

With God as Our Guide—book 4

(Compiled November 2022, By CQ)

—Unedited or proof read



Victor sees Jesus

I will start with a testimony when I was 10 years old or so .

I like to mention this one because I do share also in my personal witnessing with friends and contacts about how the Lord is sooo real and He sooo faithful to answer ALL our little childish prayers.

My background is Catholic and my family went to church. In Italy had before the tradition to have communion for the first time when you are adolescent. So the night before to attend the first communion ceremony I obey what a nun suggested the children to do before to go to bed: "Children remember tonight before to go to bed to pray the Lord for a good night and ask Jesus to sleep with you".

So I did the prayer and it happened that in the middle of the night I woke up and I had a very vivid spiritual experiences to feel the presence of Jesus and see himself sleep close side by side together with me in the same little bed.

Seeing Jesus personally my reaction was to greeting Him and after that happily I went to sleep again.

This was my first special encounter that really encourage me a lot on my grow, future and difficult teenager years. It remind me that Jesus is real and always near to us and to dose who seek & believe in Him.

Angel story from Nagaland

The students were having breakfast and two of them were facing each other opposite side of the table. One (Nitesh) could see in the window behind this student , The other(Lily) could see the garden outside behind the other students back as the door was open, the one facing the window-thought someone in white was passing by in the garden as she saw the shadow in the window but Nitesh said " No, no one passed- Then she saw in the window someone passing in red and again said: someone is in the garden, I can see him, but Nitesh said, no, there is no one! She went out right away to check but did not see anyone. She looked around the dining room but there was no one to be seen. She asked me what it was later and I said: Looks you saw two angels! Since Nitesh was facing the garden he was supposed to have seen what she saw in the window as he was facing the garden.

Answered Prayer for the Schoolroom Air Con! by Dina

Last month, we asked for your prayers for an air con for the cancer kids schoolroom. The Lord did it! Here's how:

When visiting recently, the schoolroom seemed especially hot and the kids were all sweaty. I noticed the windows were all sealed shut.

"Are you waiting for the air-con to get installed?" I asked one of the teachers.

"Yes, she said, "We made all the preparations but we don't have the air con yet."

"The kids really need an air-con!" I thought, "They're already battling cancer. They deserve a comfortable schoolroom."

That evening, I asked the Lord to supply all the funds for the air con. The next day, I went back to the cancer kids' shelter to talk to the manager. He explained about the air-con, the cost of the installation, etc. The total came to \$400.

I took a step of faith and told the manager, "I believe we'll have the air con in two weeks."

A lot of red tape is involved in getting permission to do anything in the government hospital, so I suggested we start preparing the paperwork to get the air-con installed.

After making that commitment, I got desperate in prayer. It's not that easy to raise \$400 being in a 3rd world country. The only way it was going to happen that fast was through God's miracle-working power. Two days later, I got an email from a friend I hadn't heard from in a while. He wrote, "I'm sending you \$400. Please use it for whatever you like."

Wow, the Lord answered my prayers so quickly!

This proved to me once again that the promises in the Bible really work! If you are facing a challenge or a need in your life, I hope you will use the Bible promises in your prayers. They always work!

Jewellery Miracle

Thought I would tell you about a wonderful answer to prayer and a miracle. I threw out a whole heap of old clothing the other day and saw it in the back of the car and thought I had better take it to the Salvos. In the bag was an old handbag into which I had forgotten I had put some jewellery. My engagement ring, and my Mum's eternity ring and a ring from my mother-in-law, some pearls etc. I awoke last night and started thinking about this jewellery and then remembered where I had put it – panic and prayer followed and then God gave me a peace about it.

I went to the Salvos this morning and explained what had happened, the fellow in charge looked for me and said that the bag had probably been thrown out and the garbos had picked up yesterday, just a couple of hours after I had left it. I went away a little dejected, but on my return thought I believe God can do miracles and 'phoned the Salvos and left my number in case they turned up. Went for a walk with a friend and on my return Pete said the Salvos had rung so I returned the call only to hear that they had found the jewellery. I kept saying to the Lord "I know you can do anything and I believe you can do this" and he came through for me. The man said that he was new there and the previous Manager probably would not have called me, so I blessed him and said that I hoped something good would happen to him today. As you say, we must never lose faith.

--By Carol

This is just a little testimony that shows the Lord's power and care for us, His little sparrows.

One day, when my husband was on a faith trip in another city, he called me and asked if I could send him some more witnessing materials.

I didn't know how I was going to send them, since I didn't have the money on hand for the shipping fees, yet he needed the materials right away. I got desperate and prayed for the Lord to do a miracle. The Lord told me to go ahead and prepare the box with the materials and that He would take care of the rest.

So I got the materials together but needed a box to send it in. I found a box that was inside of another box almost the same size. It took some effort to separate the boxes, but when I did, guess what?! Stuck in between those two boxes was \$10, which was enough for the shipping!

Only the Lord can come through like that when we need it most. He never fails and is faithful to His Word to take care of us! Now, whenever I'm faced with a similar situation, I don't worry or fret; I just relax and remember the ten dollar miracle!

--By Melanie

Once I was faced with fixing the audio tape player (in 1997) and there was no way to take to a repair shop. It had to get done by the next afternoon, and it was already evening. So after due prayer and claiming do-it-now promise I went to work on it. After digging in the machine I found I needed to have a cylindrical item to secure in its place to make the player to work.

I got stumped, and I asked the Lord what to do to fix it. He answered by asking me 'what is in my hand?' I didn't get it, but after some reminders he showed me what was in my hand. I was the home finance manager, and I had the 'bag' with me. In it were a bunch of coins too. Then it clicked what Jesus was telling me. The next hours were spent scraping both sides of the 2- rupee coins and making a cylinder using superglue and a bunch of coins. Then the cylinder item got placed inside and the player worked just fine. Thank the Lord the show went on without a problem and the coin item stayed in place for another 2 weeks before it got taken for a professional repair job.

Proverbs 8:12 - I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.

I moved to my present city just before the changes happened. There I was having plans to continue the work via the internet and sustaining myself with proceeds from Mottos sales. Things didn't go as planned and after about a year I was coming to the end of my funds. Being physically unable to walk around, I could only move inside house on flat floors on a computer chair. I didn't see myself working under any boss, especially a non-Family person, so I wasn't sure how I was going to make it. After a long period of waiting and declining many low offers and one particularly gangster type of real estate dealers. They all came in and wanted to buy at low price, which I refused politely. The Lord kept telling me to use technology and make them smile and not worry about other things like their intimidation or fearsome looks. So it turns out this group was not aware of google earth view and I showed them the property on my computer screen. They were so surprised and were taken aback that they seemed to forget their usual tactics. I also said some things to appreciate their understanding of details and business knowledge. Thankfully they left in peace and in good mood and I was glad to see those people off. But the Lord kept me holding on and pulled me through. I managed to make a large profit for the owner of the property after concluding the sale with another buyer. This sale was good enough to enable a source of supply for me for the rest of my life.

On our last trip to Thailand, the pilot announced that everyone would have to disembark from the plane, as the fog prevented us from taking off. I stood up and told all the passengers, "We can pray

and the Lord can change the weather." After I prayed, the crew looked at me a bit funny, but some of the Muslim passengers agreed with me. The pilot was still insistent that we disembark, and I saluted him, "Yes, sir, you are the boss, but we will just be coming right back as I believe God answers prayer." Sure enough, after everyone got off the plane, they had us all reboard since the fog had lifted. Afterwards, one of the stewards told me, "You are right. He does answer prayer."

On the way to my organic food shop, our train got stuck, with two other trains stopped on the line ahead of us. I prayed quietly for the train to get going, claiming the keys, but nothing happened. The Lord showed me I should talk briefly with the train overseer, and suggest to him that as he went through the train he might suggest to those who believe in God to offer up a small prayer.

After speaking to the train overseer, he replied, "But it all depends on the people fixing the problem." I explained that I had been working for "the Boss*" for half my lifetime, and that we were on good terms. (*A much less religious term for the Lord which people here prefer using.)

I also gave him a tract. I said that assuredly the people working on the problem would be doing their best, but that it really depended on the Boss as to whether the problem was a small one or a more intractable one.

Then I looked ahead towards the other train, and it seemed to me that it had moved! The overseer also looked, and agreed that the other train had moved forward. He looked at me with great surprise in his eyes, and pointed his hand upward (indicating that he was giving the Boss the credit for answering prayer). In a moment, our train was on the move.

Years ago, when I was living in a small community here in South Auckland, I made an agreement with a brother, to meet at a very far away shopping centre, to distribute literature in the car park. However, I had some urgent work to do, so I told Chris that I would meet him at Sandringham . He just needed to go there first.

After about an hour, I left the house and hitchhiked in to Auckland. But the most extraordinary thing happened. I needed to go to Symonds street to catch a bus to Sandringham, and the car that I had hitchhiked stopped on the motorway (!), and I scrambled up the bank to Symonds street! Extraordinary! Unheard of! It was such an unusual situation, that I asked the Lord, "Dear Jesus, what is going on? What is the reason for all this?" The Lord replied, "Go down to K Road." (about five minutes walk away.) I argued with Him, "But Lord, I am already so late, and I have a long way to go. I don't want to get caught up in wild goose chases." The Lord told me, "Go down to K Road." Finally, I said, "Dear Lord, I'll go down to K Road for 5 minutes. Absolutely no more. If I don't meet anyone special, I shall leave immediately and come back and catch the bus to Sandringham."

I went down to K Road, and looking around, I found Chris!!! I was amazed! I said, "What are you doing HERE?" He said, "I changed my mind." I said, "Chris, you can't do stuff like this. When we make an agreement, then you have to stick to it!" The Lord was so incredibly faithful! It was an important lesson for me about the very great importance of practising and making a habit of listening to the Lord's voice." God is so FAITHFUL.

With my two young boys in the double seat stroller, and baby in the sling, I walked in to a Salvo's shop. "Is the manager here?" I asked. I was straining to do just something, anything. Perhaps there was a way they could help. I felt pretty desperate.

After graciously being allowed to stay in friends' houses for a month, with our small brood, we had at last, and wonderfully, had a house to rent. We were to move in on Saturday. Today was Friday.

The house unfurnished. Completely empty—except for the stove. Looked great—no messes yet! But we'd need at least some mattresses to sleep on. There was no moving van filled with our belongings to simply unload. We had a few suitcases—till our boxes of toys, other clothes, books, and so forth arrived months later, by ship. We weren't moving from another city. But from half way around the world. Let me take you back...

For about the past 30 years my husband and I had been missionaries. He since in his 20's, and I, well, all my life. I was born to missionary parents. We had met and married in the exotic land of Jordan! Working as volunteers for projects in the mid-east region. Other countries (collectively) prior to our last country of Lebanon, included Thailand, Brazil, Japan, Portugal!

So time passed, and we then had 3 small children. After much thought and prayer, God led us to come "home" to Australia—my husband's native country. It took several months for the plan to materialize. Boxes to be packed and shipped, and so forth.

But those who have experienced it before know what it is like—to have been a missionary, giving your all to those you are helping, means when you come back to home grounds, there is no "nest egg" waiting for you, or pension or "retirement fund". You start at zero. There are no crowds to welcome your victorious return from the battle front—though you've given the best years of your life, and now a bit older, a bit more tired, have to start from scratch. There is however one thing more that is to your great advantage: God. He's been your boss, and He's kept track of all that you've given to Him. And as the Bible says: "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." PSA.37:25

We had a little funds, but really, compared to all that we'd need to set up a house and furnish it, pay rent, buy food, get a car, pay for its registration, heating for our house as winter was fast approaching, it would be a drop in a bucket! And my husband being able to get a job would be rather important.

And so predictably, no one could do anything for me, at the Salvo's, for whatever reason, I forget. But standing in line was a gentleman who was kind to offer a small TV/ DVD player he had at home and wasn't using. Wasn't really even on our list of "needs", since we are a TV free home, basically, but the thoughtfulness was encouraging. (It came in handy for visitors later on, as well as watching the "Melbourne Cup" live—the first and only thing I've seen on it.)

