

'With My Own Eyes'



**Miracle
Stories**
from Africa



Val Waldeck

WITH MY OWN EYES

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Thanks for Clive Thompson for the beautiful cover

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Introduction

There are some fascinating people in this world. They make a difference wherever you find them. Here are ten stories of believers who impacted my world as well. I learned a lot from them. Their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and passionate love for God left an indelible mark on many lives.

You will be challenged and encouraged as you read their stories.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "val".

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1

The Day God Saved South Africa



Michael Cassidy, South African Christian leader, writer, and founder of Africa Enterprise, played a crucial role in the South African change of government.

SOUTH AFRICA stood on the brink of civil war in 1994. With a week to go to the first all-race elections, the Independent Electoral Commission declared there was no chance of participation by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). This party represents the Zulu nation, one of the largest ethnic groups in South Africa. The African National Congress (ANC) looked set to win the election.

Violence gripped the land. Dr. Henry Kissinger and Lord Carrington were in South Africa as mediators. They declared on CNN that the South African situation was beyond hope. All the international mediators fled the country. The world's media readied itself to cover the expected bloodbath.

We watched all this with trepidation. We didn't know what was going to happen and braced ourselves, calling on the Lord for help. It was a traumatic time. I live in KwaZulu-Natal (then called Natal), one of our provinces, and home of the IFP. It was becoming the flashpoint in this conflict. If civil war broke out, it would happen here first, after that setting the Reef townships on fire. James Baker, former U.S. Secretary of State, estimated a million lives could be lost unless something miraculous happened.

We prayed but had no idea how the Lord could resolve this situation. The history of Africa is one of violence, war, and bloodshed. An atmosphere of doom and gloom was everywhere.

In April 1994, a week before the election, we were surprised to hear the astonishing news the IPF agreed to participate in the election after all. That meant printing 84 million IFP stickers on the ballot papers. Election officials had only a few days to make all the extra preparations.

On Wednesday, 27 April 1994, I joined one of the many queues across the country to cast my vote. It was a beautiful day. People from all races stood together, waiting for their turn to vote. It was so peaceful as we laughed and joked with one another.

The South African Police confirmed there were no recorded political crimes during the entire four days of the election process. Pietermaritzburg, one of the biggest crime centers in the KwaZulu-Natal province, did not have one recorded crime of any sort during that time. A close relative of mine had a vehicle breakdown and walked to a local African township. Everybody was friendly and helpful. An atmosphere of peace permeated the country.

The international press packed their bags and went home. One of them said it was the most boring elections they had ever covered.

Few South Africans are aware of what went on behind the scenes. I was privileged to cover the story for *JOY* magazine and learned many of the details of this Miracle Story.

Michael Cassidy, the founder of *Africa Enterprise*, was a crucial player in the events that took place. Of course, there were many other people, ministries, churches, and political leaders who played a significant part in

this story. “I can only tell the little bit of the saga I know about,” Michael said. “But it certainly was an extraordinary experience for us in *Africa Enterprise*. We were so humbled and privileged to have a little slice of God’s Kingdom action.”

“I watched the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela at three o’clock in the morning in Denver, Colorado,” Michael said. “TV billed it as the greatest show on earth. The level of interest was so high in the United States that millions of Americans woke up to watch this historic event.”

People all over the world – including South Africans – were puzzled. One moment Dr. Kissinger is seen declaring on CNN that the South African situation was a catastrophe, and all the international mediators were packing to leave. The next moment, there seemed to be a peaceful and successful election. Everyone was mystified. Michael Cassidy was interviewed several times as people tried to understand the sudden change.

When the Lord does things, they are often extraordinary, and sometimes very sudden.

Here is the story of the Day God Saved South Africa.

2 Chronicles 7:14 is a well-known scripture and one that came to pass for us. “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

The entire election was backed by much prayer. There were chains of prayer going continuously for months, both in South Africa and abroad. Isaiah 65:24 says, “It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear.” Things were happening behind the scenes, but we only heard about them afterward.

Two years before the election, in August and September 1992, the Lord spoke to Michael Cassidy and the leaders of *Africa Enterprise*. “Forty of our East African colleagues came to South Africa for our 30th-anniversary celebrations,” Michael said. “After the meetings in Pietermaritzburg, we took them on a tour of South Africa. We went to every sector of the country,

but especially political leaders. As we visited these leaders and prayed with them, it brought us together in new relationship experience.”

During their tour, they first visited Chief Minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the IFP. They also visited the leadership of the *Afrikaner VolksUnie*, the ANC, and the PAC (Pan Africanist Congress of Azania). “A group of 25 of us talked to President de Klerk in his council chamber in Pretoria,” Michael said. “We called our tour *From Africa With Love*.”

Whenever we met with the politicians, we prayed with them, and they always expressed appreciation. Many times, during the run-up to the elections, I called one or other of the leaders late at night and prayed with them. We built some great relationships as we shared personal times of prayer. We will never succeed without the Lord’s help. We must redouble our efforts,” he told them.

The following year, the Lord gave him new instructions. “We felt the Lord leading us to build personal relationships between the politicians. So, we chartered a small plane and flew groups of between 12 and 20 at a time to Kolobe Lodge in the Northern Transvaal (now Gauteng) for weekends together in the bush. We had a wonderful mix of people in each group – from the Communist Party to friends of General Viljoen.”

By the end of 1993, ninety politicians had been through the Kolobe Lodge experience. “We never publicized this to the media. We only told those who were praying,” Michael said. “They arrived at the retreat as total strangers and left as friends.”

The program was uncomplicated. Each day began and ended with prayer and devotions from the Bible. The participants were asked to share about their lives.

“We listened to a conservative Afrikaner share why a *volkstaat* (people’s state) was important to him,” Michael said. “When he finished, people said, ‘We don’t agree with you, but now we understand you.’ Someone from the central committee of the Communist Party shared how he became disillusioned with Christianity because of what White conservative Christians did to him as a young man. It was as though scales fell from their

eyes. They were beginning to understand South Africa is a nation divided by misunderstanding.”

One of the Conservative Party leaders was deeply moved when he heard an AZAPO (Azanian People's Organisation) leader sharing his story, and he later visited him privately. They could not have been more politically, ideologically, or racially further apart. God was busy at work.

In February 1994, Africa Enterprise called for a KwaZulu-Natal Leaders' Forum at a Durban hotel. “Out of that forum came the challenge to the Church to arise in new ways and become facilitators of peace in our region,” Michael said. “The next day we met with local ministers – and the *Jesus Peace Rally* was born. It was inspired by Joel chapter two, where the Lord challenged His people to call a sacred assembly and promised to intervene in their situation.”

Four days after the Leaders' Forum, Dr. Nelson Mandela and Chief Minister Buthelezi met and agreed to call for international mediation. The situation on the ground was dire. Africa Enterprise submitted a list of possible mediators. One of the names on that list was Professor Washington Okumu from Kenya. None of their recommendations were accepted, but Michael Cassidy asked Professor Okumu to come to South Africa anyway. He had a considerable grasp of the issues, and Michael believed his input would be vital. He didn't know just how valuable that invitation would prove to be.

Professor Okuma arrived on his first visit, and Michael called Danie Schutte, Minister of Home Affairs and the Interior. “I have a brother here from Kenya, and I want you to meet him,” Michael said. “We had forged a good relationship at Kolobe Lodge with Danie and, although it was very late, he came. We had a great time together. He and Washington clicked. We prayed before parting. He met with various leaders during his three visits and prayed with all of them.”

Leaders received Bibles and Gospel literature with appreciation. “Everybody who ever comes into Shell House comes to talk politics or economics,” they said, “but you AE people come to minister to us spiritually. We like that.”

Professor Washington Okumu was invited by Dr. Nelson Mandela and Chief Buthelezi to be Adviser Extraordinary to the mediating process. “We went to meet Washington at Jan Smuts airport on his third visit to South Africa,” Michael said. “He was scheduled to meet with the international mediators at the Carlton Hotel, and then join the group at the Kruger National Park.”

Professor Okumu was delayed for an hour waiting for his luggage, despite the fact he had traveled Business Class. They were nearly two hours late for the reception at the Carlton Centre. It was almost over when they arrived, and the Press conference was finishing. Dr Kissinger was making his final remarks as they came into the room.

It was the Lord’s timing. Every eye in the room focused on this unknown stranger. When he stood up to introduce himself, he was the center of attention.

The international mediation group never left Johannesburg for the Skukuza meeting at the Kruger National Park. Disagreement and arguments ensued. They could not even agree about the terms of reference. The international mediators decided at the end of the first day there was no further point remaining in the country. Dr. Kissinger and Lord Carrington flew home early the next morning.

Washington was due to meet Chief Buthelezi a day or so later at Lanseria Airport. Once again, the Lord’s timing was experienced. “Washington was late, and Chief Buthelezi’s plane had already left for Ulundi. The aircraft experienced engine trouble and returned to the airport. The two men met and had a meaningful conversation that led to the resolution of the election problem.

The *Jesus Peace Rally* took place on Sunday morning, 17 April 1994. Washington and Chief Buthelezi met briefly in the Durban hotel foyer. The Professor was on his way to Cape Town for an urgent meeting with Nelson Mandela. Washington handed Chief Buthelezi a document he had been working on with a potential basis for forward movement. It was a God appointment.

More than 30,000 people gathered at the *Jesus Peace Rally*. Michael encouraged 21 million people on BBC Worldwide to pray. It was a watershed moment in our history, and God answered our prayers.

Chief Buthelezi shared Washington's document with leaders in the VIP lounge, and they were very excited. The Chief left the rally immediately and flew to Ulundi to see the Zulu king. Minister Danie Schutte called President de Klerk.

"That Sunday night after the rally," Michael testified later, "I was suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of great spiritual darkness and oppression. I was still trying to understand what was happening when the burden lifted. It was about nine o'clock. Then the Lord said, 'The stronghold has come down.' I knew something had happened in the realm of the spirit and wondered what to expect."

An urgent meeting was called the next morning in Pretoria. President de Klerk invited Washington to be the chairman. "I fell on my knees last night," the President said. "I cried out to God that this initiative should succeed and South Africa be saved."

On Tuesday, April 19, a dramatic announcement was made to the nation – the IFP was coming into the election! With just a week to go, 84 million IFP stickers were required to be printed on the ballot papers. Parliament must meet and finalize details, including the position of the Zulu king in the New South Africa. All the impossibilities were becoming possible.

As a nation, we had stepped back from the edge of a brutal civil war. Time Magazine called it a miracle. The Star newspaper said, "People are blinking in disbelief!" There was no question in the minds of believers that this miracle was due to the supernatural intervention of Almighty God.

The IFP was unhappy about multiple election irregularities and procedural breakdowns during the four-day voting period. Michael Cassidy heard Dr. Buthelezi say on national TV that the IFP central committee was meeting that night to assess the situation. An urgent meeting took place with Danie Schutte, Mr. Moseneke (Vice-chairman of the Independent Electoral

Commission), Michael Cassidy, and the IFP. It lasted from 11 pm until 3 am the next morning.

Officials sprang into action to remedy the shortage of ballot papers and ultraviolet machines. A Christian businessman organized the printing of an additional six million ballot papers during the night before the voting started. He called the Lesotho Minister of the Interior and borrowed ultraviolet machines. A jet collected them in Maseru and flew them to Durban. Helicopters delivered the ballot papers and devices to the various polling stations. When dawn broke, everything was ready. South Africans joined the queues, blissfully unaware of all the drama.

“No human being, or group of human beings, can take credit for what happened,” Michael Cassidy said afterward. Although Washington’s contribution was extraordinary and historic, the key factor is God intervened through many people – Christians, Church leaders, politicians, business people, and people of goodwill. All were weak instruments in the hands of a Powerful Master. The only thing we can finally say is, ‘This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.’”

The South African flag was introduced to the nation before the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa. I was fascinated by its colors. It reminded me of the “Wordless Book” used by children’s evangelists and Sunday School teachers to share the gospel. This book has different colored pages with nothing written on them. Black stood for sin; red for the Blood of Jesus; white for hearts washed clean; green for Christian growth; blue for Heaven; and yellow for the Glory of God’s Presence. Those are the colors of the flag. It would make a powerful gospel tract!

