

Introduction

‘Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ (Acts 2:21)

I WAS BORN and spent my childhood in the Cornish village of Par, where my family regularly attended the local Primitive Methodist Church. As a child I found church very boring, but I now know that the faithfully committed Sunday School teachers sowed precious seed, God’s word, into my life. I must have assisted in their own spiritual progress, for ‘suffering produces endurance’ (Romans 5:3), and as a boy I certainly was a cause of considerable suffering to them!

My wife, Marion, was an Anglican, who had been confirmed at the age of sixteen. Twelve years later when she was on her way home from a church service, she met her friend Margaret. On hearing that Marion had just been to church, Marion asked her if she was a Christian. “Of course I am”, she replied, “I’ve just been to a church service.” She was surprised to hear Margaret reply, “That doesn’t mean you’re a Christian. We have a young minister lodging with us, perhaps you would like to meet him?” The minister, Len Magee, was the pastor of the Elim Pentecostal Church in Lane End, near High Wycombe. On meeting him, Marion said, “Well, as you’re a preacher, I suppose you should preach to me!”

Pastor Magee was quite taken aback by this, and arranged an appointment to see Marion the following day, when they duly met. The pastor read a passage from Isaiah chapter 53, and then shared the gospel with her. Marion, in tears, knelt and received Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour.

On returning home, she was full of joy and talked to me about being saved and becoming a Christian. I said that I thought

she already was a Christian, but she insisted that she had just received Christ and had been born again. In the days that followed, Marion tried hard to share the gospel with me, but I was having none of it! As far as I was concerned, I didn't mind her attending church meetings, as long as she didn't expect me to go.

Unbeknown to me, my wife had approached the prayer group at the church, saying that as wild horses wouldn't drag me into church, would they please pray for my salvation. Their prayers proved to be effective!

A little later, Marion asked me if some friends could come around one evening. I had a high-powered job, which I really enjoyed, but which left me very little time for friends. When I found out that my wife had invited the pastor, I objected to the point of threatening to throw him out, but after being assured that he wouldn't preach to me, I reluctantly agreed that he could come.

I was very surprised when I met him because he was completely different to what I had expected. I later discovered that everyone who was there that night, with the exception of three of us, was a Christian. Little did we know that within a few days the three of us would also be born again!

During the evening, I virtually chain-smoked, and I must have bored everyone stiff showing our holiday movies and talking about myself. The pastor kept his word and didn't preach, but I told him that I couldn't believe the Bible, as it was full of contradictions. To my surprise, I was even able to point a few out to him. He very graciously explained that the seeming contradictions arose because I had taken the verses out of context.

I then suggested to him that if he were honest, he would admit to being afraid of death. This was a problem that had plagued me personally throughout my life. The Christians

laughed and assured me that they did not fear death, as they had received eternal life.

The evening ended and I could neither understand nor believe, but I was very much aware that they had something that I did not have. Later I was to learn that the something they had was actually someone, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came 'to deliver those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.' (Hebrews 2:15)

A few days later, whilst driving to work, I was caught in a traffic jam. Some very impatient people were sounding their car horns and shouting abuse. I remember asking myself, "What is life really all about?" It seemed just then to be something of a pointless rat race, and I felt despair. I had lovely wife, two beautiful daughters, a new detached house, a new car and a good career, but... There was definitely something missing in my life.

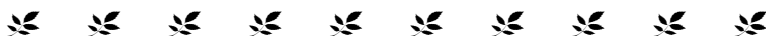
As I eventually drove on, I decided to talk to God. I said, "I cannot believe what those Christians told me about you, that you even know the number of hairs on my head. If you know that much about me, then you must know me better than I know myself. Therefore, you must know that I cannot believe, so if you are real, please help me to believe."

It was a cry from deep within, and as it left my lips, I stared in amazement. I had regularly driven along that road, but never before had I noticed a large stone cross, which I was now driving directly towards. I was oblivious to everything else around me. I cried out, "Jesus, forgive my sins and come into my life." Immediately, I could see! It was an instant conversion and from that moment my life changed forever.

I was instantly aware that everything was different. I later discovered these words in a hymn: 'Something lives in every hue Christless eyes have never seen.' I knew what the hymn writer meant. Jesus said "Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5) New desires, new friends, new principles to live by. Was it

just a coincidence that I happened to be in that particular place at that time? I think not.