"You might be able to get a washing machine for \$500, if there's one on sale..." a friend told my husband. The numbers were staggering, adding up all the costs. "I'll just wash things by hand... it'll be fine. We don't need one...we'll just put the clothes in the bathtub after the kids have a bath...and save on water that way too..." I told my husband later. I was stretching to think in new ways, trying to find any solution possible to cut down costs to what we could actually do—so we could use the little we had on food, for example. And even that was getting flexible, with our frequent use of sardines.

Now, we hadn't just jumped into this all blindly. A lot of thought and prayer had gone into this move. For months prior to even arriving I had a list of things I was praying for, for our new house to have. And when things worked out, to the T that we had requested, it felt wonderful. He'd heard our prayers. "Proactive prayer" is really the way to go. Pray weeks, months, years, in advance. When you get there, and see things working out, as if the jungle has been cleared and a road paved for you, you'll know it was worth it putting in the time to pray, way in advance.

There was a house to rent, being shown. It looked hopeful. We took the kids to go and view it. When I walked in, it was just great. I got this wonderful feeling, like it was just perfect. Tons of natural light, large picture windows, big (rare) back yard with just a nice flat lawn for children's play. The rent was unusually low, the size fine, and as we were later to discover, it was a 10 minute walk from the job

my husband got! However there were 14 others that day who also wanted the house. But the miracle happened—though he didn't even have a job yet, (besides what he did in his "home studio" and what we were approved to get from government help at this point), and with three lively children, still we were given the house!

This morning, as something the boys have long feared--a danger--happened: the huge, seemingly bad spirited dog next door and their new medium puppy broke into our yard. But I think it was your prayers as I went out there and told them sternly to "go home" waving a stick and praying, and they without a bark immediately did so. Lord took control. Praise the Lord! Another cool thing is that our back yard has no grassy thorns, so we can comfortable walk bare foot. Our front yard and others gardens around all have these types thorns and grass prickles, but I'm always praying away thorns and deadly spiders and claiming the Keys of "garden of Eden" it's neat to see it has happened in this way. All prickles have vanished from where the boys and I like to rub bare foot

I went with two of my children, Luisa and Gabriel, to take a walk in the forest in order to gather some nettles for salads. It was such a beautiful day ! We were by the river , enjoying the very beginning of spring. Some birds were singing , it was sunny, and flowers started to sprout. The nettles were barely sticking little heads and leaves out of the ground, but we found some. When we finally looked at the clock I realized that we stayed longer than planned and at 5 o'clock some visitors would come. It was 4 : 40. I realized that we wouldn't make it home in time walking, that we would have to take a taxi, once we were out of the forest and in the town. If we found one... and we needed one quickly.

As we were coming down the forest , we were walking on a dirt road, when we heard a car coming behind us. We moved to the side and waited for it to pass. It was a Taxi !!! In the forest? We waved to it to stop and it felt so weird to do that, considering the circumstances. The taxi stopped and we asked if he can take us to town. He brought us home and didn't want to charge nothing when we arrived. We arrived just in time with a few minutes to spare . What a miracle ! –Angela (March 8th 2018)

Years ago I had an appointment for a Saturday evening meal with Jim, an old university friend, and with his wife. They lived on the far side of Auckland, New Zealand, one of the most spread out cities in the world. I had to hitchhike, and their house was so far away, I estimated that it would take three hours to get there. I needed to leave our house, located on a busy road leading down to the motorway onramp, at 3.00pm, to get to Jim's by 6.00pm. Just as I was preparing to leave the house, I remembered that I had two extremely urgent notes to write and post, so I told the Lord, "OK, but You will have to give me a better ride." I wrote the notes (it took about 10 minutes), and was again just on the point of leaving the house, when the door bell rang, and a visitor wanted to talk with me! I told the Lord, "OK, dear Lord, but You will have to give me a better ride." Finally, I was ready to leave the house by 4.20pm, getting a bit late! So I phoned to Jim, and said, I have been held up, and I am just about to leave the house now. I may well be late, but I am coming." Jim said, "Geoffrey, why don't you come next Saturday?" I said, "No, today is the day. I am coming now."

At our front gate, I had to decide which way to go, to the left, to a major set of traffic lights, where I could hitch for a ride at the lights, or walk for 15 minutes down to the onramp, to the right. The situation was so desperate I HAD to pray. I felt the Lord guiding me to go to the left, to the traffic lights. My heart sank. It was so impossibly late, (by now, about 4.30pm), and here I was walking in the OPPOSITE direction to the one I wanted to go. I got my ride down to the motorway, thanked the driver and gave him a Gospel tract, and ran across the road to the onramp. About 20 seconds later a small station wagon stopped, and I got in. "Where do you want to go?" The driver was a young man.

I needed to go such an impossibly long distance, I said, "Downtown Auckland." "Well, look at that, I am going there too. Whereabouts in downtown Auckland?" "Well, actually, I need to go across the harbour bridge to the North Shore" "Well, look at that! I am going there too. Whereabouts on the North Shore?" " I need to go to Devonport." "Well, look at that. I need to go to Devonport too. Whereabouts in Devonport?" "I've never been there, but I have the address here." I showed the driver the address: "Well, look at that, the address is just around the corner from my house." !!!! The driver took me all the way to his front gate. I got out, walked around the corner to Jim's house, and arrived just before 6.00pm. Unforgettable.

My husband had been denied a visa renewal for the foreign country we were living in, at the time that I was soon to give birth to our second child. I was permitted to stay there; in fact I couldn't leave—not until after the baby was born, and got his passport. Several brave months passed, and at last the time came when I would be able to leave and join my husband, and he could see his new son for the first time. Our flight was booked and all was packed. In the middle of the night a friend, whose home I was then staying in, took me and my toddler and my 5-month-old baby to the airport. My husband planned to make his connecting flight to the airport where I was, and would travel with me and the children by plane elsewhere. Our bags were all loaded on the plane—including the baby's birth certificate and all. Then, to my shock, the border customs wouldn't let me leave—as there wasn't an exit stamp in the baby's passport. (We had been told it was not needed.) It was a "no go" situation.

So our toddler went happily with his daddy on the plane, and I had to go back to the house with the baby, and hope to catch a flight the next day, with the needed stamp. It was late morning by the time my friend and I reached the office that would stamp the baby's passport, but the man refused to do so, as I didn't have his birth certificate. I explained it was on the airplane! I at last melted down, feeling like a prisoner, separated from the other half of my family. He conceded and said he would give the stamp if I at least had a paper from the doctor, stating that this was my child, the one he had delivered. Off to the doctor's office we briskly went. The only time the doctor was in his office was around 12 o'clock noon each day. And it just so happened to be this very time! Wonderfully the doctor was there and quickly handwrote a note for us. But that wasn't all. It would need to be notified and stamped by two other ministries to make it "valid".

When we went to these services, we found the officials quite ready for their break and unwilling to stamp the paper. However, after prayer and pushing for it, they at last both did so. The race was still on. The weekend was setting in, and the passport stamping office would be closed within minutes and would not be opened again for a few days. As I walked through the door, it was closed just after me. I was the last person allowed in. Whew! The Lord had helped us to make it in time, to the second. The official I returned to see had already finished for the day, and about to leave his office when I walked in to show him the doctor's paper and get the exit stamp for the baby. He looked utterly shocked. That kind of speed for paperwork was unheard of. He promptly gave the stamp, to our relief, and that night the airline was pleased to see I had made it and could board their next flight. We had a safe flight and happy reunion after nearly seven months of challenges, struggles, and waiting.

--By CQ

My good friend had been bitten by a dog when she was a young child. I met her when we were both in our teens. Although she was grown—and taller and older than me, she still had a fear of any dogs we might encounter on a walk. I would normally have liked to have someone to "defend me" when out on a walk, but I had to play the role of confidence and boldness out of necessity. No use both of us being afraid; that would invite trouble. If a dog was near as we took our weekly walk together, I stood on the side necessary to shield my friend. Now with children of my own, naturally I need to protect them at

times—such as this event a couple of years ago while on vacation. While walking at the beach a very large dog suddenly left sitting with his owners and started running across the sand up to my youngest son and fiercely barking, nearly to the point of biting—for no apparent reason.

There were several other people around. It was as if my boy was singled out for some unimaginable reason. He was up ahead several meters from me, and the one holding his hand was looking at the waves, and enjoying the scenery, sounds, and air, and was unaware of the danger the boy was suddenly in. I made a dash for it, running swiftly towards this angry dog. I called on Jesus to help, and with authority that His Spirit gives I loudly and sternly rebuked him, and commanded that in Jesus' name he go back to his masters immediately. He did just that, thank God. They were sitting a ways away and were puzzled at what had just happened. They had not called him back, but the dog got the message loud and clear by God's Spirit, what he was meant to do. "He's never done this before; why has he behaved this way to this child all of a sudden?" they asked me when coming over to talk, with question marks on their faces.

There are spiritual forces at work—both for God's children and against them. My son loves Jesus very much, so I knew this was an attack from the wrong side. When looking at the owners of this dog, I could tell they really needed to let the light of God into their lives. I told them they needed Jesus Christ to help control their dog; it was a spiritual thing that had come over him—the age-old conflict darkness always has against light. Feeling rather shaken up by it, and worried that they would get in trouble for their pet's behaviour, they put themselves in a learning seat and listened to my short message and explanation and pondered it deeply. Then we carried on our walk, unafraid; we were under the Lord's protection.

--By CQ

God sent me an angel to help me, appearing in human form and vanishing when the task was completed. One day circumstances found me in a new city, in a place that wasn't safe for a young lady to go around alone. I didn't speak the language, I had no way to get around the city nor the sense of direction or knowledge to do so by public transportation, and I had to take care of timely paperwork for the first time on my own before leaving the country—getting it all done in 1 or 2 days. I had little money—just enough for the business at hand. I stepped out on the sidewalk, feeling like I was Peter walking on the water to Jesus. It was a thrill being so totally at the mercy of God and committing myself to Him. I made my way to a bus stop, with just a card in hand of the place I needed to go. Then God sent him. [Continued on next page]

Without hardly a few words spoken, a man at the bus stop offered to accompany me. Saying yes was a huge step of bravery and only done with a desperate prayer to the Lord. This man then took me to the right bus, paid the fare, travelled with me, located the hard-to-find building, waited until I was done getting the needed photos taken, took me out to an all-you-can-eat health food restaurant, then got me on the next right bus to make my way home. When walking towards the final connecting bus to board it I turned to where he was standing, and he had vanished. Not so much as even asking me my name. The job was accomplished, and I was safe. I could not have done it without a physical angel guardian and guide. The next day I had to bravely repeat the trip again taking a few different buses to pick up the photos and make my way back to the main paperwork office. [Continued]

I didn't have my visible angelic guide and teacher this time, but I did have the Lord. Somehow, whenever I needed information on something, I would ask Jesus to help, and He would tell me who to speak with—someone safe to talk with, and who knew the right information. How they knew exactly what I wanted, I didn't figure out. All I know is that I made it there, without getting lost, and finally at the end of the day all the way back to the friend's house I was briefly visiting for this trip. This solo trip included lots of

walking in the sun to various places, little food and water, and a tight timetable to get it all done in. Somehow I had the courage, the protection, the strength and God's care and guidance every step of the way—in whatever form He knew I most needed it in.

I was the Lord's child and dependent on Him to assist me.

I was always painfully shy all my growing up years. When I was a young adult it still gripped me, even with people I knew. If I would see them heading to where I was walking outside, I would veer to another pathway if at all possible, so I wouldn't have to be socially compelled to speak and interact. One time I heard that the manager of a Christian organization would soon be visiting was. I had heard him speaking before, in a group, and always admired his deep love for the Lord, and the wise things he said. I could really use some encouragement at that time in my life. I wanted to request a one-on-one time to meet with him, to talk and pray and spend time in the Lord's presence. As a young adult I was going through so much emotionally; there were new decisions to make and challenges to face. I could really use some Godly counsel, personal encouragement, and moral support.