A local printer caught my vision and printed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets. The title “The Gospel in our Flag” above an image of the flag carried the verse penned by the Child Evangelism Fellowship many years previously:

*My heart was black with sin... ‘till Jesus Christ came In;
His Precious Blood, I know, has washed me white as snow;
And as in Grace I grow, to Heaven I shall go;
For in God’s Word, I’m told, I’ll walk on streets of gold.*

The Gospel message was printed on the back. Christians distributed those pamphlets all over South Africa. Much later, on a visit to the USA, a friend and I gave them to hundreds of Americans too. President Nelson Mandela was in New York at the time on a State visit. Our flag was everywhere, and people accepted the tract with enthusiasm.

On the day of President Nelson Mandela's inauguration, two important things happened that few people noticed. South Africa was offered a choice of two pathways – follow the Lord or follow your culture. I sensed the Holy Spirit highlight them in my spirit.

Towards the end of the inauguration, three hundred witchdoctors stood on the stage in front of the new President. They were singing and dancing. Then they released “spirits” into the New South Africa “to guide and prosper the nation.”

Later that afternoon, someone projected the front of the flag tract on a building facing the crowds enjoying refreshments on the grounds. You couldn't miss it. It was huge. I saw it on television. The cameras panned across the masses and focused on the tract for at least three to five minutes. The world was watching.

Sadly, it seems South Africa is making its choice. Our hoped-for “Rainbow Nation” is a dream, steadily in danger of turning into a nightmare. We seem to be fast sliding into anarchy. Now is not a time for Christians to be complacent. We must pray for our country more than ever.

I saw Him do it *With My Own Eyes*.

God can do it again.

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

2 Chronicles 7:14

2

Angelic Intervention

Saved from Hijackers



*Are not the angels all ministering spirits (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] of those who are to inherit salvation?
Hebrews 1:14 Amplified Bible*

THIS TRUE STORY has no human hero. To God be the Glory!

I've heard many stories about angels coming to the assistance of God's people. I've read about that in the Bible. God's Word says they are ministering spirits "sent forth to minister to those who will inherit salvation" Hebrews 1:14.

Pastor George Dillman of *Living Waters Church* loved to share about a time early in his ministry. He had come home from conducting a youth service and felt exhausted. As Pastor Dillman sat at the dining room table eating a

late supper, he noticed Jody, his little four-year-old daughter, looking intently past him. When she began smiling broadly, he wondered if something was wrong. Why was she smiling? Why was she looking past him? There was only a wall behind his chair. He glanced backward. There was nothing to see.

“What are you looking at?” he asked her.

“Daddy,” she responded. “Don’t you see Jesus’ angel standing behind you?”

As he looked at her with some concern, she suddenly lifted the tablecloth and looked under the table, still smiling happily.

“Why did you do that?” he asked.

“I wanted to see if Jesus’ angel had shoes on,” she responded.

“What did he look like?” he questioned.

She waved her hands together. Jody was too young to know the word ‘shimmering,’ but he understood what she was trying to express. There was no doubt; she had seen an angel.

He saw nothing, but he felt strengthened and refreshed. He knew an angel had ministered to him.

An elderly couple lived in a house just behind the church. John and Margaret Robus gave birth to a child with Downs Syndrome. They called him Johnny-boy. He had the mental capacity of about a four-year-old and lived to sixty years of age. When Margaret passed away, Johnny-boy was a young boy. Before his father could say anything, Johnny-boy told him he had seen the angels leaving the house with his mother. Johnny-boy loved to pray. He spent hours listening to Christian music and worshipping the Lord. He had a relationship with Jesus that was very precious. Johnny-boy loved people and welcomed Anne, his stepmother, warmly. Often, when I was called out to pray for someone seriously ill, I took Johnny-boy with me. He knew how to pray.

John Robus shared something extraordinary with me one day. Burglars had invaded every house in his road at some point, except their home. He saw a gang of young men lounging in the street one afternoon. He knew they were local hoodlums. John asked if they knew why no one had attempted to break into his house.

“It’s because of the big man dressed in white who guards your gate every night,” they said. “We don’t dare come near your place.”

There was no guard outside his home. Johnny-boy knew about it. It was an angel looking after them, he insisted.

I love to hear *real* stories of angelic ministry. Nancy and Wynand’s story in this book also touch on this theme. The kind of “angel” ministry people bandy about on social media is nothing like the Biblical reality. God’s angels are powerful supernatural beings who fulfill His commands.

At the same time, I never expected to experience an encounter with an angel, personally. I am sure they have been active in my life and saved me from situations I cannot explain. But I was never aware of their presence in any tangible way. Until one Friday night in August 2016.

It was a night I will never forget. I ran a Bible Study for “unchurched” Christians in the Glenwood area of Durban for eleven years. There seemed to be so many Christians who had left their churches for one reason or another. Some were disappointed or disillusioned. Others were just “burned out” with all the activities and meetings. They still loved the Lord and were hungry for His Word but didn’t know where to fellowship. It’s not easy to find a church where you feel comfortable as a stranger. My passion was to give them confidence in the inspired Bible and introduce them to the local church. We often invited ministers to share Communion with this in mind.

We had several people visit the studies on Friday nights from 6 – 7.30 p.m. One of them was an elderly lady of around 90 years-of-age. Delphine needed a lift, and I agreed to take her home. There were four of us in the car as we set off – Stella, Margy (my sister), Delphine, and myself.

Margy was driving, and we headed for the Umbilo area. We were aware this was a hijacking hot spot in Durban, but it didn’t worry us. We traveled that

way every week for eleven years and didn't give it a thought. Hijacking happened to "other" people. We felt safe.

Sadly, South Africa has become known for crime, corruption, murder, rape, home invasions, and the hijacking of motor vehicles. Our "Rainbow Nation" did not take advantage of the great miracle God wrought for us. It has become a dangerous place to live.

We decided to drop Delphine off first. Stella lived close by in a retirement complex. Her home was in a lighted area with a guard at the main gate. Delphine's residence was around the corner, near the back entrance on a very dark road.

Margy stopped at the gate and helped Delphine out. There was a problem with the lock, and my sister was concentrating on opening the gate. Something caught her attention on the road. She saw a small truck pull up behind my car and four young men jump out.

Stella and I were startled when we saw Margy leave the old lady in the dark shadows and run to the motor car. She threw herself backwards into the car and hooked her arm around the steering wheel. It was too late. The young men were already at the driver's door.

Two of them grabbed her legs and tried to pull her out of the car. She fought furiously. The third young man bent down into the car and tried to drag her out by her shoulders. My car is a small Opel Corsa two-door vehicle. I was in the back, directly behind the driver's seat. This young man's head was just inches from my face as I leaned over the backrest and dug my fingers into his head. He looked up in surprise. Margaret delivered a well-aimed kick. I didn't think about it. I just punched him in the face as hard as I could. They were not going to get my sister. Nobody said anything or made a sound.

We became aware of Stella repeating the name of Jesus very softly and joined in. The more we said JESUS, the louder and bolder our voices became. Over and over again, we repeated His Name. Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!

Those four young men froze. They looked terrified. The next moment, they ran for their lives. One jumped into their truck. The others kept running as fast as they could.

We saw nothing, but we were very aware of a Presence in the vehicle. I would love to know what those four young men saw.

Delphine was unaware of the drama behind her. She was still trying to unlock the gate. We got out the car and helped open the gate. There was no fear, just peace in our hearts. We dropped Stella at her residence. Only then did the reality of what we had just been through dawn on us. One of the Lord's ministering spirits had intervened in our situation.

The small finger on my right hand looked broken. Fortunately, it was only a torn ligament and healed in due time. I wore the splint with gratitude. Things could have been so much worse.

I saw these events take place *With My Own Eyes*. What an awesome privilege that is.

3

Miriam



A Living Example of God's Promises

MIRIAM BUTCHER (formerly van Reenen) and I became friends at the Bible Institute of South Africa in Kalk Bay, Cape Town. We started studying in the same year and connected immediately. Her sense of humor and bubbly personality made her stand out among the students.

We were serious students, yet we had a lot of fun. Miriam led us into all sorts of hilarious situations. If there was chaos anywhere, you could be sure Miriam was in the thick of it. She was the master planner of raids into the boys' dormitories. Miriam, always the ringleader, checked with the Principal, Rev. Murdo Gordon, in advance. His stock answer was, "Well, Miriam, you certainly should do it, but don't say I said you could." We each

had our list of “things to do,” needle and cotton to sew up their pajamas, and talcum powder to make their sheets smell sweet.

Two memories of those antics stand out. One was the night Miriam and I used the College Principal’s office (without his knowledge). One of the boys’ dormitories was just below his office. We knelt on Mr. Gordon’s desk. I opened the window, and Miriam lowered a cracked dinner bell she had found. She rang it vigorously at the window of a student, then pulled it up quickly. I went outside to see the reaction.

“I thought I heard a bell ringing,” said Joe, a student passing by.

“What bell? Are you sure there is a bell ringing?” I asked him.

He looked puzzled and walked on. The student in the room opened his curtains and was gazing uncertainly at Mr. Gordon’s window. We were hysterical with laughter. Suddenly, the door opened, and Mr. Gordon walked into his office. “Oh,” he said when he saw Miriam, “it’s you!”

The students took turns serving at meals. Miriam gathered her team together. They added food coloring to the custard one evening when they were on duty. Each table had a different shade of custard. One student was not amused. The custard on his table was a dark, murky green. It looked like pond slime. His tablemates realized what was happening and pretended not to notice. He went to report this “unholy” behavior to the Matron. Miss Neate often played along with us. They marched to the kitchen, took the lid off the custard pot, and found only bright yellow custard. By this time, all evidence to the contrary had vanished.

Miriam had a dehydrated frog named George. The frog, lying on a bed of nasturtium leaves, found its way into the stainless-steel serving dish on the Principal’s table on one occasion. It also appeared in student mailboxes, and on a red cushion to bid Mr. Gordon farewell on one of his ministry trips. She is my most fun friend.

The thing that has always impressed me about Miriam is the Lord’s leading and provision in her life. For me, she typifies Mark 10:29,30. I have seen this promise literally fulfilled in her life.

“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life” Mark 10:29-30.

Her experiences of miracle provision are never-ending. One year she needed a new coat. Students at Bible School seldom have extra funds. Miriam opened her postbox. There was a letter from an anonymous person. It read: “The Lord has indicated to me that I should give this money to you.”

The Lord called this hilarious friend to take the gospel to a group of little Islamic islands in the Indian Ocean. Without knowing the language, culture, where she would live, or what she would do on these islands, Miriam set off in April 1975. She went with the backing of an evangelical organization.

Miriam landed at Madagascar en route to the islands. With ticket and passport in hand, she set off to get her connecting flight.

“There are no flights to those islands,” the airline agents insisted. The connecting flight never existed, despite the booking. There had been no flights there for six months due to a cholera epidemic. No flights were leaving Madagascar either because their President had just been assassinated. What was she to do?

“Just as I was getting into a state of panic, the Lord showed me He was in control,” Miriam told me.

The Air France representative in Madagascar arrived to meet a flight from France. He spoke English, and Miriam approached him. “He went into action as only a Frenchman can. He told them off for confirming a flight that did not exist and demanded they provide me with accommodation and a visa.”

Begrudgingly, they gave Miriam a 72-hour visa. “I sat on my hotel bed and cried. ‘Lord,’ I said, ‘You made a mistake! I wish I could get back to South Africa. I should never have come.’”

A calmness came over her, and Miriam remembered the names of some American missionaries working in Madagascar. They fetched her at the airport and took her home to contemplate her next move. No flights out and an expiring visa... but God had everything worked out.

Virtually 72 hours later, the first flight in six months to the islands left Madagascar, and Miriam was on it. Her name was on the top of the waiting list. A few weeks later, Miriam received a letter from a friend in South Africa. She had seen a vision of Miriam standing under a tree in a blue dress, crying. She prayed earnestly for Miriam. "I remembered I was wearing a blue dress that day," Miriam said. "God is so faithful."