Thank you Jesus for saving me. Thank you, Marion and the Church, for praying for my salvation. Little did they realise that not only would God save me, but would give me to the Church as their pastor to serve Him and them.¹



¹ The stone cross is at a road junction in the village of Bisham, Buckinghamshire. Engraved on it are the words 'Jesus my Redeemer'.

“In my name they will cast out demons.”

(Mark 16:17)

WHILE ATTENDING THE ELIM BIBLE COLLEGE I was asked to preach on Sunday evenings at a hired hall in Maidenhead. Very few people attended the service, but each week a young man named Norman came, always smelling of drink. Usually my wife and our friends Margaret and Dennis would take the young man for a coffee after the service.

One evening when I was at home, Dennis rang to tell me that Norman had turned up at his home. He was returning to Glasgow, his home town, and was the worse for drink. Dennis asked me to go round to his house. We sat with Norman, who had a large bottle of whiskey with him. We talked to him, and suddenly he began to say some very dreadful things about Jesus on the cross. I had never heard anything so evil. He was so abusive it was obvious there was a demonic problem.

Margaret left the house in a hurry and went to join my wife at our home. Norman began to abuse us verbally and vile language poured out of his mouth. He wanted to beat me over the head with a poker! Normally I would have fled, but surprisingly I felt no fear whatsoever. As he came towards me like a fiend I pointed a finger at him and commanded the demon in the Name of Jesus to leave him. At the very mention of the name Jesus, Norman fell to the floor as if someone had hit him over the head with a baseball bat.

I told him to repent and receive Jesus, and he began to weep and pray for salvation. The next moment he was weeping for joy, and he poured his whiskey down the sink! I felt exhausted and asked Dennis to read from the Word of God. He just opened the

Bible and read these words: “The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with (Jesus); but he sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you!””

Norman had come to tell us that he was returning home to Glasgow the following day. Dennis and I took him back to Maidenhead, gave him a Bible and took our leave of him, never expecting to hear from him again.

Two years later on our preaching tour from John O’Groats to Land’s End we reached Glasgow. I told Wally about Norman and we prayed for him. Glasgow is one of the largest cities in the UK and I had absolutely no idea of Norman’s whereabouts. We parked our van and walked to a shopping centre.

I knew that in Maidenhead Norman had worked for an electric company, so seeing an electric shop I thought I would go in and see if they had heard of him. I hesitated, thinking it would be a waste of time, but then decided I might as well go in and ask. I spoke to an assistant explaining that I wanted to contact a man named Norman Walker. She replied, “Oh, Norman. He’s over there.” I turned around and Norman and I were facing each other! He was now a manager, with a wife and child, and no longer had problems with alcohol. We enjoyed lunch together, and although I have never seen or heard from him again, I know he is in God’s safe keeping.

I was absolutely astonished at what had happened. I believe this was more than just a coincidence. What do you think?



My God will supply every need of yours
according to his riches in glory in Christ
Jesus.

(Philippians 4:19)

AFTER I GRADUATED from Bible College I returned to regular work with my old company. Three years later, I resigned in order to commence serving the Lord as the full-time Pastor of the church in Lane End, Buckinghamshire.

While I was working my notice some of my colleagues asked what I was going to do regarding transport, since I had had the use of a company car for the previous three years. I decided to ask the Lord about it. While praying about it, I had a clear vision of a particular car - a red Cortina. I believed it was mine, so I excitedly ran downstairs to tell my wife that we had no need to be concerned about transport, as God was giving us a red Cortina.

As my leaving date approached, I was asked by the company to hand over my vehicle to another company on the last day of my employment. I asked what would happen to the car which my current car was going to replace, and I was told that it was to be sold. I immediately asked the make of the car, and was told it was a Cortina, a red Cortina! So I asked if they would be kind enough to provisionally put my name against it, as I was interested in buying it. The car had just been completely overhauled and it had brand new tyres. The company who owned it had spent £500 on it before deciding to sell it for £500! Christian friends had already contacted me to say that they were prepared to spend a total of £1500 on a car for me, so my buying it was no problem.

On the afternoon of my departure from the company, I stood in the office with some of my colleagues and I reminded them of what I had told them – that my new employer, God, was going to supply me with a red Cortina. I asked them to look down into the car park, where I pointed out to them my red Cortina, the keys to which I had just received. God's timing is perfect!!!

I said my farewells and drove off, not in a green Rolls Royce or a yellow Mini, but in a red Cortina. I gave thanks all the way home: the vehicle had cost me personally nothing at all.

Was the provision of my new car and the timing of my ownership of it just a coincidence, or was it the supernatural result of answered prayer?