It was a bold thought, but I just felt it was what I needed. His trip to our city was short, so I'd need to take action promptly before my chance passed. I was of course way too shy to ask for an individual time like that; and with such a busy and important man as he. But when I woke one morning, the Lord brought to my mind Psalm 84:11. Through it, the Lord was saying that if what I was requesting was a good thing for me, God would work it out; that I shouldn't hold back from asking, because if it wasn't going to be good for me the Lord would stop it from working out. So I confided in the secretary working out the meetings. She knew me and some of my struggles and thought it was a great idea. She then arranged it all for me. Just getting myself to ask for what I felt I needed spiritually and emotionally, took great courage. But because I had God's Word encouraging me, I was able to do it.

The time spent communicating, and communing with the Lord together with this man of God had a great impact on me. It gave me wings to carry on serving the Lord, and continued to help break the bands of crippling shyness. It was during that year that I had a good character change, and the more I stepped out to do as I had done, and made the effort to communicate with those who would help build up my Christian faith and walk with the Lord, the stronger and bolder I got. Today one could never tell from the way I am now, what I used to be like. God's Word and obedience to it, empowers us and changes us.

A brave and daring young German lady, 18 years old, and her friend, were on their way to be missionaries in Ethiopia. Their plans were suddenly jolted as this woman was found to be in need of an emergency operation. Ovarian cysts were causing great pain, and two had ruptured. It all happened so suddenly. Would she go with the operation? If so, the doctors explained it could cost 15,000 Euros. They certainly didn't have the funds for it, and were still trying to raise funds for the rest of their travel needs and project expenses. A kind nurse spoke and encouraged her to trust in the Lord's love, and not worry about the money. So this young woman took the step to have the operation, still not knowing how the Lord would cover the needs, yet declared she believed God could do a miracle.

Friends of hers were praying for her, every hour, and were also trying to come up with ways to help cover the medical expense, but God had something very unexpected in mind. After recovering from her operation, a month later, she went to face the situation with the bill to be paid. She was told to report to the hospital with how she was going to pay. She really didn't know what to do about it.

However, to her amusement she found out, that in that German hospital, there surprisingly wasn't a proper medical record that had been kept of her. How that happened, no one knows, as they are

usually very meticulous with record keeping. The only record that showed up on the computer was that of a woman by her name, yet 76 years old who had inflammation of the joints, and the bill had already been covered by the hospital's medical insurance. The secretary said, "We cannot charge you if there is no record of you even existing. You can go!"

Wonderfully surprised, the young lady left the office, hardly believing what had just happen. It was a rather humorous way for Jesus to cover the bill-paying dilemma. When she happily told her friends about it, the mother of one friend phoned the hospital to make sure. And it was indeed as the secretary had said—they could not find a single trace of paperwork that she had ever been in the hospital.

An 18 year old German young lady—who had been on her way to be a missionary in African— shared a hospital room with a Turkish speaking woman, who had little chance left to live. The cancer in her body advanced and had wrapped itself all around her intestines. There was only 30% chance or less that the operation would be successful. This woman was afraid to die, worrying about the punishments in the afterlife that she feared she would face. She had heard the young Christian lady praying to Jesus for healing, and knew that in the Koran Jesus is called the healer. "Please pray to Him for my life," she requested. The young lady prayed a simple prayer, desperate for Jesus to do something to honour the faith they had put in Him at that moment. Her whole family was standing there with such expectant faith. The next day when before leaving the hospital the young lady was released, while having a time of prayer, she heard her name being shouted.

"It's a miracle! It's a miracle from God!" the daughter of the sick mother was saying over and over.

Just before doing the operation for the older woman's cancer the doctors decided to do one more scan, and found all the cancer gone! All but one little bit on top that was easy to remove. The doctors said they had never seen anything like it before!

The young lady had been waiting and praying before leaving the hospital, as she needed a place to stay in that city, while waiting to pay her hospital bill. This Turkish family was so happy, they let this young woman stay with them for two weeks. They had many questions about God's love, and Jesus' power to heal, and were able to have many good discussions.

While she stayed with them, an even greater miracle occurred than that of the healing of the mother's cancer. During that time the father, mother, and daughter asked Jesus to come into their hearts and change their lives. I think all the pain, and the temporary disruption of her plans, that the young lady's own medical needs caused, at that moment, must have seemed worth it. This family found joy with Jesus.

A young man visiting his mother in Uganda needed a ride to the airport at 4:00 a.m. to catch his return flight to Japan. It was going to be a challenge finding a taxi who would drive that early. They prayed for the Lord to provide the needed ride. The day before the flight he and his mother stood on the side of the road hoping to flag a taxi down that would agree to return early the next morning to drive him to the airport. However, before they could spot a taxi, a jeep suddenly pulled up beside them. "Can I help you?" the driver asked and introduced himself. "George" was his name. After hearing of their predicament, he offered to be the one to drive the young man to the airport the next morning. The mother wasn't too sure about this arrangement, wondering if there was a catch to it, as in lots of money going to be asked of them, or whatever. She said she'd rather have a proper taxi. Yet, when they talked more, and heard what George had to say, what they found out about him gave them the confidence that he could be trusted.

He told of a miraculous event that had happened in his life, years before, when he worked as an electrician for the city's main power. One day a mistake happened and thousands of volts of

electricity coursed through George's body. He should have been killed instantly, but for some inexplicable reason he wasn't. Everyone said it had been a miracle.

This had a life-changing effect on him, changing his priorities and his way of operating in day-to-day life. He went on to describe it, as well as the amazing reason he was there, in his jeep, ready to help:

"Since that accident," he said, "I try not to make a move unless I hear from God. I was sitting in my room tonight, watching TV, when that inner voice that I've come to recognize as God's spoke to me, and said:

'Get up, get in your car, and drive. You'll meet someone who needs your help.'

When I saw you by the side of the road, I knew you must be the ones He was sending me to."

Convinced of his sincerity, and very gratefully that he was offering to drive,—and offering to do it free of charge—they accepted. George kept his word. God had once again answered the prayers of those in need, in a special way.

On May 13, 1998 in Jakarta, Indonesia, John and Lydia's family and coworkers were caught in the heart of citywide riots that had been sparked by anti-government student demonstrations. Their third-story apartment doubled as housing and base of operations for their volunteer work, and due to the dangerous and tense situation, stayed put for days, leaving only for emergencies. One day they ventured out to the outer court where the guard was keeping watch at the gate of their apartment complex and other anxious neighbours had gathered. Suddenly a few terrified and fleeing youth were running and warned them of the mob that was coming and would soon be upon them. They were looting and burning buildings—just like the place John and Lydia were residing in. There was only one thing to be done: Pray hard! Back in their apartment some prayed in one room for God's protection, more desperately than they ever had before, while the children were read to calmly in another room—unaware of the fear and danger.

The adults beseeching God's intervention and help remembered, reviewed, and reminded the Lord of His promises of safekeeping as outlined in Psalm 91.

After what seemed like a long while, they cautiously looked out the window to see that all was calm in their immediate surroundings. A look then from the roof top showed that God had heard and answered their plea for help. Whatever occurred to make the mob turn away, they didn't know, but the sight showed God was able and did so. Here's what they wrote about what they saw from the top their apartment building:

"The mob had left a path of destruction down the street that led to our neighbourhood—a cindered, litter-strewn mess of mangled steel and shattered glass. The mob had come straight up our street, and then just before it got to our apartment, the mob had made a U-turn and headed for a nearby supermarket. For some time after that, we could still hear the shouts of looters as they emptied the supermarket of anything they could carry. Later, 200-foot columns of fire illuminated the night sky as two nearby department stores were looted and burned. Destruction and terror were all around, but through it all, we were kept safe in the hands of our loving Saviour."

In the rugged Hakkoda mountain range in Japan, in February 2007, a ski guide was on a tour. He says, "I always spend the long commute up the mountain praying for wisdom and spiritual guidance, as well as for protection for each person in that day's tour group." On this day, something unusual happened.

A team of seven Australian's were his team for the day, and thankfully they were all experienced ski patrolmen, and each carried full avalanche gear in their backpacks. Weather conditions changed to dangerous, and getting down safely an alive was the goal, using a different route than what they had

planned. They headed into the biting wind and inched their way down the ridge in blinding conditions. The guide later wrote, "I desperately prayed for God to have mercy and get us down safely." Halfway down the mountain they discovered another group who were desperately calling out for help. They'd been caught in an avalanche. Some were injured, some half-buried, some not alive, and one still missing.

While they waited for the rescue workers to come with snow boats, this guide and his team assisted these ones in trouble, performing First Aid and CPR on the injured, and built snow shelters around them to keep them from freezing to death. And they searched, in a patterned way, until they found the lost member of the group. Wonderfully they found, that though this man had been buried in the snow for an hour, he was still alive. His helmet had created an air pocket around his head so he could breathe, and the cold had slowed his metabolism so he needed less oxygen. "And it wasn't his time to die," the guide added, thankful for his life being miraculously spared.

When writing of the event, the guide explained, "Any other group of skiers I've guided would have been totally helpless in such a situation, as most people bring no avalanche gear and have no experience. Only God could have arranged for our team of experienced skiers to get together on that day, on that mountain, in order to help those stuck in the avalanche. And only through a miracle of God did we find the last person alive after he'd been buried under the snow for so long. As one commentator put it, we were 'the hand of God on the mountain that day.'"

Bela Paskin had been a displaced Hungarian man who had lived through many difficult times during war times, made to labour for the Germans, sent to the Ukraine, later was captured and put to work by the Russians. It all started when he was a young married man. At long last, he was free and travelled hundreds of miles on foot to his house and home in Debrecen, a city in eastern Hungary. Rather than finding his family at home, he found only strangers filled the house, who never heard of him or his parents, brothers or sisters, or wife. A neighbour recognised him, and told him the terrible news of what had happened. They said all his relatives were no longer alive, and his wife had been taken to Auschwitz, one of the worst concentration camps. It was devastating news. He set out on foot again, crossing border after border until he reached Paris. He managed to immigrate to the United States in October 1947. While on a train on January 10, 1948, three months after arriving, something wonderful happened.

The train was very full, and politely Bela got up to give his seat to a new passenger, Marcel Sternberger, also Hungarian. "I hope you don't mind if I glance at your paper," Marcel felt prompted to say to Bela, who was surprised to hear someone speaking to him in his native tongue. The men got talking, and Bela's sad life's story unfolded. However, when Bela spoke of his missing wife—who he was sure could no longer be alive—and the places they used to live, this rung a bell in Marcel's mind. So many of the details matched the life account given to him recently from a Hungarian lady, who was crushed with what had happened to her in life.

"Is your wife's name Marya?" Marcel asked, looking in his address book. Bela replied it was.

"Let's get off the train," Marcel suggested, and led the way to a phone booth. Before too long the wonderfully stunning and amazing event took place, Bela was on the phone with his wife. She hardly knew what to think of it as well. Marcel helped the greatly surprised Bela in a taxi, told the address where Marya was living, and paid the fare. The two were happily united again.

The odds of such an event occurring is too far out to think about. But the fact is that God knows who you are special to, and who you are meant to be with. He loves for loving couples to be together and share life's ups and downs and help each other through. He knows, right now, who and where your husband or wife is, if you are unable to be with them. And if you don't yet have a partner, He knows

just the person who is right for you and can bring you together, in His time, if you ask Him to. He is the God of love, and loves to see it shared by couples caring for one another.

I wonder if Ted, at 10 years old, was being prompted from the all-knowing mind, that his days were to be short, and he was to prepare the hearts of his family for an early departure. These words came to him, and he wrote them down. Three years later he was whisked away to the place this poem speaks of:

Death, I think, is really life,
The living, I'd call dead;
To leave this human, mortal strife,
And in new paths be led.
Death, I think, is beautiful,
A new and happy home,
To live then with the Father
And away you'll never roam.

Death, I know, brings sorrow,
And often drops a tear;
Then you think your end has come,
But it's only life that's near.

[--By Ted Hagstrom age 10, died at age 13 in an auto accident.]

Two men are being prepared to meet. They don't know each other. They live on opposite sides of the world. Yet for 20 years there is something one man earnestly wants to know; something that the other man knows and could tell him. —If only he would be God-led in life to learn the information, travel to that very remote location, and be able to communicate with the locals. He'll also need to not give up living and working in the area for two years with no real visible progress or success, until his paths cross that one man still waiting, daily hoping, for the answer to his prayers.