A local Christian was to meet Miriam on her arrival. He had no idea if or when she would arrive. There had been no flights for months. He was shopping in the capital the day Miriam left Madagascar.

"When is there ever going to be a flight from Madagascar?" he asked a friend.

"The first one is coming in right now," said the friend. "Look, there it is!"

Miriam had arrived. The heat and humidity took her breath away. "I discovered there are only two seasons here – hot and very hot!"

Miriam prepared for this mission as much as she could before she left South Africa. After she graduated from the Bible Institute, she worked in a children's home for disadvantaged children and taught Sunday School in squatter camps.

Nothing could have prepared Miriam for life on the islands. "In South Africa, I always went back to my own culture afterward. Now I was living in a new culture."

No one was available to accompany her. It was pioneer work. "There was no local church to depend on, and no one to help me. I had to trust the Lord for everything and anything that arose. I learned a lot about prayer," she said.

Life on a remote tropical island is nothing like city living. “The culture, people, and food were very different. I found green bananas make super chips. I have 101 recipes for bananas... from green to rotten,” laughed Miriam.

Open-air butcheries took some getting used to. “The cows get slaughtered on the beach, and they wrap your meat in large leaves.”

Shopping was another experience altogether. “When you buy flour, you take your little plastic bag to the shop. You can see little goggas (tiny insects) looking at you through the plastic. No matter how hard you sift the flour, there are always “things” in it.” Miriam learned very quickly to make fruit cake, chocolate cake, or wholewheat bread.”

I remember the wholewheat bread. I was visiting Miriam with Dianna, a friend from South Africa. “Why is that flour moving?” asked Dianna.

“Oh,” said Miriam nonchalantly. “It has added protein.”

Each of the islands speaks a different dialect of Swahili. The official language is French. The local language had never been written down. Miriam spoke neither. “For the first few months,” Miriam said, “I walked around with an English/French dictionary, speaking in the infinitive. ‘Today I to eat... tomorrow you to eat... yesterday you to eat.’”

The political situation on the islands has generally been unstable, and many coups took place. Bullets often flew through Miriam’s yard. The famous mercenary, Bob Denard, was involved with many of the coups. Foreigners were forced to leave the islands.

Miriam took advantage of those times. She went to France for language study during one of the coups. “A year later, I returned with two South Africans.”

One of them wrote down the local language and translated the New Testament into one of the four dialects. That enabled them to speak both French and the local language fluently.

Miriam had worked in a clerical position in South Africa before attending Bible School. Missionary activity is not permitted on the Islamic islands. What could she do? Why had the Lord brought her there? Besides influencing the people with her lifestyle, she desired to help them. Miriam loved these people, and they adored her. Many discussions centered around her faith.

I visited Miriam on a few occasions. I remember taking a local bus home with her. She had a spirited discussion with some passengers about her reasons for being on the islands. “Take her right to her home,” the passengers instructed the driver. “We want to know where she lives.” Later, they came quietly in the evenings to ask her why she was there and what she believed about God.”

The people live in poverty, but they have many children. Miriam’s heart broke to see the state of the malnourished babies. “That’s how my career in the local hospital began.”

Miriam approached the French doctor. “I told him I had no medical training but could use common sense to supervise what the babies ate. He was delighted, so I became the founder, matron, and supervisor of the pediatric ward. I even trained the local nurses in pediatrics.”

Sharing a house with the local British Vet brought more challenges. “When she left, everybody was convinced I was a Vet, so they called me ‘doctor’! Whenever I came to South Africa, I returned with lots of medicine for dogs and cats, especially family planning shots. They don’t see feeding domestic animals as a priority, so I did my best to prevent them from breeding. Good water and worm pills also solve a lot of problems.”

Another coup gave Miriam the opportunity for medical training. “I volunteered in a pediatric hospital in Cape Town. Then I went to England and America to do various courses in community health. I was also able to do a course on nutrition at the Institute of Child Health in London.

She returned to the islands with new vision. “I realized I could return to the hospital and rehabilitate malnourished children, but in six months they would be back in the same state. The Lord clearly led me to work in the

villages. Just using basic common sense, I was able to take local village food and teach the mothers to prepare it in a nutritious way so the children could eat it.”

Miriam found walking to the villages in the extreme heat very trying. She rode a bicycle for a while. Then she asked the Lord for a motorbike. She wrote to me: “My fellow worker and I need two motorbikes.”

A young man at *Living Waters Church* worked in a motorbike salesroom. I set off to visit him. “I need to buy two motorbikes,” I said.

“Right,” he responded. “What kind?”

He could see I had no idea. “So, where are they going?”

When I told him, he laughed cheerfully, “I’ve just been there. I know exactly what they need.”

He organized for two Yamaha 50cc bikes to be shipped to the islands. The organization provided the funds. *Living Waters Church* bought two helmets, and a Christian friend added some electric fans. The Captain of the ship put the motorbikes in his cabin and personally handed them to Miriam. She rode all over the islands, a nurse on the passenger seat clutching baby scales and other equipment.

Miriam’s work with the mothers expanded to the point she needed a vehicle. She talked to the Lord about it. Soon after, a letter arrived. “Dear Miriam, just to let you know that someone who wishes to remain anonymous has sent money to buy a car for the work in which you are involved.”

She visited a local car dealer. Miriam set her heart on a new French model called a Renault Express. It looked like a little truck, with ample space at the back, and room for five passengers. “It will take six to eight months to get it here,” the dealer informed her.

The next day an American friend from a social welfare organization telephoned her. “I heard you have money for a car,” she said. “When are you getting it?”

Miriam told her what the dealer had said. A short while later, the friend called again. “We’re getting a consignment of stuff from Holland,” she said. There is one car like that available right now. Do you want it? The boat leaves in two days.” Miriam took delivery a few weeks later.

Life was not easy, but Miriam saw the funny side of everything. She often had me in stitches of laughter. Miriam had three cats, all named after her favorite cereals – Nutty Nola, Weetabix (Bixie for short), and Maltabella. A dog also joined the family.

One day the locals invited her to a picnic. “How cute,” thought Miriam as she walked with them. “They’re taking their goat to the picnic.” Little did she know, the goat *was* the picnic.

Miriam taught the women handcrafts so they could earn some finance. “The men liked it because their wives were earning money.” She said. “Family planning came about as a result. They worked hard, and started spacing out their babies, so one baby was properly weaned before the next came along.”

Miriam taught them nutritious recipes, using products from their fields. They learned how to make bean fritters, sweet cakes, and other foods with grated coconut and bananas. They loved it.

I was visiting Miriam on one occasion. She had planned a vaccination safari, and I went with her. They dressed me in a raincoat to shield me from the aftermath of the babies’ reaction (especially the male babies) when they vaccinated them with a needle. Sometimes there were two to three hundred children in a village that had to be treated. Miriam went about everything with great enthusiasm and lots of laughter.

One evening we stood looking out over the ocean, taking in the beautiful scenery. A full moon shone on the waves lapping gently on the shore.

“What a rotic night,” she said.

“Rotic?” I echoed.

“Well, it can’t be roMANtic... there are no men here,” was her response.

Miriam worked on the islands for twenty-four years. The heat, humidity, varying tropical diseases, and malaria took their toll. More Christians were active in various occupations on the island. It was time for a change of season.

Miriam was transferred to the United Kingdom as Personnel Director to co-ordinate the personnel work of the organization. That meant a lot of traveling, something she loves. Her next assignment was to care for the UK workers who were also to be found in all corners of the globe.

“From three seasons a year – the hot season, the very hot season, and the coup d’état season – it took some getting used to being in a place with the grey season, the very grey season, and the slightly sunny season!” she said. “It was quite a shock getting used to driving on roads full of motor cars, having running water, and constant electricity.”

After twelve years in the UK, it was time to retire and return to South Africa. Miriam’s brother helped to organize a flat in Cape Town, and she began preparing to return home. Her friends planned a home-coming party. We wanted to furnish her home. Miriam had given away all her belongings, including the little red car she had acquired in the UK.

We need not have been concerned. The Lord had everything under control. A friend in the UK called her. “Miriam,” she said, “I am living in England now, and don’t think I will be returning to South Africa. My household goods are in storage in Cape Town. Please take anything you can use.” Another friend said she was moving to a retirement home, and Miriam was welcome to have any furniture she wanted as she couldn’t take it with her. Other friends also contributed. “Between my extraordinary friends, I was able to furnish my entire three-bedroom flat,” laughed Miriam.

Again, God’s miracle provision was evident. A friend took Miriam to see her flat. Right opposite the gate of the complex stood a storage place. It was the location of the stored furniture. It just had to be carried across the road to her flat.

“In thirty-six years, I’ve moved seventeen times,” she said. Hopefully, this would be her last. Miriam thought she would settle down with her cat, but

it's not the end of her story. I telephoned her one evening from Durban. She sounded different.

“Have you met a man?” I joked. She was in her sixties by this time.

There was a sudden silence. I sensed Miriam was blushing.

Her story was amazing. God had everything planned out. We had often talked about how Miriam would fund her retirement. The Lord took good care of that detail. She wants for nothing.

During her early Christian life, while she was teaching Sunday School and involved in youth work, she became friends with a young couple. They had three children. The family supported Miriam during her time on the islands. Sadly, the wife died, and Alan Butcher moved into a retirement home.

Miriam and Alan met up again at a Church dinner after her return to South Africa. The attraction was mutual. I was privileged to be at the wedding. The Minister said he had been warned not to mention anything about that part in the Anglican service that talks about Abraham and Sarah and babies!

Both Alan and Miriam love traveling. “The family call us ‘The Travelers.’ We love going to different places, meeting up with old friends, and experiencing new things. We are having an absolute blast and enjoying every minute of it.”



The Lord promised those who left everything for His sake would receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands. Miriam has an instant family – two daughters, one son, and four grandchildren.

Miriam is a living example of that promise.

How blessed I am to have seen God's incredible provision *With My Own Eyes*.

4

Nancy



From comfortable flat in Durban to a Maasai Kraal in Kenya

I MET NANCY MCELROY at the Bible Institute of South Africa, Kalk Bay, Cape Town, where we were students. We became friends and kept in touch when she answered the call of God to do mission work in Kenya. She has a wonderful sense of humor, and her uncomplicated faith made an impression on me.

"I probably was the most reluctant missionary that ever was!" Nancy said. "I was always interested in missions and started a prayer meeting in Durban for the Africa Inland Mission. I thought I couldn't possibly be a missionary. I couldn't learn languages, and only had a South African passport."

Nancy was teaching at the Durban Open Air School for the disabled when she felt the Lord call her to Kenya. "I taught at the Open Air School for eleven years and did a course through UNISA to teach the deaf. When I felt the Lord calling me to work at a home for disabled Maasai children in Kenya, I wasn't keen. I had just bought a flat and new car, and I told the Lord if He wanted me to go, He would have to take my job away."

No sooner said than done! "The Headmaster called me in one day. He said: 'There's good news and bad news.' He told me I had just been promoted with a full year's backpay. That was good news! It meant I could pay off my flat. And the bad news? The Deaf Unit was being moved to Fulton School for the Deaf." Nancy no longer had a job.

Nancy applied to the Africa Inland Mission and began raising financial and prayer support. "The day before I left, my car was still not sold. I prayed, and the Lord sent a Christian that very day who bought it for cash."

The Child Care Centre located among the Maasai people in Kenya was her first assignment. "The first year of being a missionary wasn't easy. I couldn't speak the language and felt so stupid. I had to drive a large landrover with faulty gears and kept getting lost in Nairobi." She worked there for six and a half years.

It was a time of preparation. "The Lord knew I couldn't have gone straight into the ministry that was on my heart – outreach work, Bible teaching, and discipleship."

During this time, Nancy was able to start learning the language and getting to know the people and the culture. She had a burden to reach the Maasai people and started a beadwork project. "Every Friday, the women came together, and I was able to teach them. We also met on Sundays. I longed to do this type of ministry all the time."

Furlough followed. "I went back to South Africa on Home Assignment and prayed about my future. When I returned to Kenya, the Church leaders asked me to work among women. I started looking for a place to stay."

