, false words of knowledge, mocking from others and anything contrary to the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV

[22]“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

As a believer, life isn't easy. We must continually build our knowledge through His word and by revelation from the Holy Spirit of who Jesus is and His Kingdom promise.

We must learn to fight, using this knowledge and remember who our fight is with.

Ephesians 6:12 NIV

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

We must test our knowledge and the spirit behind it with others.

1 John 4:2-3 NIV

[2] “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, [3] but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.”

It is so important to be connected to a family of **truth** believers.

We must also, be ready at any time to share with others the truth of Jesus Christ with a sense of urgency.

Chapter 15

An encouragement for those who don't know Jesus Christ

Life is a whole new ball game now and of course God being God, I can never come to the end of learning more about him. There is a sense of being satisfied yet knowing there is still more of God I can experience and it's that sense that keeps my life wild and free, fresh and vital regardless of my situation.

I encourage you as a reader of this book, that if you haven't already acknowledged Jesus as your Lord and saviour, it is vitally important for you to seek him out, for those that seek will truly find Him and will experience many of the things I have experienced and maybe more.

Matthew 7:8 NIV

“For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

If you are ready, the following prayer is a good first step.

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins. I repent of it and I turn to you

by faith right now. I thank you for dying on the cross for me and paying the price for all my sins. I ask you to come into my life right now and be my Lord and saviour and my friend. Fill me with your Holy Spirit and help me to be your disciple from this moment forward. Thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Once you have taken this step, I encourage you to read the Holy Bible and find your local Spirit filled Church to continue your journey of your discipleship.

Proverbs 4:20-23 NIV

[20]” My son, pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. [21] Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart; [22] for they are life to those who find them and health to one’s whole body. [23] Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Chapter 16

My mentors

Derek Prince - saying “Don’t give up, God is faithful, keep going”.

Western Carryer – Was a dairy farmer in the Inglewood area and an evangelist.

Eddie Cairns – I first met him in the Presbyterian Church in Hawera. He was a farmer, butcher and evangelist.

Bill Snowden – Was a farmer and evangelist. He helped us with prayer and encouragement when our son was sick back in the 90’s.

Graeme Powell – Has a deliverance ministry.

Bill Subritzky – Was an evangelist, a lawyer as well as a builder.

Rodney Francis – Was an evangelist who worked in the power of prophecy and words of knowledge, Sandra and I spent many years with Rodney and Jean in ministry.