Man #1 we'll call Solomon, a man who lived with his family in a dirt-floor shack, in an isolated mountain village in China. (Name changed for security reasons.)

Man #2 is Ray Aker, a volunteer Christian worker, who lived out God's call to go and tell people about Jesus Christ; people who have never heard this truth.

The area where Ray was reaching out to people, on that wonderful day, was controlled by fear. They were in fear of evil spirits troubling them, stealing life, harming them, if they didn't do what they supposed these devils wanted. But Solomon was let in on a secret that made him think differently. When he talked with Ray that day, he said something that Ray will never forget, for it made all he had been doing, so worth it. Solomon said: "Twenty years ago, I understood in my heart that there was one God above all, but I didn't know anything about Him. So I prayed every day that He would send somebody to tell me who He was. God answered my prayer today when He sent you

to me.” Solomon then received Jesus as His Saviour and the Lord of his life. He didn’t need to fear the evil; he was free; he was protected.

Ray expressed: “That was probably the single most powerful experience that I’ve ever been a part of in ministry here. I didn’t do anything special.... God ordained that moment in time.”

It would be nice to say that all went smoothly for Solomon, but perhaps a bit of challenging opposition is what will strengthen one’s faith best, and prove to others that what they have is the genuine article. Solomon joyfully started to tell his family and other villagers about this God of love, the one true God; the God who can remove fear from their life and the one who has authority over all, and can do anything.

His family believed and receive Jesus into their hearts and lives, and so did six others. That’s as far as he got before the local devil-worshiping leader, keeping people in the dark bondage began threatening Solomon to stop talking to others about Jesus. Oh how darkness hates the light, because it exposes to all that it’s been a sham and inferior, all along. Control works better when people are in fear and are kept from having true knowledge. This man proclaimed that Solomon would die in three days, due to the evil spirits that would make it so unless he stopped sharing with others what he had learned about the one true God, and Jesus His Son. Solomon had waited for 20 long years to receive the gift he had now, and he wasn’t going to keep it from his neighbours and struggling villagers. He went right on telling the good news. Villagers watched to see what was going to happen. Day three came. Then day four but nothing happened. Solomon was well and happy, and still sharing the Good News. What an awakening! The villagers saw that the God who Solomon learned about, the one God of all who had made us and loved us enough to give His Son to save us, was far more powerful. No harm had come to Solomon. So on that day four when villagers saw that he was still alive, they wanted to know why. Solomon told the whole village about Jesus. In one day 80 people gave their lives to Him.

One brave blind man expressed how he uses the art of praising God in all things, even for the difficult and disappointing turns in his road of progress. Rather than viewing something simply as a bothersome problem, he uses it like an exercise machine to grow his gratitude muscles, and his holding-on-to-hope skills. One time he had to discontinue taking a computer course for the blind, and no longer engage in the motivational meetings that he was hosting for those there. As disappointing as it was, he chose a wise reaction. He said, “I saw the situation as an opportunity to practice praising God in all things. I also repeatedly reminded myself of Galatians 6:9.” Later on, a new blind friend who was very knowledgeable about basic and advanced computer skills helped him in his learning journey, both in person, and by phone and email. Some years down the line his laptop gave out, and the speaking software he had been using to navigate did not work on his newer computer. He chose to practice praising God, and discovered what happened as a result. He typed it up on that very computer. Here is what he said:

“There I was, back at square one. Still, with the Lord’s help, I praised and thanked Him for this development, and continued believing He had a solution. Only days later, I found out about a newer screen reading program that works almost exactly like the one I’d been using, and is also offered free of charge. I’m still using this program today. Once again the Lord marvellously came through for me.

“Today my computer skills are still improving and I continue using them to minister to people via email and for writing articles like this one. This whole process has taught me that the obstacles that appear in our way are often allowed by the Lord to test our patience and determination. With each obstacle I faced on this journey, I had to choose to see them not as reasons to freak out and panic, but as opportunities for God to work, and He always did. As the saying goes, ‘Victory belongs to the

most persevering.”

“Before honour is humility” it says in the book of Proverbs (Prov. 1:33), and so it happened in the life of a young soccer player in Brazil.

“I have always loved to play soccer. I played on the junior team for Sao Paulo in 2000” he said. But in October that year, when suspended for a game, he was injured while swimming at a water park. “As I was coming down one of the slides into the pool, I hit my head on the bottom of the pool, and my neck snapped.” Though this young person had no idea how serious the injury was, or rather how serious it could have been, he came out of the water with a bleeding and hurting head. It took some time and repeated x-rays until it was discovered that he had fractured the sixth vertebra in his neck.

He says, “They told me that I could have become paralysed and lost my ability to walk and to play football. I believe God was protecting me during that time from anything more serious.”

For a couple of months he couldn't play and had to wear a cervical collar, but the best was about to come. Wonderfully he was able to resume playing soccer again in January 2001—and with great gusto and amazing ability. Within two weeks he was called to play for the Sao Paulo professional team. He knew it was Jesus that had saved his life, as well as maintained his ability to walk and play.

He was very grateful to the Lord who brought him through the accident; and was even grateful because of it. Somehow it put him in the right frame of mind and position of heart, and stoked up his zeal to do his best with the skill he had been given. Additionally, because of it, he was then able to tell others of how great and kind the Lord is; that it was only because of Jesus' help that he was able to play, and play as well as he did.

The young player said, “I believe God had a purpose in that accident. It is something that happened just before I had the great blessing of starring as a professional in Sao Paulo and initiating my career as a professional football player. I need Jesus every day of my life. Jesus tells me in the Bible that without Him I can't do anything. (Jn 15:5) I have the gift and capacity today to play soccer because God gave it to me.”

"Kill me, if you wish. I will go straight to God." Jack Vinson, a Christian missionary, said this to the bandit threatening his life. The place was Kiangsu Province, in Mainland China, in the 1930's. The bandit was surprised that Jack had no fear of death. E.H. Hamilton, Jack's friend was inspired by his courage and penned a poem, expressing why they who know Jesus personally, did not share the fear that others are gripped with. Those who live for Christ and know His love can die unperturbed, and as bravely as they lived. Jack Vinson's courage inspired his friend E.H. Hamilton to write the following:

Afraid? Of what?

To feel the spirit's glad release?

To pass from pain to perfect peace,

The strife and strain of life to cease?

Afraid--of that?

Afraid? Of what?
Afraid to see the Saviour's face
To hear His welcome, and to trace
The glory gleam from wounds of grace?
Afraid--of that?
Afraid? Of what?
A flash, a crash, a pierced heart;
Darkness, light, O Heaven's art!
A wound of His a counterpart!
Afraid--of that?
Afraid? Of what?
To do by death what life could not--
Baptize with blood a stony plot,
Till souls shall blossom from that spot?
Afraid--of that?

When a parent is given the gift of a new child, they are given a few extra gifts that enable them to care for and train that young one. The gift of extra angelic protective help is one of the gifts. Sometimes the gift is the ability to see, in their mind, what the future holds, so the parent won't lose sight of the goal amid the details and tedious daily needs. Sometimes the gift is enhanced knowledge about the needs of family members, so they can make wise decisions on things that affect the extended family. Sometimes the gift is a closeness in spirit with friends and relatives, though they may live far away from each other, so that the parent will feel the moral support and companionship when they have to be somewhat alone in their parenting journey. Or perhaps all of the above, and more, might be granted to a new mother. God has all kinds of gifts and aids (and aides) to grant to those who are loving His little ones.

Here is what one woman said:

"I was dragged half-conscious out of a smoke-filled stairwell by someone who left before I could catch my breath and thank him, or even see him. Television news videos of the fire showed me emerging from the building—but my rescuer didn't appear on film. At the time I was expecting a baby, and the pregnancy seemed to lend me strange abilities. I could see, vividly, things that were happening to friends and family far away. I had visions of my future that later proved accurate. Once, when I was sick and alone, I felt unseen hands comforting me physically."

Though people didn't understand, she chose to hold to the faith that special things can and do happen.

I think they happen more often to those brave women who bare and raise little ones, so delicate and dependant on them, those so fresh from Heaven—and those who are open to receiving the special gifts.

In order to be all that your little growing and maturing child needs you to be, you need to be more

than yourself. It takes a lot of hands and hearts to raise them well. And when mother must be alone, which is often the case for the best care of a baby or young child, those extra hearts and minds and hands that help must come from the invisible realm where the baby originated; from the realm of God, our wonderful Creator and Caretaker. No mother caring for a young child is ever truly alone.

Mr. Merriweather, a dedicated missionary of the Sri Lanka and India General Mission, while on a trip to the United States, visited a certain woman who supported a full-time missionary overseas. Expecting a rather well-off and comfortably living lady, he was somewhat curious to find it not the case.

She lived in a clean yet simple, small and almost poor dwelling place. His surprise was heightened to find out, while conversing with this woman that she not only supported one missionary, but four fulltime missionaries! He wondered what her secret was; where she came up with the means to do so.

She explained the secret to God's faithfulness and amazing provision for her and for the mission work:

"Yes, sir, I have four--four people all over the world preaching for me. I have one in India, one in Africa, one in China, and one in South America. I knew I would never be able to preach the Gospel overseas, so I determined others should do it for me."

She had always believed in giving one-tenth of her income to God and regularly set aside His portion, and it accumulated. As a blessing for this, God had someone bequeath to her a certain amount of property, which she rented out. This increased her income and her "Lord's Fund".

She chose to, and was then able, to support a missionary. As she gave to the Lord's work, He kept giving to her—through her—for His work.

She added, "I also discovered that my own funds were increasing, and eventually I was able to purchase more property. And so it continued, Mr. Merriweather. Come over to the window and I will show you my houses."

A row of magnificent villas was pointed out, and she said,

"What does a poor old body like me want with such big houses? I have all I require in this little home, and the rent from those places supports my missionaries."

A Christian mother and her three daughters very much wanted to go to a camp to learn more about Jesus, but they were quite poor and could not afford to pay the train tickets or even their expenses. Their grandfather who lived with them, laughed at their plans. "You can't afford to go, so stop thinking about it." He said.

They did not stop thinking about it, and continued to pray that God would somehow make it possible for them to attend the camp. On the last night before the camp, they prayed once more and packed their suitcases. They still had no money.

The grandfather said, "There's no use fretting. If God wants you to go, why doesn't He give you some evidence of it?"

The mother and the girls knew that if anything was to happen it had to be soon, as the train left early the next morning.

Something did happen. At 3:30 in the night, one of the girls named Doris heard a strange scratching sound at the front door. Her sisters and mother also woke up and they all cautiously headed to the door. They discovered two cats scratching at the door! Doris pushed open the door, and found two bulky packages and four envelopes placed on the porch.

Quickly they opened the packages. In one was lunch for their trip, and in the other was more food for their stay at the camp. In the four envelopes was money for the mother and the three girls. The grandfather was astounded when he heard the story over breakfast, as they prepared to leave for the train station.

The little family never found out who sent the parcels, but they guessed it must have been a tender hearted person whom God used to answer their prayers, because there was an anonymous note in one of the packages which read: "From a friend who wishes you a safe journey. May God watch over you and care for you until you return safely home, is my prayer for you."

Suba Rao was the wealthy headmaster of a government school in India. He did not like missionaries at all.

One of his close friends became sick, and was not healed for two years. The man went to many doctors, to no avail. One night as Suba Rao slept, Jesus appeared to him and said, "If you will go and lay hands on that man's head in My name, I will heal him." Suba Rao woke up and laughed at the dream, then went back to sleep.

For the next two nights Jesus again appeared to him and said the exact same thing, "If you will go and lay hands on that man's head in My name, I will heal him." The third night Suba Rao got up and went immediately over to his neighbour's house. He laid his hands on the sick man's head and prayed in Jesus' name. In the morning the man said, "I feel much better. Do that again." The man was healed.

Suba Rao threw out all his idols. He started to read the Bible and began a Bible study class with his neighbours. Suba Rao declared himself a follower of Jesus. Healing people in Jesus' name became his main occupation.