A vehicle was needed. "I was praying for a car and had the exact amount of money for a bakkie (pickup truck). The problem was I did not have enough money to pay for the insurance. That's 5% of the value of the vehicle. Twice, the company refused a 5% discount."

With God, all things are possible. Nancy telephoned again. The timing was perfect. "The salesman was busy, and the secretary suggested I try another branch. They gave me the discount without hesitation and sold me the only bakkie in town with a tape deck at no extra charge! Most of the Maasai are

illiterate, and we had some lovely Massai scripture songs on tape. As I was also considered to be the local taxi, everybody heard Gospel songs when they wanted a lift."

Nancy went to visit her friend, Ng'oto Tino at Sajiloni. "She was the washing lady at the Child Care Centre and a lovely Christian. We drank chai together (very sweet milky tea – a mixture of water and milk with lots of tea leaves all boiled up together).

"God told me to give you these two thorn trees outside my house," said Ng'oto Tino, Nancy's Maasai friend. "You are going to build your house there, and we are going to work together for the Lord."

The car had taken all Nancy's finance. "Lord, I prayed, here's another impossible situation for You to work out. I have no money to build a house. Ng'oto Tino is a widow with eight children. I don't have the finance to pay her a salary." This Maasai lady used to walk twelve kilometers to the Child Care Centre to do the washing, and it was her only means of support.

The mission handed Nancy 45,000 Kenyan shillings (approximately \$880). "See what you can do with that," they said.

Nancy's description concerning the erection of her new home is hilarious. She had never attempted anything like it in South Africa. Her newsletters were always fascinating.

She looked in the local telephone book. "I found a place that sold prefabricated metal huts and bought one. It came in bits and pieces with a sheet of instructions that said it would take three unskilled people three hours to put it up. Well, the more we looked at those instructions, the more confused we got. They had given us the wrong instructions, and we didn't even know what shape it should be! It took us three days to erect it!"

"I didn't know you were supposed to build it on about a foot of concrete," She wrote. "We built it on about an inch of cement, and it's all slanting. But there's a great advantage in having a slanting floor. If you drop anything you always know where it's going to land!"

They placed one panel inside out. "You could see daylight through it. When it rained the water poured in and ran like a river down either side of my bed. It collected in a pool at the bottom of the house because of the slanting floor. Somebody drilled a hole in the wall for the water to run out. I had the cleanest floor in the whole district!"

The kraal (homestead) Nancy lived in was also home to five adults and nine children. "At first it was only Ng'oto Tino's little cow dung hut and mine."

Soon there were four huts surrounded by a thorn fence. "Maasai huts are made of sticks and cow dung, and they are very dark and smoky. You can't stand up in them. There are a lot of wild animals around. At night you can hear the hyenas and the giraffe come right up to the fence. One day an aardvark (anteater) walked right through our kraal. It's like living in a game reserve," she said.

An aardvark has a long snout that ends with a pig-like nose, rabbit-like ears, and a tail like a kangaroo. Yet it is not closely related to any of those animals. Aardvarks are found throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Water was a problem. The only water was three kilometers away at a borehole. One half-inch tap had to serve the whole community. "The water is very salty and must be filtered and boiled. Amoeba is an occupational hazard, and there are only two kinds of missionaries in Kenya – those who have amoeba and know it – and those who have it and don't know it!"

Gutters were added to the little house. Nancy wrote, "I've got two water tanks now, and for five months of the year, I've got rainwater."

Living in this kind of community is very different from life in Durban. "We western people are very possessive of our things. At first, I found it difficult to share everything I possess. One day I offered to pay for some milk and Ng'oto Tino was horrified. 'Do these cows not belong to you? You live here, and they're your cows too', she said. But the car is our car... the spade is our spade... the wheelbarrow is our wheelbarrow. I had a little basin to wash in, and every time I wanted to use it, the basin was gone. Somebody else had it! My rolling pin and water can were community property."

The worst sin in Maasai culture is to be stingy. "That's far worse in their eyes than immorality. If you have something and you won't share it, that is considered a most dreadful sin. They share everything, and this is why you don't need old age homes and orphanages there. Anger is also high on their list. It's very hard not to get irritable sometimes when you are tired, and everybody is clamoring to get into your car, but that's the quickest way to blow your testimony."

People are important to the Maasai. "Programs take second place. That's why they are always late. Sometimes I plan a seminar and announce the first speaker will talk at 2.00 p.m. The speaker might not arrive until 4.00 p.m. because he/she met somebody along the way that needed to be witnessed to, or who was sick and needed to be taken to hospital."

"In our Western society we have to account for how many letters we've written, how much we did, but I've learned from the Maasai that it's far more important to ask how many people we've interacted with during the day (even while waiting endlessly in line for water) than to look at what we've achieved. It's a real turnabout culturally, but that is exactly what the Lord has called me to do."

Once Nancy was established, the women's ministry began in earnest. "We had six meetings a week. One of them was at our place, and the other five within a radius of ten kilometers. We had meetings on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (two meetings), and Sunday under the tree where we had church. Saturday was community day – that's when weddings, funerals, and community things take place, and I'm out mixing with the community all day. Monday is my day off technically, but the whole world comes to visit because they know I'll be home!"

"At a typical meeting, I play the guitar, and we sing. Then I do the Bible Study and Ng'oto Tino applies it. It's a fantastic partnership because she knows what's going on in the community and what their fears are. If she thinks the people don't understand my Maasai she is able to help. Her whole heart is in this ministry. She is really called of God."

The Lord assured these two friends He would provide for them to work together on a fulltime basis. "We prayed together, and the next day she

handed in her notice at the Child Care Centre. I have found God always provides when there is a need, and extra gifts started to come in.”

Nancy was able to pay Ng'oto Tino's salary every month, and she earned more than she had at the Child Care Centre. The Lord knows how to provide, even in the most rural of areas.

Nancy's overriding desire is to win people to the Lord. "I decided I wasn't going to use any gimmicks. The beadwork project drew people on a Friday, but for the wrong reasons. We decided to pray them in.”

Every morning they prayed together from 11 to 12 o'clock before setting off for their meetings. “We asked the Lord to remind them to come, open their hearts to receive the Gospel, and to cause Christians to grow. It's amazing how often someone will come and tell us that they were walking to the waterhole with their cows and suddenly remembered the meeting.”

Nancy made preparation a priority. “It took a long time to prepare every morning because I had to teach in Maasai,” she said. She presented a different Bible Study at each place because some of the people attended all of them. “The Bible speaks for itself, and I work my way through it, explaining what it means. They ask many questions, and we do a lot of memory work because very few can read. I also use a lot of pictures. ”

Three times a year, they invited all the Christians in the area for a weekend of ministry. “Usually, about 120 people came, and we invited Maasai evangelists to preach. The Christians shared testimonies, and everybody got involved.”

Nancy had been assigned women's work, but the Lord had much more in store for this intrepid missionary. "The first night I slept in my little tin house, I thought to myself: 'This is great. I can spend every night reading and writing letters and have some time to myself.' But the Lord had other ideas."

There was a knock at the door. “We have come,” said Ng'oto Tino. Her eight children stood beside her.

Nancy had no idea why they were there. "I didn't know why they had come, so I invited them in. 'Now that we live together,' Ng'oto Tino told me, 'we are a family, and we must pray together every night.' The next night they came again and every night after that."

The Maasai have had the New Testament since 1983. The Old Testament had only become available more recently in Maasai. Nancy decided to tell this little family a Bible Story from the Old Testament every night, starting with Genesis.

By the end of the week, all Ng'oto Tino's family were coming, as well as the herd boys from the whole area. "About fifty of them arrived each evening around 8 o'clock and crowded into my little 7 x 4 1/2 meter house. A little paraffin lamp provided the only lighting, so it was very dark, and all I could see were the whites of their eyes and their teeth! Ng'oto Tino had to shine a torch on the pictures. Where in the Western world would you get children coming to Sunday School seven nights a week?!!"

"It was quite exhausting. We had to move some of the furniture outside, and afterward, the house would be full of dust, mud, and cow dung. They would go at about 9 o'clock, and it would take me ages to get the stuff back and sweep the place before I collapsed into bed."

The Lord provided again. "A believer I met briefly in Howick, Natal, died and left me about R5500 (about \$400) in his will. We used that and some extra gifts the Lord sent to build a small classroom and equip it. I was able to install two solar panels on the roof and solar lights. It was much easier to teach when we could see what we were doing."

Nancy also did all her own maintenance. "I learned how to use a water-level! I wish I'd known that before I put pelmets, shelves, and cupboards up! Everything is very Heath-Robinson at my house. It's all tied up with bits of wire and crooked, but it works!"

Literary classes preceded the Bible lessons. She held a literacy class from 7.30 to 8 p.m. every evening to help those who were unable to read. "I didn't want them to carry their Bibles around like decorations. They must know

how to read them. We also did a lot of Bible drills, so they know how to use the Bible."

Scripture memorization played an important part. "They learned a memory verse every single night, the same one for a week. They built up a lot of memory verses in their heads over the years."

Nancy also taught these young men how to share their faith. "Everybody who can read has to look for a verse during the day and share it with us at night. They've got to bring a meaningful scripture and tell us where it comes from in the Bible. It is amazing how often their verses hinged on the same theme. This is the Lord's doing."

Nancy believes it is vital to reach these children for the Lord now. "They are the evangelists of the future. Once they reach the age of about 15, they get circumcised and become warriors. The warriors move around in bands and live a very immoral lifestyle. It's considered beneath their dignity to mix with women and children. Their parents hire them out as herdsmen, and they often leave the area. We need to pray for them because, once they are away from Christian influence, it's tough for them to stand as Christians."

Those who were really 'born again' continued to attend her meetings. "It's very gratifying to see those who go away come to our meetings when they return home once a year. There are so few Christian men among the Maasai."

The Lord also provided finance for the formal education of some of these young people. Nancy sponsored two children in Primary School. "Babu is 13, and Kuninyi, a little girl, is 11," she wrote. "The Lord has enabled me to look after them and pay all their school fees, food, and clothing. I also care for a Christian young man of about 17. He loves the Lord and preaches beautifully. The Lord has sent the finance to put him through High School. Perhaps he will go on to Bible School and become a Pastor."

Nancy experienced the Lord's practical care in many ways during her time on the mission field.

One evening she was showing Bible film strips at a meeting quite far from her home. She used a generator to power her projector. On the way home, her truck got stuck in the mud. She needed a miracle, and the Lord sent one.

"He looks after us in the most incredible ways, especially my car. I was alone and came home late. It was raining hard, and my truck got stuck in mud right up to the hubcaps. I tried everything I knew to get out but only succeeded in digging myself deeper into the mud. It was dark and cold. Nobody knew where I was. It was impossible to find my way home on foot because I lived on a cattle path and didn't have a torch. I sat there praying when suddenly I had the impression I should start the car. As I turned the key, there was this tremendous push from behind, and my car landed on a hard patch. I got out to thank my helper, but there was nobody there. God must have sent an angel!"

An incident about Nancy's truck battery again illustrates her simple trust in the Lord. "Another time, I was praying when I felt moved to go outside and open the bonnet (hood) of the car. The battery had fallen off its perch and was resting on the spark plugs about a centimeter from the fan. I might have driven that car for another week without ever looking under the bonnet! That sort of thing happens all the time."

Nancy loved going for long walks and talking to the Lord. "We pray about everything, and when the Lord answers I am always amazed, but Ng'oto Tino is never surprised. She always says: 'Didn't we pray about it? What did you expect?!'"

Nancy did an amazing work for the Lord, but her season of ministry ended abruptly when she had an accident and was severely injured. It left her in a disabled condition, and she returned to South Africa. She lives in Cape Town in a caring facility. I visit her on the rare occasions I get to Cape Town. Despite her circumstances, her sense of humor and love for the Lord is as strong as ever.

The Lord's ways are not our ways. We can never fathom his purposes, but only trust Him, even when things do not turn out the way we expect.

One of the things that impresses me about Nancy's ministry is the lasting effect it has on the people with whom she shared those years. The Africa Inland Mission made it possible for her to pay a brief visit to the people she loved so dearly a few years later. The work has continued without her and is blossoming. They were overwhelmed to see their beloved teacher and friend.

Only eternity will reveal the powerful results in the lives she touched.

I feel privileged to have watched these events *With My Own Eyes*.

Lorna



Lorna Jackson stood on the edge of eternity. Today was to be the last day of her life... and then she met Jesus! Another miracle story from Africa.

LORNA JACKSON'S STORY will move you to tears. This good friend of mine has been through much, and she has an amazing testimony. The Lord stepped in and rescued her at the point of no return. Her story took place in Africa and offers hope to those who have lost faith.

The Jackson marriage was not happy. Neville, her husband, was often away and left her to care for his mother who was dying of terminal cancer. It was a very stressful time, but worse was to come.

Their fourth daughter was unable to digest food products available locally. Lorna's only option was to import a special baby formula. The USA arms embargo during the Sharpeville crisis in South Africa affected medical

supplies as well and put an end to that. There was no hope, and baby Susan was dying a little every day.

To make matters worse, Lorna became ill. She lost 20 kilograms in six months. Cancer was ravaging her body. The pain and bleeding in her body left her weak and desperate. She felt so alone and contemplating increased pain and an undignified end added to her stress. The proposed operation offered only a 50/50 chance of success.

There was only one way out. Drastic circumstances needed a drastic solution. Lorna decided to commit suicide. Who would look after her baby and mother-in-law? She decided to take their lives too. Their older three daughters could be taken care of by their father.

Lorna set to work immediately. Her plans were specific. During the next few weeks, she stockpiled morphine and painkillers prescribed for her mother-in-law and herself. Her mother-in-law seldom took her drugs, but Lorna collected them faithfully from the chemist and stored them.

She tidied the house and took care of all the mending. Nothing was left undone. Lorna made sure her children's clothing was ready to wear, from school clothes to casual wear. Then she set about preparing food and freezing meals. Lorna baked her children's favorite cakes, tarts, and cookies. Everything was carefully planned.

"You are going to work yourself to death," her mother-in-law said. "Please stop and rest." She had no idea what Lorna was planning.

One morning Lorna woke up and knew this was the day things would come to a climax. It was D-Day. She felt a strange peace as she began preparing to carry out her decision.

As Lorna's preparations came to an end, she took issue with God. Lorna was a religious woman and always conscious of God. She attended a Church school and taught Sunday School. Lorna took time to pray but had no personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For her, it was all about religion. The heavens seemed as brass. It was as though her prayers hit the ceiling and bounded back.

“I recall speaking to God,” she told me. “I was not very impressed with the way He had just left me to battle on my own. He had not helped me. I would help myself.”

Now she would take care of her problems. “I took my older children to their respective schools and made arrangements for them to be collected after school and kept until their father fetched them.”

She went home to attend to the final details. “First I tidied the house. Then I bathed and dressed my mother-in-law. I plaited her long grey hair and tied it with a new pink ribbon to match the bed jacket she had knitted for herself. She seemed so calm and happy that morning.”

Lorna picked up little Susan and held her tightly to her chest. She dressed the baby and then dressed herself. It was time to prepare the medication.

Lorna was about to administer the drugs when she heard a knock at the door. She froze and waited, hoping the person would go away. But the knocking persisted. Opening the door was a decision that changed her life forever.

Lorna had been attending a weekly Prayer and Bible Study group at a friend’s home. She had completely forgotten about it and was surprised to see her friend standing at the door. Lorna was also puzzled. She had her own transport. Why had the friend come to fetch her?

“I’m not coming today,” Lorna told her friend. “There is something important I have to do.”

The friend walked right past her into the lounge and sat in a chair.

“The Lord told me to fetch you,” she announced. “I am not going without you!”

Lorna knew her friend meant business. She finally agreed to go with her on condition they would return immediately afterward. She was determined to finish what she had started.

Lorna had no idea the Lord had heard her cry, and this was going to be the most wonderful day she had ever experienced. Death was going to give way to life.

They were late arriving at the Bible Study. It was a small group of about five women. They were studying the final words spoken by Jesus on the cross. The topic that day was Jesus' cry: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" As Lorna and her friend entered the room, those were the words uttered in the opening prayer.

Lorna was shocked. That was exactly how she was feeling. "Yes, Lord," she cried out in her heart. "Why did You forsake me? Why did You leave me all alone?"

Time stood still for Lorna. "Suddenly, with the eyes of my spirit, I saw Him – a Man on a cross. I heard Him cry out in agony: 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' I couldn't understand. He was God – perfect – without sin. He did not deserve to be on that cross. I was the sinner and the one who should die."

As the enormity of that truth hit Lorna, the awfulness of what she was planning overwhelmed her. "I felt I could never live with myself again and wished I would die. I cried out, 'No, You must not die. I must.'"

At that moment, it seemed as if the Lord reached down and took away her burden of guilt. She heard Him say, "I must die so you can live."

Suddenly Lorna saw a light and the Risen Christ stretching out His arms to her. "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," He said.

In a moment Lorna was "born again," filled with the Holy Spirit, and physically healed.

Lorna was overwhelmed with joy. "My heart seemed to burst, and I began to pray in a language I had never learned. It was as if joy came from deep within, and I could not contain it. Instead of death, Jesus Christ gave me new life."

Two weeks later Lorna booked into hospital for the cancer operation. When they opened her up, they could find absolutely no trace of cancer, only scar tissue. Jesus had healed her completely.

Lorna's mother-in-law also gave her heart to the Lord. She died of cancer and went to be with the Lord. Neville had other women in his life and finally left to marry one of them.

What happened to Susan? Lorna knelt by the cot three months after her conversion. Since the baby's birth, she had not had one peaceful night's sleep as the little one cried out in pain. "Please, heal her or take her home," she prayed. "Susie has suffered so much."

That night Lorna fell into an exhausted sleep. She awoke with a start. The baby was silent. Was she dead? Lorna peered into the cot and Susan gurgled happily. The Lord had also healed her miraculously. I watched Susan grow up into a beautiful woman. She is a mother and grandmother. Lorna is a great-grandmother many times over.

Lorna felt the call of God to go into missions. She managed the *Living Waters* bookshop in Durban for a time, then studied at the Bethesda Bible College and later served the Lord in the mission field. Her faith has never faltered over the years.

One day Lorna was traveling on a mission trip in a rural area. She had an elderly Pastor's wife in the car. Suddenly the car skidded in the mud and slewed off the road into a cornfield. A man approached them in a threatening manner. Lorna climbed out of the car and stood in front of it to protect her passenger. She knew they were in deep trouble, but she also knew how great the Lord is. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Lorna began to sing "Thank You, Jesus!" in every language known to her. She sang it in English. She sang it in Afrikaans. She sang it in the local African dialect. The man looked startled. He suddenly turned and ran for his life, leaving his stick and jacket on the car. God's Power in Africa is still available to all who believe.

Lorna worked at the Full Gospel Mission Head Office, then went on to become the National Secretary of the YWCA. Her influence on the young women was very positive. Today she is retired, but still active in the Lord's work.

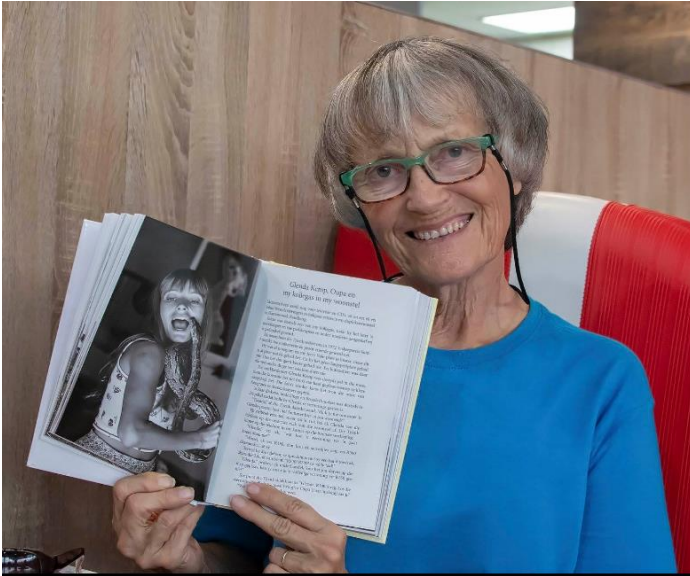
Lorna and I have remained good friends, and I still marvel at the amazing work of the Lord in her life. We've hiked in the Drakensberg mountains in

South Africa, traveled across the United States on a ministry tour, and spent many hours sharing fellowship.

Lorna's testimony is something I witnessed *With My Own Eyes*.

6

Glenda



Glenda Harper, formerly Glenda Kemp, Snake Dancer

GLEND A HARPER is one of my favorite people. I’ve known her for many years and am always impressed at her humble attitude and passionate love for the Lord.

Better known as Glenda Kemp, a famous stripper and snake dancer from South Africa, she turned her world upside down in her heyday. Now she is turning it the right way around for Jesus.

Glenda had a traumatic childhood and ended up in an orphanage. She wasn’t happy there, and it just added to her trauma. But God had a plan for this teenager. The Lord intervened in her life at a Christian camp she attended.

“I was chosen out of the whole orphanage to go. I was so happy to be away from the rules,” she said.

There she met “Tannie” (Auntie) Baumbach, who led her to the Lord. “At the camp I went into a little tent and poured out my heart to God. He knew all about me, and He loved me. His love is like no other love. It fills the emptiness in your soul. It is the only love that fits into that hole. Nothing can separate us from God's love.”

She was ecstatic when “Oom” (Uncle) Baumbach and his wife decided to adopt her. Glenda was 15 years old. The Christian influence she received at that time blossomed in later years.

When she left school, Glenda studied to be a teacher at a local Teacher’s Training College. Her passion for music and dancing, however, led her into the social world of parties and dancing. She soon found her gift of dancing opened doors for her in the entertainment world. Her first job was as a go-go dancer.

Go-go dancers are dancers who are employed to entertain crowds at nightclubs or other venues where music is played. Go-go dancing originated in the early 1960s, by some accounts when women at the Peppermint Lounge in New York City began to get up on tables and dance the twist.

Glenda was in her element. Nothing mattered to her when she was dancing. She lived for the music and the words. It made her forget her sad circumstances. She began to develop her routine. Her younger brother brought her a snake one day. “This will make your act even more exciting,” he encouraged her. It was a unique twist, and it made her famous.

Traveling with her snake was a mission. One day Glenda smuggled her snake onto a flight from Durban to Johannesburg. “I was trying to keep the lid on the basket by my feet. The right thing to do would have been to sit on the basket, but this was not possible. I was strapped down in the seat ready for take-off. The position of my body took the strength off my foot on the basket, and the python, who was on his own mission, found the foot pressure weak. A beady eye looked my fellow passenger in the face. Pandemonium erupted.”

The plane's engines powered down. The doors reopened, and Glenda was escorted off the flight. This story of an unknown young woman, Glenda Kemp, who kept company with a python in a basket on her travels around South Africa soon hit the tabloids.

That was just the beginning. Soon Glenda was stripping with “Oupa,” her pet python. When I met her many years later, she told me how the python died during one act, but she just continued dancing. The crowds never knew. She had several pythons during her career as a stripper. They were all named “Oupa.”



The 'New' Glenda posing with a python

During the conservative seventies in South Africa, people were shocked at this young Afrikaans woman stripping with a python. It just wasn't done in those days. The authorities, including the church, did their best to stop her without success.

Religious women formed barricades with their bodies to prevent Glenda and her snake from reaching her shows. She burst through like a meteor off course and turned a conservative country upside down.

“People assumed I lived a loose life,” she told me later. The truth is that Glenda lived only for dancing. When she wasn’t doing a show, she lived a quiet life and was never involved with the men vying for her attention. She never drank alcohol or took drugs.

One day Glenda was sitting on the beach when a young man started chatting with her. He invited her on a date with him that night.

“Let’s go and watch Glenda Kemp’s show tonight,” he said. She still laughs about it.

“He had no idea he was talking to Glenda Kemp!”