One of the early founders of the Rothschild House borrowed a little money from a friend to start up his business. Then he left for another part of Germany, and many years passed. Nearly fifty years later, the generous friend was now poor, in bad health, and struggling to provide for his family. One day he received a letter from the Rothschild House in Frankfurt, summoning him to the bank for an interview. As the friend entered the office of the great banker, he was warmly welcomed. After they talked for a bit, the banker took out a draft for thousands of dollars, and handed it to the friend. The friend was astounded, and refused to take the money, saying that he could not accept such a large gift.

"It is not a gift." The banker said. "It is simply the profit of the money you lent me, wisely invested until it has actually accumulated this much interest..." As the great Christian writer A. B. Simpson said, "There is a day coming when the trust that we have committed to God's keeping will be returned to us a million times more. We shall find what a good investor of our treasures God is."

Olga Kristensen spent forty years in China as a humanitarian worker. One night toward the end of her stay, she and her co-workers received news that a gang of bandits was heading toward their

centre, burning, killing, and pillaging. Before long, they heard shots being fired at the end of their street. Ms. Kristensen later recounted that night:

"I went into my room and asked God for a word to calm me and the others, and a passage I had often read before came to me: When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet. Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught (Proverbs 3:24-26).

"I shared that message with the others there and told them to go get some rest. Then I went off to bed myself and slept soundly.

"The next morning, bodies lay in the street outside our premises. There had been fighting and murder, but no one had so much as knocked on our door."

One time when we were living on the East Coast of Sri Lanka, my wife and I took our 3 children by canoe to a small coral island about 100 yards off shore! Only a few square meters of the coral actually stuck out of water, and on this we landed the canoe! The children were able to look through masks at some of the amazingly beautiful tropical fish and fabulously coloured corals which were abundant in the clear blue water all around!

It was late afternoon and the huge red sun was already beginning to dip down over the horizon of the sea, so we began to load the children into the canoe to get back safely to the beach before dark!

However, the water around the coral rock was now a good deal more choppy than when we had landed, and due to the shallowness of the water and the sharpness of the coral, it was not easy to get everyone on board with the canoe swaying this way and that, and the two younger children were getting a little bit frightened!

All of a sudden, literally it seemed from nowhere, a swimmer appeared in the water beside us! He got up onto the rock, and calmly held the back of the boat steady while we all clambered safely inside! I remember studying his face and it was radiant with a sort of heavenly glow of peace and strength and quiet assurance! His face was much like the face of Jesus, with shorter hair! It's a thrilling and unique sensation when you're pretty sure you're staring face to face with an angel!

Then with a kindly smile and a wave he pushed us off from the rock, and we started back towards the shore! After paddling for about 10 seconds I thought, "I'm going to turn around right now, and if he really was an angel I have a feeling that he will have disappeared!"--So I did! And he HAD! He was GONE! Not only had he vanished from the rock but neither was there any trace of him swimming in the water anywhere around!

Night falls so swiftly in the Tropics and by the time we arrived back at the beach it was almost dark! There was NO other way for him to swim back to the shore except by the way that we had come! We watched for at least half-an-hour but he never set foot on that beach!

This convinced us that we had indeed had a close encounter with a guardian angel whom the Lord had sent to help in our time of need!

Joseph Plateau. While studying the after effects of the sun on the retina, he looked 25 seconds directly at the sun, which caused him to eventually go blind.

However, he did not give up in despair, but continued in his scientific studies. He went on to write books on the nature of liquid surfaces by asking others to tell him what they observed during

his experiments and then had someone else write his findings down. The laws of liquids he discovered are still being used today, such as the law that a liquid surface will always go the smallest area possible.

I was amazed at this man's fortitude. He must have felt extremely guilty that he had caused his own blindness due to his mistake, yet if he did, he did not surrender to condemnation, but continued on with the help of others.

It was also very interesting to note that related to his findings, they have since found protozoan creatures that live deep in the ocean mud that have similar structures to the results Plateau discovered with his soap bubble experiments.

I went on line and was in awe at the beautiful creatures that live deep in the ocean mud. God didn't have to make them so beautiful but perhaps He was trying to show us a lesson through these simple microscopic creatures that He can take our lowly mud and make something wonderful from it.

When we were on vacation, I lost the key to my hotel room. If not found it was going to cost me not only the expense of making a new key but paying a locksmith to replace the old lock with a new one. Being An unpaid volunteer worker (missionary), helped me to get desperate to find the missing key. I began to retrace my steps. A day later, to my horror, I realized I had taken it with me swimming. It must have fallen out into the ocean! How was I going to find it now!

It's funny how a Bible verse can speak to you and take on a new meaning from perhaps what it was originally intended for. The verse I prayed God would honor and thereby lead me to the missing key is found in Mat 16:19, which says: *"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."*

I believe it worked, for after looking for several hours, I did find the room key among the rocks, carried far by the tides from the place where I had been swimming. It was nothing short of a miracle that I found it again!

CPVGorder

I recently visited my son, and we had one of those beautiful father-to-son talks. I asked him what his plans and dreams were. He told me that his ultimate dream would be to own a house on a beach where he could mix business and pleasure and hopefully do some good for others at the same time in mission work.

He related a story which although it has nothing to do with beaches, reminded both me and him of this principle that life is full of the kind of surprises that put our problems in perspective. It obviously had a big impact on his life. I'll let him tell it:

"As I was driving onto a ramp of a large highway, I paused to let two semi-trailers pass by. I could have tried to speed up to get in front of them, but decided to slow down.

"At the time," he said, "I was complaining about my troubles – my 3-year-old son was still not speaking and in need of special therapy. I was having troubles in my personal relationships with others and it was tough finding enough money to make ends meet.

" 'Why do I have it so hard?' I asked the Lord. He answered, but not in the way I expected.

“I drove on for a few more minutes when a semi-trailer recklessly came from the opposite lane and ploughed into one of the semi-trailers that had just passed me.

“The other trailer swerved away just in time to miss it but the first truck took the full force of the collision. Both semis tumbled over each other and exploded in flames killing the drivers immediately. Fiery debris were flying everywhere and narrowly missed my car.

I tried to stop and see if I could help. I grabbed a fire extinguisher and tried to put out the flames, but it was too hot to get anywhere near the accident. Someone called the emergency service and help came soon, but the drivers had already perished. It was sobering to realize that if I had tried to rush ahead that day in traffic, I too would have died in the inferno.

“This incident put all my problems in a new perspective – no longer did they seem so looming. I was alive. I began to count my blessings.”

Nothing helps you to be more grateful for life than a close brush with death. Life is a beach, but it is one full of challenges and vicissitudes (ups and downs) that make us stronger after we come through them.

William Niehous, a well off and busy with life business man living in Venezuela, had everything change. To put weight on the government, a team of people decided to forcibly take him away from his home, his family, and hide out with him as captive deep in the jungle. No one knew what happened to him for 40 weeks. He didn't see another human face in all that time, as his captors were always masked around him. In that time there was plenty of time to think over the pattern of his life. The social life and busyness had crowded out things like time to be with his sons, or time to read the Bible and pray together with other believers. This “time out” in rough conditions, sleeping in tents or shacks on a hammock with sounds of wild animals around and the site of crawling creatures nearby, clarified so much. The questions and trials strained at him. How was his family? Did they know he was still alive? Why had this time gone on for so long, without rescue? One day when it seemed more than he could bear, he saw a site that gave him courage. A fallen crumb from his small lunch was picked up eagerly by an ant, that looked much too small to carry it. But with bravery and determination this ant carried out his prize, over to his colony somewhere in the jungle. If he could bear the weight, and had the God-given ability to manage what it needed to, so could he. Mr. Niehous felt a new sense of courage to go on in his seemingly endless and hopeless situation. But just as Jesus was in the wilderness with the wild beasts for 40 days while fighting off the taunting of the enemy, and the Moses wondering with the people for 40 years before they were able enter the land of their destination, and Noah with his family heard the pelting down rain for 40 days that was washing and dramatically changing the world as they knew it, so had Mr. Niehous endured his “40”. Those months in the jungle had changed him and his priorities forever. He looked up and saw some police had discovered the hide-out rather accidentally, and set him free. The next day he was on a plane to join his wife and sons and mother, who had moved back to Toledo, Ohio by that time. His father had passed away suddenly, some months after his capture. I wonder if, invisibly, he was permitted by God, to be there with his son during this long and trying time. Maybe he wasn't as alone as he felt. No harm came to him, and not a moment longer was he held in that place than what he could truly endure. He was a better father and husband for it, having his faith strengthened that with God, you can go through anything, and come out the other side all the stronger.

Joyce, a trained nurse living in Devon, England, was worried about her husband who was seriously ill with heart and breathing problems. After a terrible night, the doctor came and warned Joyce that her husband was most unlikely to recover. Joyce, however, clung to a promise from the Lord back in

February, when her husband had first become ill, that he would make a good recovery.

At bedtime, Joyce made her husband as comfortable as possible, although his gasping for breath meant he had to sleep sitting up. Joyce describes what happened next: "Just then angels started to surround our bungalow, shadowy figures, all facing inwards. There were so many I could not possibly count them. The chief one came and insisted I go to sleep; no harm would come while they were there. I slept amazingly well, waking only once to attend to my husband. At 8 o'clock the following morning, I was literally shaken from my sleep and, as I opened my eyes, the last few angels were departing.

"The chief one was by me saying, 'Hurry up, we have to go. All is well.' And he was gone. I sat up and could hardly believe how peaceful my husband looked. He was pink and lying down, breathing easily, instead of blue and gasping. When the doctor saw him, he couldn't speak for amazement."

Sometime later the doctor said to Joyce, "Medically that was an impossibility. It was only your prayers and faith that saved him." Joyce then told him about the angels. Her husband continued to make excellent progress.

Less is More

By Curtis Peter van Gorder

One day I was out and saw a new electronic scale that would not only measure your weight and height, but also plot the results on a graph to find out if you are underweight, the correct weight, overweight, or obese. The people selling the scale were eager for me to try it. I was hesitant. Getting on a scale is a bit like looking in a mirror – can be scary.

I decided to give it a go and to my horror, the heartless thing registered me as obese! What...obese? The word echoed in my mind. Not me! I had a picture in my mind of what that word meant and I didn't fit it – or did I? The slim and trim operators of the scale began to snicker. What were they laughing at?

I had a hard look in the mirror and examined the stark evidence staring back at me. All of my pants had become unpleasantly tight on me. When I sat down, I had to unloosen my buckle, which was sometimes embarrassing when I got up. Maybe I could make the waist bigger or go shopping for a larger size. I went to the store but when I found out they didn't carry my size, it was time for a reality check.

I took some time in prayer and meditation. A realization dawned on me. If Jesus said, "the very hairs of your head are numbered," surely every kilo must be, too. Our bodies the Bible says "are the temple of the Holy Ghost". In what condition was my 'temple'? Could use a bit of remodeling, I thought.

From what I read on the subject, the solution seemed pretty straightforward: If you want to loose weight – eat less and exercise more - Easier said than done. I liked food, and as everyone knows, it is

hard to give up something you like. In the 'reality check' department, I realized that even though I had now reached middle age, my food servings were still as large as a growing teen's were.

It also dawned on me that I had a few wrong attitudes. I realized that before I could make any progress in my weight loss, I would have to change some mistaken mindsets that I had adopted. I found it helpful to cling to a few slogans that helped me to keep focused on my goal of losing 25 kilos to become 'normal' weight.

Some of these were: "If you eat normal portions, you will start to look normal". "Overweight luggage costs", "Eat to live, don't live to eat." "It's only food." "Less is more." and "It's OK to be hungry." This last one was very helpful as I had developed the wrong idea that I should eat every time my stomach began to growl.

And the Bible verse, "He must increase, but I must decrease" took on a new meaning.

To keep the weight off once I lost it would require a long-term commitment: "Diet means life style change". All of these slogans helped to keep me focused on eating smaller portions. To begin with, I had my wife serve my 'normal' plate. Later I could trust myself to make my own servings.

Once that battle was won, it was time to fight the next giant – exercise more. I took up tennis and made it a point to do some kind of exercise daily. Although sometimes it was hard to get started, I found getting out and moving my body was fun, and looked forward to that time of the day. I started to believe what I had read: Scientists have found that hormones that give you a feeling of pleasure called endorphins are released in your body during exercise.