She lived in two distinct worlds during her stripping days. On the stage, she was Glenda Kemp, Snake Dancer. Off-stage, she lived a quiet, private life.

The Rapport Newspaper tagged her “Newsmaker of the Year.” Glenda was arrested several times by the Vice Squad and charged with public indecency. Christian wives, loyal fans, and liberal supporters clashed loudly over her performances. Glenda was unfazed by all the publicity. She was not intimidated in the slightest. A full-length film, “Snake Dancer,” was made about her life. It was not well received in South Africa, and Glenda decided to call it a day.

She planned to follow a teaching career, but her reputation preceded her. Glenda’s notoriety resulted in one rejection after another for teaching positions. She decided to move to London and continue her dancing career.

All the time she lived in apparent freedom and rebellion, there was always a voice whispering in the background, “slave to sin.” The Lord constantly reminded Glenda of His love for her, and she finally surrendered her life fully to Him. From that day on, Glenda was utterly sold out for Jesus. She still is. Her passion burns as strong as ever to win people for Jesus.

Glenda and her husband started a family, and life took on a whole new meaning. In the 1980’s they returned to South Africa, and she began her teaching career at the Bushlands School on the Bluff in Durban. The headmaster had no idea who she was, but because of her name, he never

failed to share a ‘Glenda Kemp’ joke with her. Glenda never enlightened him.

Her new Christian life was not an easy one. Many Christians were still appalled when they met the infamous snake dancer. Reports of her appeared in every local newspaper. Everybody knew about the Snake Dancer, including an evangelist who set up a revival tent on the Bluff.

Glenda was very excited about the evangelistic campaign. She had started a youth group in her home and invited some of the young people to the meetings in the tent. One of the young men – a drug addict – was hesitant about coming into the service and Glenda went outside to talk to him. They knelt to pray, and a crowd gathered around them. The Pastors and organizers stormed to the front.

“What are you doing?” someone asked aggressively.

Glenda was dumbstruck. “I am praying for this young man,” she said.

“We know who you are,” they responded. “You work for the devil. Get off this property now!”

The boy and his girlfriend ran for their lives. Glenda was shocked as she ran to her car, the men in hot pursuit. “They stayed close to me. You would have thought I had an army with me and could blow fire and destroy the tent at any minute. I shook as I drove off. They almost pushed my car out of the grounds.”

Glenda longed to influence more young people for God. She had become a member of a local church on the Bluff and applied to be a Sunday School teacher. The church leaders were not so keen. They held a leaders’ meeting to discuss her application. The men were up in arms about her request. A former stripper teaching their children... one who stripped with a colossal snake and performed for men ogling her naked body? No, no, no, a thousand times no!

The Sunday School Superintendent disagreed. He knew Glenda was running a youth group in her home. His wife was her cell group leader, and

they were aware Glenda was sold out for Jesus. The conversation went something like this.

“Do you know who you want to bring into the Sunday School as a teacher? Do you know who she is?”

“Do you know who I am?” the Sunday School Superintendent asked.

“Yes, we do. You run the Sunday School. We know you.”

“No, you don't know who I am,” the Sunday School Superintendent said. “You know me from the church. You do not know who I was before Jesus redeemed me!”

He had anticipated this reaction and came prepared. He took a handful of stones out of his pocket.

“Let the man without sin take the first stone,” he challenged them.

There was silence.

Glenda was accepted as a teacher.

She uses every opportunity to talk about Jesus and win souls for the Lord. She especially loves ministering to the vulnerable people of society, including prostitutes and drug addicts.

Without knowing her story, you would never guess her background. Glenda attended Bible Studies I taught at my local church. No one had any idea who she was until she shared her autobiography* with someone. The reaction was so funny.

“I had a poster of you on my wardrobe door for many years,” one man said in shock.

One day Glenda was in a little printer's shop near her home buying ink for her printer. Her pamphlets and booklets spread the Word wherever she went. Another customer was also buying ink, and they started chatting.

“My name is Brenda,” the woman said. “But I am often called ‘Glenda Kemp’ because I work with snakes and do demonstrations at schools.” She went on to share that her son was having trouble at his school.

“The only answer for our children,” responded Glenda, “is to pray for them. There is so much power in our prayers. God is so powerful and loves our children more than we do.”

Glenda could see they were not overly impressed. “So, I told them how God had protected me in my dancing days, even when I was unfaithful to Him. Both ladies went quiet and looked at me — ‘What dancing days?’ they asked.”

Glenda had always assumed the shop owner knew who she was. Their reaction amazed her. She had their full attention now and shared the gospel. “I explained how we were cut off from God and how Jesus' death on the cross brought us back to God. I told them how to give their lives to Jesus and to make Him King of their lives. I find when I witness to Christians, they don't listen because of who I *was*. When I witness to the world, it listens *because* of who I was.”

Now in her senior years, Glenda continues to live a life of complete devotion to God. Her gentleness and beautiful spirit are very precious. Glenda is a worshipper, an intercessor, and a soul-winner.

I feel so privileged to see what God is doing in and through her life *With My Own Eyes*.

**Glenda Harper, Snake Dancer*, is available on Amazon in Kindle and paperback

Wynand



Back from the dead

WYNAND VAN RENSBURG and his wife, Maureen, were members of *Living Waters Church* in Durban North. Wynand served as a Deacon, and we were good friends. He suffered very badly from Diabetes and often fell into a coma. He worked at the South African Railways, but his condition was so bad, they eventually boarded him.

Wynand had a passion for souls. He found the Lord as a result of their young son's death and had a definite call of God on his life. He was excited at the thought of receiving a disability pension. That meant he could go to Bible School and prepare for the ministry. When he completed his training, Wynand and Maureen set off for Cullinan, Gauteng, South Africa, to pastor

the *Full Gospel Church of God*. He developed a powerful ministry in the local prison as well.

Saturday, 15 February 1992, was a day Wynand and Maureen would never forget. They were involved in a serious motor accident. Wynand described the scene to me later.

“A moment after the car crash took place, I found myself in the presence of God. I didn’t see His face or His being, but I was aware of His power and glory. I knew I was in Heaven. I found myself looking down at my body. It was lying across the steering wheel. My Mom was half lying between the back and front seat. Maureen was battling to open the car door. I seemed to be in another dimension, yet I could see everything happening at the scene of the accident. I knew I had died.”

He was very concerned about his wife and family. “What will happen to them and how will they cope?” he asked the Lord. He understood everything was under control. The Lord’s Hand was on them, and He would take care of them.

Suddenly he found himself back in his body. It was late in the afternoon, but the magnificent glory of God was so bright, he called out to Maureen, “Please cover my eyes. I can’t take this direct sun.”

They were all badly injured. Wynand had five broken discs in his neck and was declared a paraplegic. For three months he lay in the hospital bed, unable to move. People all over the country were praying for him.

“So many times, we pray for five or ten minutes or a day or two, and then give up,” he told me. “When we think we’ve prayed enough, we get up from our knees and go. Never give up praying. I am a living testimony to the God who answers prayer.”

Wynand drifted in and out of consciousness during those three months. The hospital staff discovered he would only respond when they called him by name. They wrote on his daily chart: “Please call the Dominee (Pastor), Wynand.”

During that time, he had the most amazing experiences. “It seemed as if I moved between two dimensions with my spirit while I lay in a critical condition in my hospital bed. While I was in the dimension of the spirit, I spoke to many people who had passed on into the presence of the Lord. I spoke to my late son, Bobby, who passed away 28 years previously. I spoke to my Dad and to many believers I had buried during my ministry. I also spoke to Pastor George Dillman’s late daughter, Jody, and his late grandson, Jonathan.”

How did they converse, and what did they discuss? “I can’t remember what we talked about,” He told me. “The words uttered in Heaven are not the words we speak. It’s all on a higher plane and of much higher value.”

The experience reminded him of the Apostle Paul’s testimony recorded in the Bible. Paul couldn’t express what he heard and saw either. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:4 that he “was caught up into Paradise and heard unspeakable words.”

A 13-year-old girl came to visit Wynand as he lay critically ill in the Pretoria hospital. She gave him a homemade card. In it she wrote, “I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord has chastened me sore but He hath not given me over to death” Psalm 118:17.

“Those words gripped my spirit, and I held on to them for months,” he remembered. “I knew the Lord was going to allow me to minister for Him again and be a testimony of His mighty power in these last days.”

Saturday, 21 March 1992, was a red-letter day for Wynand. “The Lord promised me I would walk out of that hospital on May 21. I wrote that date on that little card.”

It looked impossible. Wynand was unable to do anything for himself, and the doctors declared him to be a paraplegic. Wynand refused to accept that report. He believed the Lord would keep His word.

Early in May 1992, Marie Nortje, a very close friend of Wynand and Maureen, was rushed to hospital in a critical condition. I was serving as Pastoral Assistant at *Living Waters Church*, and Pastor Dillman sent me to the hospital. Sampie, her husband, and the family were standing around the

bed. As I arrived, Marie passed away. I spent some time with the family comforting and praying for them. Then I walked across the hallway to call Pastor Dillman on the public telephone. Those were the days before mobile phones.

“Aunt Marie has just died,” I told him. His wife telephoned Maureen right away to tell her the news.

Maureen went to the hospital to tell Wynand. He surprised her by sharing Marie’s passing first.

“I was talking to my son Bobby when I saw Marie enter Heaven. I ran straight up to her,” he told Maureen, “but she walked right past me. I asked Bobby why she did that. ‘Dad,’ he said, ‘she’s just come. She’s going to meet the Lord first.’”

Maureen was weeping as he spoke. “Pastor Dillman’s wife just called me with the news of Marie’s passing.”

Wynand saw Marie enter heaven at the exact moment she died in Entabeni Hospital in Durban, over 300 miles away.

A few days later, on Tuesday, May 19, at four o’clock in the morning, Wynand heard the Lord speak to him. Just four words: “Get up and walk.”

He was lying in a cot. It had a lever at the bottom of the bed which required to be pulled to enable the sides to come down.

“I couldn’t do that from inside the cot,” he laughed. “So I decided I would just have to climb over.”

As he pulled himself over the side of the cot and dropped to his feet, he was excited to realize he could stand on his own. And he could walk. It was a miracle.

“For twenty-eight years, I have suffered from diabetes. I’ve had nearly 46,000 injections and developed terrible ulcers under my feet. The moment I stood on my feet, God healed me completely. Tests confirmed there is no trace of diabetes in my body.”

Wynand took his catheter in one hand and set off to find the night nurse. “She met me at the door and got the fright of her life. I said, ‘Sister, I’m walking!’ She said, ‘I know, but it’s all in the mind. Please, Dominee, don’t move.’”

Despite his protests, the staff carried him back to his cot. He waited until they were out of sight and climbed out of the cot again. “It had been three months since I had a proper bath, and I set off for the bathroom. It was wonderful. I filled that bath right up to the top with lovely warm water and relaxed.”

Around 5.30 that morning, he heard a commotion in the passage. Someone was screaming: “Ag Hemel, waar is die Dominee?” (Oh heavens, where is the Pastor?). The bathroom door opened and two nurses rushed in. They carried the protesting Wynand back to bed.

“The more I insisted I could walk, the more flustered they got.”

“It’s all in the mind,” they told him firmly. “You might have been able to walk before the accident, but you can’t walk anymore. You are paraplegic.”

“They looked at each other and said, “Shame!” That is a favorite saying in South Africa. It could mean anything from compassion to surprise. It can be an expression of sympathy or pity, pleasure or sentiment, especially if something is small or cute.

The doctor arrived at 7.30 a.m. and began a battery of tests. “He took down the sides of the cot and used a hammer, pins, and feathers. There was no reaction whatsoever.”

“It is impossible,” the doctor declared, “I see it, but I don’t believe it. You cannot walk!”

“Impossible with you, Doctor,” Wynand replied. “Anything is possible with Jesus!”

Wynand was instructed to stay in the cot and not try to walk again.

“The moment he moved away, I was over the side and out of the cot,” Wynand laughed. “When he turned around, I was standing right behind him.”

Another doctor joined them. “They made me walk to the wall, lean against it, lift my legs one at a time, and walk with my eyes closed. They were shocked.”

Wynand informed them he intended walking out of the hospital in two days on May 21. That was the date the Lord gave him. They agreed if he could walk the approximately seventy meters to the front office of the hospital, they would discharge him. The doctors promised to return later that day.

One of Wynand’s colleagues visited him that afternoon. “When I told him about the miracle, he responded cautiously. ‘Yes, my brother, I know you are trusting God and the Lord will honor your faith, but please take it easy.’”

It was obvious he had serious doubts about Wynand’s claim to be able to walk. “He prayed for me. As he turned at the door to give me a last goodbye wave, there I was, standing right behind him. I accompanied him right past the front office.”

The doctors returned that evening. Another doctor accompanied them. He was on crutches.

“Let’s do it,” they said. “You must walk to the office.”

He climbed out of the cot and began walking. The doctors followed closely, ready to catch him if he fell. “I walked up to the office and turned around. Then I began to run. I ran full force down the passage. They tried desperately to catch me. We crashed into each other, and the doctor’s crutches went flying. He ended up hanging on to me!”

Two days later, on Thursday, May 21, Wynand walked out of that hospital.

The eight doctors responsible for his treatment were amazed. One of them stood with his arms raised, declaring, “This is God’s doing.”

Wynand visited *Living Waters Church* to share his testimony with us a few months later. We had some interesting conversations about his experiences

during that time. One of the things that struck me was his comment about the angels. There were fewer than he expected, and the ones he saw did not have wings. When he asked the Lord where they were, he heard the angels were busy ministering to the Lord's people on earth.

We both love end-time prophecy. Wynand shared with me his question to the Lord about His Return. "How long before the Rapture of the Church takes place?" he asked. The Lord responded, "With God, only a moment away."

"We don't know how long a moment is with the Lord," he said. "It can be days, or weeks, even years – but it is not long now. We must tell everyone to prepare for that Glorious Place, more wonderful than the sun shining in its fullest strength."

Wynand has since gone on to his eternal reward. This time he will return with the saints when the Lord meets us in the clouds.

This amazing miracle happened right here in Africa, something I saw *With My Own Eyes*.

Never stop trusting God. With Him, nothing is impossible.

8

Elaine



A Lady of Faith

IN THE MINISTRY, one often has the experience of sitting at the deathbed of people as they slip into eternity. I have done that many times. What a privilege it is to see believers go Home to their Lord. How special it is when the presence of the Lord actively accompanies that moment.

Elaine Mather stands out in my mind. This elderly saint faithfully served the Lord for many years. She was a woman noted for her active faith. Elaine would drop everything and pray with those in need at the drop of a hat. She prayed for people on sidewalks, in restaurants, and even on escalators. She walked very carefully with the Lord, and it showed. Elaine was a faithful and unashamed worshipper. Young people and children loved her.

This mother of four adult children insisted on living in a retirement home. “I am the last person many of these elderly people see before they pass on,” she told me. “I always sit with them and make sure they have an opportunity to give their lives to Christ before they die. I am a missionary, and this is my calling.” She led countless people to the Lord as they stood on the edge of eternity.

Visiting her was a pleasure. Elaine always had something fresh to share about the Lord. Many visitors came away with tears in their eyes and a song in their hearts. They went to encourage her, but she always encouraged them. She was an exceptional lady.

One man shared his testimony with me. He was longing to receive the Baptism of the Spirit. He visited her and Elaine prayed for him. Immediately, he was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. “It was as natural as speaking my home language,” he said. He was not the only one to experience the touch of God when Elaine prayed with her visitors.

She had faith, especially for finance. Elaine was not rich financially, by any means. She brought her family up by faith. One day she handed me a little envelope. It had R50 (about \$5) in it. On the outside, she had written a scripture. “*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*” *Philippians 4:19*.

“Lift this before the Lord,” she said. “Trust Him to meet your needs daily.”

I treasured that envelope and shared it with several people going through financial difficulties. Each time it was returned to me, it came back with a testimony of provision. No one ever removed the R50 note. Some kept the envelope for months. There was no magic about that envelope. It was just a point of contact to help believers release their faith as they waited on the Lord for His assistance.

“I am a sixteen-year-old in a seventy-year-old body,” she often told me.

Sadly, that seventy-year-old body began to weaken rapidly. Elaine entered McCord Zulu Hospital in Durban, South Africa, at the age of seventy-seven. I knew her Transfer to Glory was imminent and visited every day.

One day I walked into her ward, and she looked at me intently.

“It’s so hard to die!” she said.

I wasn’t sure what she meant by those words. Was she afraid to die? Was something troubling her? I knew her faith was strong, and she longed to see the Lord Jesus. Why was it hard to die?

“Oh, I’m not afraid to die,” she said when I questioned her. “I know my time has come. I’m ready and longing to go.”

I was still confused.

“I’ve been lying here the whole week trying to die,” she explained. “But I am still here. It’s so hard to die!”

We both giggled hysterically. Elaine had a great sense of humor.

Saturday, 5 February 2000, her time came. Her family practically lived at the hospital. She was frail and could hardly speak or move at this point. They all loved the Lord, and as we stood around the bed, we prayed quietly. She was in the Intensive Care Unit of the hospital, and there were other patients in the ward. We hardly noticed them as we watched her face begin to shine with anticipation.

Suddenly this frail elderly lady lifted both arms and began to sing the praises of the Lord. We sang with her, and the presence of the Lord filled the room. I will never forget that moment as she went into eternity with praise on her lips and joy in her heart.

Job asked a question one day. “If a man dies, shall he live again?” Job 14:14. It is a question people have pondered throughout the ages.

Death is not an option. It is the most certain thing in the world. It is also the least prepared for or discussed. Some people are so afraid to face death, they have gone to great lengths to preserve their bodies in the hope of a miracle cure for their ailments someday.

For the Christian, death is one of the most exciting adventures of our lives. Death, as we understand it, is the Gateway to Eternity and the direct Presence of the Lord.

Before I met Jesus, I imagined death to be a state of drifting forever in the Unknown, a kind of spirit being in a cheerless environment. When I received Jesus as my Personal Savior and Lord, everything changed. That day the Lord gave me a vision of Eternity.

I saw a tombstone. As I looked, it became an arched doorway – a gateway into Heaven. With my spirit, I saw a golden light shining through the arch and knew it was the light of Heaven. Ever since that day so many years ago, I have longed to go to that beautiful place. I can still see that golden light as I write this.

Elaine went to Heaven, rejoicing. There is no fear for the Christian concerning death. Heaven is a beautiful place, filled with His Glory and Grace. It is the fulfillment of all we have ever dreamed of or longed for because we shall be with the Lord forever.

Death is merely the separation of our spirit-being from our physical being. For the Christian, it is “falling asleep” to this life and waking refreshed in the next. Jesus Christ has already paid the debt of our sin, and there is no condemnation awaiting us. It is a Graduation – a Promotion – a Glorious Event to be anticipated with joy.

For the believer, “To live is Christ – to die is gain.” No wonder Paul exclaimed triumphantly: “O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” 1 Corinthians 15:55.

Christ has dealt with the sting of death, and we enjoy His victory. “There is therefore now NO CONDEMNATION to those who are in Christ Jesus” Romans 8:1.

The Bible likens death to vacating our tent for a permanent home.

“For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands. We

grow weary in our present bodies, and we long to put on our heavenly bodies like new clothing. For we will put on heavenly bodies; we will not be spirits without bodies. While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it's not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. God himself has prepared us for this, and as a guarantee he has given us his Holy Spirit.

So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:1-8 NLT

We have a glorious future ahead! As I looked at her lifeless body – the tent in which she had lived – I knew Elaine was already experiencing the glories of Heaven.

“But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him” 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” 1 John 3:2.

As we stood around the bed praying, with tears running down our cheeks, we heard a voice. A patient called out to us. He, too, was in tears. “I want to know Jesus too,” he said softly. One of Elaine’s sons led him to the Lord. His mother’s body lay in the adjoining bed. Elaine was already in the presence of the Lord.

I can’t even begin to explain the atmosphere in that hospital room. It was electric yet peaceful. It seemed the glory of the Lord filled the place. We were all aware of it. That was a very precious moment for me. I saw it *With My Own Eyes*.

Elaine had been a soul-winner all her Christian life. It was a fitting conclusion to a life well lived for the Lord.

Soon we will be reunited.

“And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died... Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with Him forever. So comfort and encourage each other with these words” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 NLT.

9

Alvean



Miracles of Healing

ALVEAN JACOBS and I have been friends for many years. I was delighted to receive a telephone call from her on May 2019.

“I’m flying to Durban for a funeral,” she said. “Let’s have lunch.”

“That’s great,” I responded. Alvean had been in a wheelchair for 28 years. It was a large one, and I knew it would never fit in my little motor car. Every time Alvean visited Durban, a friend drove her car. It had a mechanical device that lifted the wheelchair onto the roof of the vehicle. I knew in recent years she often used crutches.

“What about your wheelchair?” I asked her.

“No worries, the Lord has healed me. I’m walking as normally as everyone else.”

“What? Are you using crutches or a stick?” I said hesitantly.

“No,” she laughed. “Wait until you hear my story!”

The first time I met Alvean, she oversaw the emergency room at Addington Hospital in Durban, South Africa. I had been requested to visit a young lady involved in a motorbike accident. The emergency room was busy, and Alvean was reluctant to let me in. I was just as determined to carry out my mission. I won. She was probably too busy and weary to argue with me!

Later Alvean came to worship at *Living Waters Church*. I served on the Ministry Team as the Pastoral Assistant, and we became good friends.

I was sad to hear Alvean suffered from an autoimmune disease called *Systemic lupus erythematosus* (SLE). Normally our immune system protects our body. This condition causes the immune system to attack healthy tissue. It can affect the skin, joints, kidneys, brain, and other organs. It is a debilitating condition, and for people who have a severe flare-up, lupus may become life-threatening.

Eventually, Alvean was unable to work. She was boarded and received a disability pension. By August 1977, her condition worsened. She was unable to walk or move much. Alvean spent three months in a special ward on the 14th floor of Addington Hospital. All her organs were shutting down. It looked as if there was no hope. She also believed she had dealt with all known issues in her life. She was ready to meet the Lord

A Church leader came to pray for her. When she was unable to respond physically, he became frustrated. “I have faith,” he told her. “You are not healed because you have no faith. There must be sin in your life. Repent, and you will be healed.”

There were other people visiting Alvean in the hospital room at the time. In desperation, she asked them to pray. It felt like all God had been telling her

was falling to pieces. After prayer, Alvean said God had given her a Scripture – James 3:15. Someone read it aloud: “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up.”

Four of her close friends were praying for her healing. She thought about the man let down through the roof of the house where Jesus was ministering. Faith began to arise in her spirit that Jesus is still the Healer.

She had someone call me. When I heard about the words spoken into her life, I was shocked. Pastor George Dillman agreed to come to the hospital with me. He sat down at her bedside and began talking gently with her. Healing words flowed like a balm over her troubled spirit. Then he began to pray as we laid hands on her.

We left quietly. Alvean had not moved. She lay in the hospital bed next to a window overlooking the sea.

“Close the door,” Pastor Dillman said as we left the room.

“We can’t do that,” I replied. “The door has to stay open so the staff can keep an eye on her.”

“The Lord has healed her,” he responded. “Please, close the door!”

We were hardly back in the Church office when the telephone rang. It was Alvean.

“I put the pillow over my head when you left,” she said. “As I prayed, I knew God had healed me.”

Alvean got out of bed and walked to the nursing station. They were taken entirely by surprise. She signed herself out of the hospital and went home. It was Friday, and she agreed to return on Monday morning for tests. The doctors were stunned. There was no sign of lupus in her body.

Her story doesn’t end there. Alvean went on to do mission work at the Donald Fraser Hospital in Venda, a rural area in northern South Africa, now

part of the Limpopo Province. Five years later, she moved to Pretoria to work at the Steve Biko Academic Hospital and later at 1 Military Hospital. She completed her degree in Theology.

While moving, Alvean helped haul a washing machine up the stairs to her new flat. Disaster struck. The heavy appliance fell on her and severely injured her back. She had several back operations during the following two years. That resulted in damaged nerves, a dropped foot, and bladder problems. It was a very trying time.