I am still a work in progress, but now a few months down the line, I don't have to enlarge my waistline in my pants – in fact some became too baggy. I feel so much better carrying around less 'luggage'. So far I have lost 15 kilos and am still working on losing the next 10. It also helps when others encourage you by remarking at how much better you look.

Of course, my story pales in the light of some other dramatic stories such as Kelly Pless who lost 95 pounds and is training for running the marathon. But it is interesting to note that she discovered some of the same things I did.

Kelly had this to say, "I changed how I felt about food and what it meant to me. Instead of giving in to the temptation or convenience of calorie-laden or fatty foods such as cheeseburgers from the drive-through, I started to ask myself, "What do I really want to eat? Or, what does my body really want right now?"

Like I said, I am a work in progress. Hopefully, my story like that of Kelly's, might inspire someone who needs it. Losing weight is hard work, but I found you just have to take it one day at a time. Yesterday, I had an urge for ice cream but bought a mango instead – and it was so good!

Kelly Pless weighed 220 pounds at her heaviest. She lost 95 pounds through diet and exercise and God's help.

With the rain slapping my windshield, I could barely see the turn signal of the car in front of me. Heavy rains had flooded Houston, and the highway was just about washed out. "We're almost home," I said to my three-year-old daughter Christy.

The car in front turned onto our exit ramp and stalled in the deep water. "I guess we can't go that way," I sighed and pulled over onto the shoulder to wait out the storm. An hour later, the rain still showed no sign of stopping. We'd have to walk home.

With Christy riding piggyback, I took my umbrella in one hand and started down the grassy slope of the overpass. By now the highway was a muddy river. I took a deep breath and waded in. A gust of wind ripped the umbrella from my hand and I lost my shoes in the strong current. When the water reached above my waist, I put Christy on my shoulders.

Dear Lord, I prayed, fighting to stay on my feet, *please help me get Christy to safety*. I remembered the prayer cards I'd collected as a child that pictured white-winged angels with blond hair and porcelain skin. How I needed one of those angels now!

Suddenly Christy was lifted off my shoulders and a strong arm grabbed me around the waist. I looked up into the face of a tall, husky, brown-skinned man. "Are you all right?" I asked Christy when the man set us safely on higher ground.

"Yes, Mommy," Christy said. "Who helped us?" I turned to thank our rescuer, but he was nowhere to be found. So much for white wings and porcelain skin!

One night in early May, 1979, Barbara Burak heard her nine-year-old son, Paul Junior, call to her in panic: "I can't see--and my head hurts!" He had been suffering from an ear infection, and now his condition had become much worse. Sobbing, the youngster told his mother he couldn't even focus his eyes.

This event marked the beginning of their ordeal. Within twenty-four hours, Barbara and Paul had rushed Paul Junior to a hospital in Miami. Because of a diagnosis of encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain caused by injury or infection, the boy was in critical condition and was not expected to live.

The people at the Buraks' church started a prayer chain and began to pray continuously around the clock. "We had people praying all over the country," Barbara recalls. Of course, it would have been easy just to give up and sink into despair. But as far as God is concerned, the Buraks don't know the meaning of the word impossible.

Paul Junior remained in a coma for four days and then stayed semi comatose for fifteen more days. His condition went up and down. Sometimes it seemed hopeful; other times, hopeless. Barbara couldn't bear to see her son suffer like this, and so she went off alone to talk to God in prayer. She told the Lord she wasn't losing her faith, but she emphasized that He had to help her and give her the strength to get through this ordeal. "You have to help that boy!" she prayed. "You can't let him come out of this a vegetable!"

A definite answer to this prayer seemed to come the next morning, when an EEG showed normal results. But the tough times weren't over by any means. A brain scan the following day showed what a doctor described as "definite brain damage." But when Paul Senior heard this report, his faith in God's ability to overcome the impossible seemed to grow even stronger. He said, "The Lord has kept him alive this long. He's brought him this far. He's going to perform a miracle, and He doesn't do halfway jobs." As for the diagnosis of brain damage, he said flatly, "I'm not going to accept it!"

These weren't hollow words, either. From that point on, when his father took such an unwavering stand of faith, Paul Junior began to recover. His improvement baffled the doctors, but the boy knew the source of his help: He told anyone who would listen that it was Jesus Who was healing him. Finally, he recovered totally, in defiance of a doctor's prediction that he would be mentally impaired. A child neurologist has confirmed that he's completely well, and since his release from the hospital, he's been an "A" grade student in school.

In short, the lesson from the Buraks' experience is that it's never wise to accept any physical condition as "impossible" to heal. In fact, the first step in tackling an "impossible" problem is to recognize that with God all things are possible.

Excerpt from "Time" Magazine, 27/12/93

Ann Cannady recalls the day in July 1977 when a third test result confirmed she had advanced uterine cancer. Her husband Gary, a retired U.S. Air Force master sergeant, had lost his first wife to the same type of cancer and did not know whether he had the strength to go through it again. "We spent the next eight weeks scared and praying, praying and scared," says Ann.

One morning, three days before she was to enter the hospital for surgery, Gary answered the doorbell. Standing on the step was a large man, a few centimeters taller than her 1.95 metre (about 6 feet, 5 inches) husband. "He was the blackest Black I've ever seen," Ann says, "and his eyes were a deep, deep, azure blue." The stranger introduced himself simply as Thomas. And then he told her that her cancer was gone.

Thomas came inside and again told them she could stop worrying. He quoted Scripture to them-- Isaiah 53:5: "...and with His stripes we are healed."

Ann, still confused, looked at the man and demanded, "Who are you?"

"I am Thomas. I am sent by God."

Next, Ann recalls, "He held up his right hand, palm facing me, and leaned toward me, though he didn't touch me. I'm telling you, the heat coming from his hand was incredible. Suddenly I felt my legs go out from under me, and I fell to the floor. As I lay there, a strong white light, like one of those searchlights, travelled through my body. It started at my feet and worked its way up. I knew then, with every part of me--my body, my mind and my heart--that something supernatural had happened."

She passed out. When she awoke, her husband was leaning over her asking, "Ann, are you alive?" and pleading for her to speak to him. Thomas was gone. Ann, still weak from the encounter said, "I crawled over to the telephone and called my doctor's office and demanded to speak to him right that minute. I told him something had happened, and I was cured, and I didn't need surgery. He told me stress and fear were causing me to say things I didn't mean."

In the end they reached a compromise. Ann would show up at the hospital as scheduled, but before the operation the surgeons would do another test. They would keep her on the operating table ready. If the preliminary test came back positive they would proceed as planned. When Ann woke up after the test, she was in a regular hospital room, the doctor at her bedside. "I don't understand what's happened," he said, "but your test came back clean. We've sent the sample off to the lab for

further testing. For now, though, you appear to be in the clear."

There has been no recurrence of the cancer. At first Ann was hesitant to talk about it for fear that people, including her children, would think she'd "lost it". They didn't. Even her doctor, she says, acknowledged at one point that he'd "witnessed a medical miracle".

Kiki, the city's political leader and one of the most powerful men in Honduras. Kiki was well known by everyone in the city as a Communist Party leader and was the meanest and most feared man in that part of the nation. As a strong political leader, Kiki was instrumental in getting the president of Honduras into office. He was wealthy and owned several businesses, as well as the banana plantation.

Kiki was an avowed atheist with no desire for God. He was a man possessed with hate. He hated himself; he hated God; he hated everyone; and he couldn't get along with his family. But he was also a very sick man. He had been to the States several times trying to get help from the American doctors, but none had been able to determine what was wrong with him. Unable to hold anything in his stomach, he was steadily wasting away.

When his wife saw our telecast in which people were testifying to having been healed in our meetings, she urged Kiki to attend. At first he resisted, but about the fifth or sixth night, Kiki and his family began coming to the meetings. To secure good seats he sent his servants to set up chairs in the front near the platform long before time for the service to begin. Each night after the service had started, Kiki and his family strolled to the front of the crowd and took the chairs from the waiting servants. Kiki always had two six-shooters strapped to his hips. Needless to say, the crowd gave him plenty of room.

It was said that he carried the guns because there were so many people out to kill him. The local pastors told us that he had once caught twenty men stealing bananas from his plantation and had held them at machine-gun point for a full day in the hot sun with no food or water while they were forced to hoe grass on his land.

On the fourth night that he came to the crusade, something began to happen to Kiki. He had heard the Word of God preached. He had heard hundreds of testimonies of healing. He had witnessed miracles of healing each night. Through all of this, Kiki had been in excruciating pain. Occasionally, he bent over double because of it. Then on the fourth night, while he was sitting on his chair, listening to the Word of God, his pain suddenly left.

Kiki stood up and grabbed his wife. "I have no more pain!" he shouted. "The pain is gone! Something has happened to me! Something wonderful!"

That night Kiki and his whole family answered the invitation for salvation. A few nights later, they all received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Kiki was ecstatic with the joy of the Lord. He came to the platform and held the crowd spellbound while he gave his testimony. Everyone knew him and what he had been. When he talked, the people of San Pedro Sula listened.

Kiki commanded one of the team members to accompany him in the daytime as he went from one businessman to another, giving his testimony of how Jesus had saved him, healed him, and baptized him in the Holy Spirit. Hardened, ruthless businessmen fell to their knees and cried like babies when Kiki gave his testimony and witnessed to them about the love of God in sending His Son Jesus to die for them. Kiki went to all the political leaders he had helped put in office and gave them his testimony. He began by saying, "Look, you know we drank together; we chased women together. But now I am different. Jesus Christ has come into my life and has made me a different person, a new man."

Kiki always broke down and cried while giving his testimony. He gave his testimony on television and cried like a newborn babe through most of the program. He said, "Once I was on political platforms, but now I am on a platform for Jesus Christ." His testimony, carried on television stations all over Honduras, shook the whole country. The people knew there had to be something to Kiki's new faith, something dynamic, to cause him to change so completely.

Eventually Kiki went into full-time ministry and helped establish many churches in Honduras. He has visited me in the States and given his testimony here as well.

A young couple, new missionaries, were spending their first winter of marriage in the isolated Cree Indian village of Red Sucker Lake, Manitoba, Canada, in 1991. It was towards springtime, and lakes and rivers were clogged with ice, making float flying (landing airplanes on lakes) impossible. There was neither telephone nor radio communication to the outside.

The missionaries were in the initial stages of language learning. The small child of a prominent native became very seriously ill. There were no medical facilities in the village. The workers had no medical training. As the child worsened, friends suggested that perhaps the new missionary would pray for the child. The father refused, saying, "He's a false teacher. How could he do any good?" The days passed and the child's condition became critical, until it was clear to all he was dying.

The neighbors said, "Well, it can't hurt now to let the missionary pray for him. The child is dying anyway." The father reluctantly yielded.

The missionary came to the tent, prayed briefly for the child to get well, then left. The next day the child had completely recovered.

Today, the grown child is living a normal life, happily married. Eventually, the father was converted, went to Bible school, and became the pastor of the Indian church in the village.

LIVINGSTONE, ON SACRIFICE

PEOPLE TALK of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that which is simply paid back as a small part of a great debt we owe to our God be called a sacrifice? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own best reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter?

"Away with the word in such a view and with such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say, rather, it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then, with a foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life, may make us pause, and cause the spirit to

waver and the soul to sink, but let this be only for a moment.

"All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which was made by Him who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself to us."

"MY JESUS, MY LORD, MY LIFE, MY ALL,
I AGAIN DEDICATE MY WHOLE SELF TO THEE."

The above words were found in Dr. Livingstone's diary under date of the day Stanley left him after failing to persuade him to take the only possible opportunity of returning home.

IN THE cemetery of an English town there is a tombstone which attracts the attention of many visitors. It marks the grave where the celebrated Swedish singer, Jenny Lind, known as the Swedish Nightingale, was buried, and upon the stone is the text, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Jenny Lind was born in 1820. When only seventeen she came from her native land, and her lovely voice took the concert-loving people by storm. The good Queen Victoria often was found in her audience and signally honored "the slim girl with a marvelous voice," as she was called, by throwing to her a bouquet of flowers. From the crowned heads of Europe Jenny Lind received honor, and gifts were showered upon her from all sides. Wealth poured in, but all her success did not make her proud or exacting, as is so often the case, and she humbly wrote to a friend in later years, "My unceasing prayer is that what I gave to my fellows may continue to live on through eternity and that the Giver of the gift and not the creature to whom He lent it may be acknowledged."

A certain writer has remarked, "Nothing is more astonishing about the career of Jenny Lind than its comparative shortness. She sang in the English opera for only two years and retired practically in five years after her first appearance in London, though she appeared occasionally during the next few years, but chiefly for charities."

To many it would seem strange circumstances which led a young girl to abandon such a promising career and retire to the quietness of an English country home. On one occasion she sat on the seashore, reading a Bible, when one who greatly admired her beautiful voice saw her and asked, "How is it, madam, that you abandoned the stage at the very height of your success?" Jenny Lind gave the following reason: "When every day it made me think less of this"--laying her hand upon the open Bible, "what else could I do?" What a beautiful answer and how convincing! It was the knowledge that this precious Book had brought her--the knowledge of a Saviour's love which led her to abandon what the world counts of such value--riches, honor and popularity.

A story is told of a Christian girl in India, who was about to be married. She was attractive, and one of the most capable girls in the institution. Sores appeared on her hands, and it was discovered that she had leprosy. She was removed from the orphanage and sent to the leper asylum. She was dressed in her beautiful white flowing garments, as she walked with her brother into that awful place. The women who were there were dirty and filthy, and their faces looked sad and hopeless. When she saw them, she threw her head on her brother's shoulder, and wept and sobbed, "My

God," she said, "am I going to become as they are?" She was so distressed, that those about her were afraid she might jump into the well. The missionaries sympathized with her, and asked her if she wouldn't like to be a help to those poor women. A ray of hope came to her and she caught the vision. She started a school, and taught the women to sing, read and write. She could play, so the missionaries bought her a folding organ. Gradually a transformation took place. The houses were made clean, neat and tidy; the women washed their clothes and combed their hair; and that horrible place became a place of blessing.

After being there for some time, she said, "When I first came to the asylum I doubted that there was a God." "Now," she said, "I know that God had a work for me to do, and if I had not become a leper, I never would have discovered my work. Every day I live, I thank Him for having sent me here, and that He has given me this work to do."

The lot had been vacant and unused for the 2 years we had lived in this area. Now for the first time it seemed to be open for parking, with an attendant sitting at the entrance. I was (and still am) living in Lebanon, in the "ritzy" area, where ladies doll up for hours to walk to the corner store. I definitely stood out as I struggled—as gracefully as I could appear—to push my toddler in the stroller while carrying my newborn baby in the sling. Time for make-up or fancy hair-do's seemed light-years away. My husband had unexpectedly had to leave the country—with only 2 days notice—and had been unable to return for several months, due the legalities. In his absence I'd had gone on vacation with our co-workers, had a baby (a sudden C-section weeks before my due-date), and now had two little ones growing and learning along with me in this new stage of motherhood.

As I was walking with my little boys to the nearby store, that hot summer day, I saw the look I haven't forgotten yet. It's etched in my memory. The new parking attendant looked up into my face. What I saw could only be described as an angel or God looking through him to me. He had a gentle smile on his face, and eyes were filled with compassion mixed with faith, as if he knew my situation, and was tenderly trying to encourage me. There was a godly light, a loving warmth in his gaze. It both caught me by surprise as well as deeply encouraged me—I looked back twice just to see it again, it made me feel so good inside.

What gave me renewed strength for any struggles I faced after that was the fact that this man was handicapped. He had no hands, his arms ended at the wrists. Yet he sat there like any, confident and comfortable with himself and doing his job. If he could be content, and tackle a job that it would seem impossible to do in his state—(counting money, giving change, opening and locking the gate), so could I handle things in my far more fortunate condition. I had hands. What could you say? Comparatively there was nothing I was limited in.

When I returned on my way home, he looked like any other old man, sitting there smoking his hubbly-bubbly. Some how God had looked at me in that moment, and used the perfect one to do it.

He sat there day after day, through the hot summer sun—at least whenever I went out he was there. Just looking at him gave me a boost of courage. After leaving the country to join my husband for a few months, and being able to return all together, I found the parking lot closed again, as it always had been. No sign of this stranger. But every time I pass that corner I remember "the Angel without hands" that held me with his gaze, and pulled me through, without hands. And I also learned the value of a single, well-timed, smile. I've tried to share mine more freely with others since then.

--By CQ

I was weak and ill with hardly strength to do anything, with no clues from the doctor what was wrong. I was still recovering from a heart break, and nowhere near my desire to at last have a loving life-long partner. In my lonely late 20's I received the call to go work as a missionary in Mexico, and after that, when the war had more or less subsided to go as a volunteer in the world's "hot spot" of the Middle East. I'd have to leave all friends and family, go where I knew no one and could speak the languages, give up most of my small amount of personal possessions, have no known source of income. Would I do it? I was certain God had called me to do it. I could hardly sit or stand at times in my weakened state, though I carried on with work as a private tutor. I took the enormous and brave step of saying yes to the Lord. I packed my suitcases, said good bye to everyone, and gave up for good, in my heart, any plans of marriage. I would just serve the Lord, and give myself wholly to Him and the needs of children. My initial station was in a challenging situation where the first day's challenge was always "What do we have that we can cook for breakfast, something that would be enough for all the children and teens?" I worked long hours, sometimes from 6 AM to 11 at night filling the needs of the missionary families. I got the illnesses of the country—and got healed. And I saw miracles of supply in front of me—like the time we had one litre of milk and God kindly let it pour and keep on pouring until all 15 children's cups were filled. Or the time we were lost and driving around for two hours trying to find a certain orphanage to give food and gifts to, and the second we rolled down the window to ask a man who was walking by the car, without asking the question he tells us where we are to go—and we find the place without trouble. Angels at hand! In that humble place of service I had the strength to do all I was called on to do, and my health improved. Then when the time was right I moved out to the further unknown—to the Middle East. Days after arrival I met the one who is now my husband and the father of our children. Leaving everything I was clinging to for comfort and support was a brave and difficult step, but through that decision to do what God called me to do—just me, not with a group, but as a singled out individual—I was able to know the full joy and life He wanted me to have. I am cared for and loved very much by my family, and wherever we are, I devote my fulltime to ensuring the best childhood our children could have, as well as keeping our eyes and ears open for the needs of others, and my hands ready to help in whatever way I can. Becoming a mother has been one of the bravest things I've had to do yet. It's taken an enormous amount of courage to make the decisions that are right for the children, as well as endure the physical and emotional pain that comes with the package of childbearing. But now I enjoy the best health I never even dreamed was possible—and our children as well. Courageously obeying God's plan for my life, though highly uncomfortable at first, brought the best dividends in the end, and was well worth all it cost. Jesus gives back many times over what we give to Him.

--By CQ

Jean and some friends had gone to the lake for a swim and lounging on the shore. Jean began swimming out, and out further. Before she knew it more time and distance had passed than she realised. Suddenly she found her self exhausted and out of breath. She looked towards the shore, and her friends looked very small and far away. She waved and called out to them, but they heard and saw nothing. The thought came to her that she might drown, and never make it back to safety.

"God, help me!" Jean prayed aloud. Suddenly she saw something—an old, upside down boat, that was chained to the lake floor, it seemed. Though it provided something to hold on to, while collecting her thoughts, it wasn't going to be her vehicle to safety. "Help! Someone help me!" she called.

"Splash!" someone was just then swimming near Jean, and greeted her. "Having trouble?" he asked. She had no idea where he came from, or who he was. Answering her questions, he replied, "I'm a safety inspector, and one of my jobs is saving lives in water, if I have to."

Jean felt relieved that some help had come. This man encouraged her to try to swim back to the shore, assuring her that he would swim beside her, ready to help hold her up anytime she needed help. This gave her courage to try. So one stroke at a time she swam and swam, and true to his word the man swam along with her all the way to the shore.

She had made it! Her friends were relieved to see her, as she had been gone so long.

Emerging from the water she explained, "I would have drowned, if it wasn't for the lifeguard, the safety inspector who swam back with me." Jean turned to point him out to her friends, but there was no one there.

"We never saw anyone swimming with you," Jean's friends said.

Jean found out later that the resort didn't have any lifeguards or "safety inspectors" employed. He had vanished the moment she was safe on the shore, was never seen again. He was certainly a life guard of an angelic type.

While at a summer swimming party in Illinois, a Mexican woman who was attending was frantic. It was a traumatic moment for her. Her youngest child had fallen into the pool, and was lying on the bottom. She couldn't swim and needed help immediately. Crying out to all around the pool she began scream for help, explaining what had happened. Scott and Betty were invited that hot afternoon. Scott was ready to dive in for a refreshing swim, while most others were standing around chatting and relaxing. The moment he stood on the diving board is when he heard the woman's voice loudly, saying, "My baby! He's at the bottom of the pool!"

Scott looked into the water and could make out a form of some sort, deep down in the pool. Into the water he dove, down, down, then found and pulled up and out of the water the drowning little one. Thankfully Scott knew how to administer CPR, and with a fervent prayer it worked. The little boy coughed up the water. He would live.

Scott's only question was, why did everyone else ignore this woman's desperate cries for help? Why didn't others respond and jump in to help save the child? "Mother doesn't speak a word of English," one of her daughters explained. "We couldn't understand what she was saying," the other guest stated.

Yet, Scott, who couldn't speak a word of Spanish, heard the woman speaking in clear English, calling for help for her child. He was the one who was ready to dive in, and could help rescue, resuscitate, and pray for divine intervention. And it had come.

I was the only one available to do something "fun" with the five teenagers that weekend; children of missionaries. They begged to go "camping"—freestyle. But since it was a bit drizzly and already late afternoon, and since we didn't even have a tent, it would be a new experience. This is what they longed for—adventure and nature. The last time I'd been to the proposed camping area was a few week earlier. It was there I that I saw the largest serpent I'd ever seen in the wild.

We were hiking around, but before I took my next step I paused. It has right of way clearly. Going from the right side of the rough trail straight over to the left side. I watched as it slowly slithered across the path. How big was it? I only saw part of his thick body as it continued to move its wide serpentine body. A gentlemanly teenager turned when I called out "snack" and offered me his hand as it simply stepped over it, to continue on our way. I never saw its head or tail, as it was too big and long.

So, now to go camping there—open air style, was what I was being asked to do. I'd After discussing it with the parents extensively, it was decided to be worth a go.

In the near darkness we were dropped off at the foot of a pathway leading up a hilly trail. With flashlights we were able to eventually find a spot that seemed good to camp in. It was flat, and we spread our tarp and set up our sleeping bags for the night.

Attempting to have a cosy campfire was futile. As much as we tried, because the evening dew and light rain had already made the sticks we found too damp, no fire could be coaxed into starting. When the drizzle began to turn into rain we spread out an additional tarp and pulled it completely over ourselves.

There were enough clouds in the sky for them to not only maintain the gentle precipitation but contained the possibility to give a hefty downpour.—And in that area of Mexico at the right time of year it could really pour! We all prayed heartfelt prayers aloud as we shivered under our thin protection overhead.

There was no one we could call on for help but the One who holds the cloud's tap in His hands. Wonderfully, the rain did stop quite soon after the teens' and my earnest prayers, and with a wind blowing the clouds away we actually saw the stars as we went to sleep.

The experience had its own thrill, but not something you'd eagerly repeat nightly! With an early start the next morning (not really the kind of bed you enjoy "sleeping in" on) we enjoyed a nice day of hiking, sun bathing on the mountain rocks, soaking in the rays to warm up, playing in the stream, throwing "mud balls" and so forth.

The hiking on the mountain in the warm sun was beautiful, while the cliff edges presented the constant danger of places for any of us to fall, break a bone and sprain ankles. The known presence of rattlesnakes likewise kept me on my toes every second, praying for everyone's safe keeping.

I was so very thankful for the Lord's amazing safe keeping of us during that trip. I had clung desperately to the Lord in prayer, and He had come through and proved His supernatural power. There hadn't even been a scratch.

If you had seen the terrain and knew the adventurous nature of this group of teens you would be as relieved and amazed at this miracle as I was. This was one of the bigger responsibilities and dangerous endeavours I'd tackled yet. It was not done without much prayer and claiming God's promises continually.

--By CQ

The large boulders were just the type of playground our sons wanted to explore. We'd hiked up a hill to this rarely visited area. It was a place you didn't want to fall, with cracks in between tall sheer rocks, but the view was great. There was a cave that beckoned to be explored—that is if you were small enough to make your way through a rock hallway, and clever enough to make it down a tall sheer rock on the other side (and somehow back up again!). It was certainly out of my comfort zone, and I was praying. I wanted the boys to free the freedom to explore nature, and face challenging situations with bravery, and wisdom too. Our two older boys made it there, but the last boy didn't want to be left out of the fun. It was very distressing to not be seeing those cool things his brother said they saw. He would need help, however. Help I didn't think I could provide. Even though I'm small, the narrow rock hallway seemed barely big enough for the child, must less me. I prayed for God to do whatever was needed—for me not to be stuck, and for us to make it safely through this challenging boyish fun. It was downhill through it, and was able to squeeze my way through it. With some help from his brothers the boy was able to get down and see the cave. But oh, now how was I going to make it back up and through? No ropes; too high to climb up and over; not wide enough to place one foot on each side of the crack and "walk" up it. The soft, spongy, slippery, wet, leaf-covered, uphill ground didn't offer any traction or resistance—but the friction on both rocky walls

that pressed on me was enough to make it very difficult if not impossible to make my way through. I took the first step and “push”! Something pushed me. Put out my foot to take the next step and “push” it happened again. One step after the other this unseen, timely help from heaven pushed me through this tight zone, when no other one could help me. Being a parent can put us into uncomfortable and challenging situations, while trying to care for our children and have the right balance of fun, safety, adventure, learning, and freedom. I could not have made it with out help from Heaven. I’m glad I can have it to call on while I do my best for the children God’s given me. I guess sometimes the best we can do is try to take one step at a time, and the Lord has to do the pushing part, when pressures on all sides make us powerless to make forward progress.

--By CQ

On Christmas Eve 1755, in a little Pennsylvania town rightly called “Bethlehem” a wonderful event occur for those who were brave enough stay there to celebrate it that year. The many Moravians living there were a people who loved God, friendship with the Native Americans, peace, harmony, and music; especially music. And they love celebrating “The Great Day”, which is what they called Christmas. Native Americans called the Delaware lived outside the town, and relationships between them and the Moravians had been peaceful until foreign powers pressured the Native American tribes to forcibly try to take the land where settlers were peacefully living. A terrible event was planned for the town of Bethlehem, and planned to occur on Christmas Eve. However, one Native American Indian that had become a Christian, and helped by running messages between towns and villages, came and forewarned the Moravians.

The people of the town prayed and met for discussion on what to do. Abandoning their town didn’t seem a safe option, and it was the day the children so looked forward to would be missed. For each year a “Christmas Surprise” was made: A big display of the manger scene. Each year was a bit different than the time before, but always artistically beautiful. The children would at last see what was created when they entered the room, feeling nearly as they had gone back in time to the first Christmas.

It was decided that they would stay in their town and trust in God’s care.

The night was spent in prayer, rather than in song, however the trombone choir would announce the start of Christmas Day, in the very early hours of the morning, while all was still dark and quiet.

A peaceful yet prayer-filled night was spent on Christmas Eve, until the music of the trombones announced the day at 4:00 a.m. That was the precise time that the lurking tribe had planned to make their destructive move. Yet, the musical sounds shattered the silence, startled them, stirred them, and they were in fear and wonderment at what it meant.

The Native Indian Christian man was running now through the dark, and seen as one of their own tribe, heard the leader say, in fear and wonderment: "Surely, Great Spirit watches over this place." Some of the Indians remembered the kindness that the Moravians had shown them and they were ashamed that fighting was now in their hearts. Fearing what judgments would fall on them, they turned and ran back into the forest to put as much distance as they could between them and the Great Spirit Voice that sounded from the sky. (As they took the music of the trombones to be.) A wonderful Christmas was enjoyed by the peaceful, faith-filled Moravians.

By Rebecca Hagelin, The Washington Times, December 19, 2010

Marie Fiala and family experienced God's power at one of the darkest moments of their lives. Marie, a lawyer, and her husband Kris, a business executive, had created a peaceful, happy family life with their two sons and daughter.

But everything normal in their lives—going out for ice cream, the mad scramble in the morning to leave for school—came to a shattering stop the day their 13-year-old-son Jeremy collapsed on the kitchen floor, the blood vessels in his brain inexplicably hemorrhaging.

Comatose at first, then paralyzed and barely responsive, Jeremy lay at the mercy of his bleeding brain for weeks. There was little the doctors could do. In the weeks that followed, e-mail chains updated family, friends, co-workers, unknown friends of friends—countless people—about Jeremy's dire situation and the family's struggle.

As Jeremy lay teetering between life and death, a family member organized an international prayer vigil asking for healing. It was a simple request, sent far and wide over the Internet: light a candle and spend one hour at 8 p.m. on a Sunday, united with thousands of others, praying together for Jeremy's recovery. So thousands did.

That night, as the vigil concluded, Marie received message after message from people profoundly touched by faith as they prayed together for Jeremy. His family felt God's presence that night, and Jeremy knew the blessing of a peaceful sleep. But it was nothing dramatic—until 24 hours later.

Surrounded by a roomful of doctors doing their usual pricks and prods, Jeremy spoke out loud. And kept speaking. The jubilant doctors were astounded. Marie, who was taking a rare break at home that night while Kris stayed with Jeremy, got an unexpected, miraculous phone call. "Hi Mom, This is Jeremy. I am sorry to wake you up. I love you."

It was the first of many miracles for Jeremy. Marie shares their story—including her own doubts and heart-wrenching tests of faith—in her eloquent, uplifting book, "Letters From a Distant Shore."

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On a Christmas Day a young man, tall and slim with dark hair, was making his way south on Interstate 85 just below High Point, North Carolina, trying to hitch a ride.

For two years he hadn't been home; his family had heard nothing from him. He and his mother had had a disagreement, and he set off across the country, going from town to town, from odd job to odd job. He worked at filling stations and produce markets; he drove a taxi and picked crops; he was an orderly in a nursing home and a plumber's assistant. But now he was ready to go home.

Thirty miles to go, but a ride was hard to find. "Mom," he said to himself, "I'm tired and hungry, but I'm coming home."

The cold wind blew and a few trucks rumbled by. Then from across the road, he heard a voice call his name. "Mike! Hey, Mike, come here!" To his surprise there was his stepfather, waving, calling to him from his truck. Mike ran across the highway. "Get in, Son. We're going home."

Mike tossed his bag in the back of the truck and embraced his stepfather. "Fred," he said, "how did you happen to be here?"

"Your mother sent me. Just this morning in her prayers for you, she knew you were coming and that you were on Interstate 85 just below High Point."

"But how did you know I'd be here? I didn't write. I didn't call."

The two men looked at each other without saying a word. Then Fred started the motor.

"She's waiting for you, Son."

The inspiring oratorio that continues to reverberate across the world yearly—Handel's *Messiah*—was a miracle in so many ways. Most notably, of course, the fact that it was completed in less than one month—a piece containing around a quarter of a million notes. But there was more. Handel's father didn't wish for him to learn music to begin with—yet his God-given gift and life's calling propelled him forward. He never married, or had children, and was often poor and barely able to keep up financially, yet he kept on doing what he was created for—music. He had illnesses that left him partly paralyzed and unable to play musical instruments, but he recovered and carried on. His faith in God and belief in His Redeemer kept him going. He read his Bible and wished to let the scriptures be known through music. Though criticized for having the audacity to have musical works performed outside of the church, he pressed on, not heeding to the chaffing words and harsh attitudes. Sometimes at risk himself of having to go to "debtor's prison" he had a heart for those who had suffered that fate and the "Messiah" was a way to deliver many of them, through the proceeds of the concert going to this and other charities. He lost sight in one eye, and undaunted pressed on, continuing to compose and perform his works for the betterment of others—both the listeners as well as those benefiting from the charitable proceeds. When he lost most sight in both eyes, he carried on the best he could, relying on a good memory. It seems in his heart was written what he was meant to do with his life. As long as he looked to the Lord, prayed, read his Bible or thought on the scriptures, and worked for the good of others, the many roadblocks and hindrances only made him learn buoyancy and perseverance, and could not stop him. He faced each test, and kept on going; ups and downs perhaps, discouragement perhaps, pauses perhaps, but eventually continuing on and reaching the end of a well-lived life for God, doing what he was fashioned to do.

I was fatigued from a strenuous full day of our volunteer activities. Getting out of the taxi at our destination, I was so tired that I forgot an expensive tape recorder in the trunk of the taxi we had taken. Fortunately, I had struck up a very deep conversation with this taxi driver on the way. We discussed the similarities of our faiths and how God's love could bring peace to this volatile region of the world.

I sympathized with him as he had six children to provide for and he had to work hard to meet their many needs. We left as very good friends and calling each other 'brother'. Somehow I knew that this driver would not forget us.

After I had discovered the loss of our tape recorder, all of my friends and I got together to pray that the taxi driver would return the tape recorder. Then we had to do the hard part of waiting and trusting that the answer would come. At midnight the doorbell rang and there was the taxi driver with our tape recorder in his hand! We were so happy that our prayers were answered. We are still in touch with this man and we want to help him and his family any way that we can.

Our needs are an opportunity for God to work in our lives. Expect miracles and you will get them. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed (Happy) is the man that trusts in Him.

—By Curtis Peter van Gorder

The close brush with death changed the way a certain Ugandan man did things, which set him up for being part of an answer to prayer for a visiting missionary. The son of a couple living in Uganda was visiting them—he and his parents were fully involved with mission work to better the lives of others. When it was time for their son to leave, he would need a taxi to take him to the airport at 4:00 AM in the morning. To make arrangements they went to the main highway to hopefully encounter a taxi able and willing to help. Instead however, a man in a jeep pulled up to them offering to help in anyway—for free. They invited the man to their house, to get to know him better, and he shared his story with them.

The father writes:

"Years ago [this man] was working as an electrician for the city's main electricity power station. A huge amount of electricity flowed through those lines that he worked on. You have to know exactly what you are doing when you work with main's electricity, one small mistake can be fatal. That day, a switch was left on by mistake, and as a result, he was electrocuted. The mains electricity coursed through his body. He should have died, but he didn't. This near brush with death changed his whole perspective on life. It made him think about what really matters".

The Ugandan man told them, "You know, since my accident, I try not to make a move unless I hear from God. I was sitting in my room tonight watching TV and an inner voice that I feel was from the Lord, spoke to me and told me to get up and get in my car and drive. He told me that I would meet someone who needed my help. You must be the ones I'm looking for. Also the Lord told me to fill up my gas tank all the way." This proved to be the sure voice of the Lord, as there wouldn't be gas stations available in the early hours the next morning as he drove them to the airport.

This man showed up the next morning right on time, and not only didn't he ask for money, but gave the missionary son a generous donation. His father writes: "Amazingly, his gift was exactly the amount my son needed for the missionary project that he was involved in at that time."

From Curtis Peter van Gorder

The New Year is often likened to a steep mountain waiting for us to climb. It is sure to be fraught with toils, dangers, and snares. But with the hardships there will also be joys, blessings, and victories.

To climb it, we'll need help from our mountain guide, Jesus, who calls us to follow Him. He knows where the dangerous crevices are and where to step to avoid danger. If we stay close to Him we can reach the summit at the end of this coming year in full victory. Even the best climbers need guides when they climb unfamiliar mountains.

Many of the great mountaineers have sensed that someone was guiding them and helping them to reach their goal.

Years after his ordeal Shkelton described a mystical guiding presence that was with them during the crossing of the Antarctica.

He said, "I know that during that long and racking march of 36 hours over the unknown mountains and glaciers of South Georgia, it seemed to me often that we were 4 not 3 of us. I said nothing to my companions, but afterwards Woolsley said to me, 'Boss I had a curious feeling that there was another person with us.' "