After the miracle healing from lupus, I found it difficult to understand why this happened to her. Little did I know, the Lord had even a greater miracle in store.

Around the time of her third back operation, the Lord promised Alvean He would heal her, but in his own time. He also told her the problem would worsen in the meantime.

It did worsen. Two years later, Alvean underwent an emergency neck operation. The doctors discovered she also had a disease process of the cervical spine. Could things get any worse?

They did. After the operation, there was permanent cord damage (myelopathy) at the level of Cervical vertebra 4/5 to Thoracic 1 (The neck spine).

Alvean was in a wheelchair from 1989. All four limbs had weakened. Decreased sensation and severe spasticity caused extreme muscle spasms in her body. It meant a life of relying on a wheelchair for mobility and living with constant intense nerve and spinal cord pain.

In 2000, Alvean had another neck operation to try to stabilize the neck. The spasticity increased, and she suffered uncontrolled muscle spasms and increased pain. It became difficult to manage daily living and routine tasks.

Later, it was decided to put a pump into her abdominal cavity with a tube going from it into the spine. The pump allowed the medication to be distributed directly into the spine at intervals. It helped to control the spasticity and gain management of life in her sizeable battery-operated

wheelchair. She used adaptable utensils to eat and an adapted pen to write in very shaky handwriting. Pain management helped to control some of the constant pain.

During the period 1999 to 2000, God spoke to Alvean through a prophecy given at her Church. “I heard Him say, ‘Be content with your disability.’ I told the Lord I could accept being in a wheelchair, but I did not know how to be content with it. I then began asking God to please help me be content. It was the most challenging time in my life. I did not understand it from the viewpoint of Him healing me.”

Leaving home was difficult. The big battery-operated wheelchair was hard to transport, and her muscle spasms increased with any activity. Alvean moved to a Church closer to home. It was only ten minutes away, but it became increasingly difficult to get there. Alvean began to feel “shut-in” and intensely lonely.

“It was a time everything in me cried out to God, not only for the healing of my body but more for the healing of my mind and emotions,” she told me. “I felt devastated and wounded. I praised God for friends who stuck with me and were there for me. I praised God for friends and people who I knew were praying for me. It was those prayers that bore me up when I did not have anything more to say. I could only cry tears.”

At the same time, Alvean sensed the Power of God was keeping her. “He held me by my right hand with His righteous hand (Isaiah 41:10-13). The Lord and the angels of God ministered inner healing during this difficult time (Psalm 91:9-13).

Life became more complicated when five of her support group of friends left Pretoria within a year. One went overseas. Another moved to the Cape. Three went to be with the Lord.

“God took me through a period of almost two-and-a-half years, which He said was wintertime. I felt dried out, worn out, and weak. During this winter period, alone with God, He spoke to me very specifically about certain things. He spoke about ‘His calling,’ ‘pruning,’ ‘healing,’ and ‘spiritual warfare.’ The Holy Spirit emphasized Scriptures, which He confirmed with other Scriptures.”

At the beginning of 2015, The Lord again assured Alvean He was going to heal her. God drew her attention to Exodus 23:29-30: “But I will not drive them out in a single year... Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.”

“He reaffirmed certain things He told me nearly 29 years ago. God impressed on me that my healing would take place over time.”

God’s timing was a vital emphasis (Psalm 31:15). He reminded Alvean He would do it His way and in His time. The Holy Spirit often whispered to her, “Step by step.”

Later that year, the pump began to malfunction and led to an adverse effect on the autonomic nervous system (the involuntary muscles). The symptoms were not easy to handle. It was a period of spiritual warfare, deep pruning, and healing of the soul (emotions and mind). “God used special friends and their ministries to support me. I experienced the angel hosts of God fighting for me (Psalm 91).”

Medically it was a time of uncertainty. Alvean’s physician decided to wean her off the toxic drug. Suddenly stopping it could risk cardiac arrest. Weaning was anticipated to take at least two years.

Towards the end of 2016, the spasticity decreased and then stopped. “I could raise my arms in the air in praise and worship. I was able to hold them up for longer periods before resting my elbows on the wheelchair. I could eat with ordinary eating utensils. I was still holding onto rails or support bars because my legs were unable to hold me up.”

Alvean felt very encouraged and was able to get to Church more often. During this time, God spoke to her three times during worship about healing. The third time was in early 2017.

“I was in tears as I made the journey home in my wheelchair. I asked the Lord to give me a verse that used the word ‘walk’ as confirmation. It must come from somewhere different,” Alvean told the Lord. It must not be one she found herself.

Three days later, Alvean received a message from her cousin in Durban. At the end of the SMS, her cousin had typed Luke 5:22-26. The reference was about the paralytic man brought to Jesus.

“I read the words of Jesus where He said, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’ I knew God was confirming His promise to me. My cousin knew nothing about what God had said to me at Church or what I had asked Him on my way home.”

2017 saw the culmination of this process of healing. Alvean knew she would walk again. “How can this take place,” she asked the Lord. “When will I walk in the Church?”

What happened next took her breath away. Alvean was preparing breakfast in the kitchen when God spoke to her.

“Start walking,” the Holy Spirit said.

“So, I did. I got out of the chair and started to walk in the kitchen. Then I walked to the lounge, the bedroom, the bathroom, and around the whole flat. Later I walked outside to the gate.”

A few days later, friends from the UK visited Alvean. They had not seen her for two years. They were very puzzled because she was using the wheelchair and also walking around freely.

“You have been hiding things from us,” they said. “You get out of the wheelchair as naturally as anyone else. It doesn’t look like you have been in a wheelchair for 28 years. What’s going on?”

“God said I must walk, and so I do,” she responded.

Alvean was feeling very frustrated at being able to walk only short distances. It hadn’t occurred to her that she was limiting herself.

A visit to her neurosurgeon confirmed her healing. “He said he could not explain what was happening when I got out of the wheelchair and started walking. He examined me and said my muscles showed no evidence of myelopathy (cord damage). There was no medical explanation. He referred me for Neuro-physiotherapy.”

On Thursday, 16 November 2017, Alvean arrived for her appointment. The Neuro-Physio examined her thoroughly. “Can you climb steps?” she asked.

“I don’t know,” Alvean said. “I haven’t climbed any for nearly thirty years.”

There was a flight of stairs nearby. Alvean walked up and down them with ease. “The Neuro-Physio’s assessment showed normal muscle function. She said I needed to walk more and exercise and soon I would be able to walk distances, and even go shopping in supermarkets. The Neuro-Physio suggested I only use the wheelchair for long distances.”

Alvean pondered on the medical assessment as she did her daily exercises. “When, Lord, are you going to allow me to walk on my own without using the wheelchair?”

Alvean was still convinced something had to happen before she could do that. She wasn’t sure what. Perhaps someone needed to pray for her first.

“What did I tell you to do?” the Lord asked her.

“You said I must walk.”

“So?” she heard God say.

That was when she realized the Lord was serious about her walking permanently.

Soon Alvean was walking distances of two kilometers. On 24 December 2017, she walked into Church to the astonishment of the parishioners. Her wheelchair days were over. Her healing was complete.

Tests by an Occupational Therapist to assess the strength of her legs and arms were very positive. They showed her strength and response action to driving an automatic vehicle was above average to that of a disabled person. It was on par with a healthy person aged 40 to 50 years. The only problem was she couldn’t drive her car legally. There is no legislation for the upgrading of a disability license, and Alvean was forced to redo the test. In July 2018, she passed with flying colors. She was now licensed to drive an automatic vehicle. That is a beautiful testimony by itself.

Since Alvean's healing, the drug being pumped into her had become toxic to her body. In March 2019, it was decided not to refill the pump. Seven months later, it was clear the drug was no longer needed. Removal of the pump was scheduled for January 2020.

We had a wonderful lunch as she shared her journey. "Readjusting after so many years in a wheelchair is no small task, but with the Holy Spirit as my patient teacher, it is deeply humbling and full of rejoicing. Most times, the wonder and awe of all God is doing is so huge it overwhelms me. I am still trying to take it all in. I want to give glory, honor, and praise to an Awesome God. He, in His wisdom, is right on time and faithful to His promises. It has been a journey that has taught me so much. It will take a book to describe all the journey and what God has done."

After lunch, we walked to the motor car. I watched her closely. There was no sign of any disability, not even a small limp. We took the escalator to the ground floor. Alvean was standing in front of me. As we neared the bottom, she tripped and pulled me down as she fell. I was desperately trying to throw myself over the last step from a sitting position to avoid being caught by the motor. Suddenly she yanked me up, and we both jumped off the last step.

Had she been on an escalator since her healing, I wondered? Was she hurt? Would she be able to walk? Would this set her back?

My fears were groundless. Alvean strode ahead of me to the car as if nothing had happened. I was the one limping now! We laughed with sheer joy. When the Lord does something, He does it well.

Alvean shines for Jesus. "The greatest thing I have learned," she testifies, "the greatest miracle is my Salvation. Wrapped up in it is healing (Isaiah 53). Jesus – my Savior, Deliverer, and Healer. He is the healer of our spirit, soul (our emotions and mind), and body through the beautiful gift of the Holy Spirit. Our King is Sovereign. We are subjects of His kingdom and must walk in obedience to His Word."

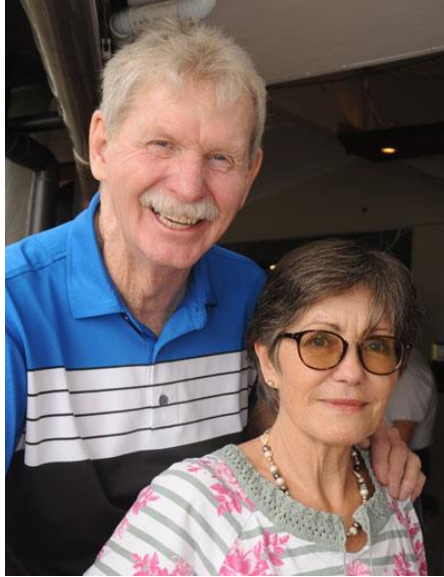
Watching the Lord perform such amazing and wonderful miracles in Alvean's life has increased my faith to believe for the impossible. What a privilege to see it *With My Own Eyes*.

Holy, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty...” (Revelation 4:9).

“Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain...” Revelation 5:12).

10

The Pygmy Miracle



*Founders of Messiah Ministries International London
Reaching the Unreached for Jesus*

FERGUS AND JOANNE BUCHAN are special friends of mine. They are utterly committed to the Lord and ready to obey His leading, whatever the cost. Their vision is to share the Gospel worldwide.

Founders of Messiah Ministries International London, they work extensively in Central Africa and have done so for more than ten years. Fergus loves traveling and ministering in rural areas where the Gospel of Jesus Christ is unknown.

Their ministry is based in London, where they founded a church for unchurched South African, Zimbabwean, and Kenyan Christians living in

London. Joanne is a prayer warrior and intercessor and has his back while Fergus is away on missions. I feel very privileged to be their friend and partner in the ministry.

They have four lovely children. Kirsty and Sheena live in London, Fraser and his wife Marta live in the United States, and Alistair is already in Heaven.

Fergus' ministry as an evangelist/missionary has enabled them to plant many churches with the help of African Pastors and Bishops in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, and Uganda. He has also ministered extensively in South Africa, England, Scotland, and Australia. Gifted with a Healing Ministry, Fergus prays for the sick wherever he ministers.

[*Faith Like Potatoes*](#) tells the story of their little four-year-old son's tragic accident when he fell from a tractor Fergus' brother, Angus Buchan, was driving. That led to his and Joanne's conversion and ministry. Fergus, a well-known golf professional, left the world of golfing to win souls for Christ. [*Play it As it Lies*](#), available on Amazon, shares his testimony.

"I strongly believe the Lord Jesus came to do two things primarily," says Fergus. "To save the lost and heal the sick – and this is our heart as Messiah Ministries International London."

When the call came to take the gospel to a small unreached Pygmy tribe in the vast Congo jungle, Fergus was ready.

Pastor Charles, a tracker in the Congo, heard about the Pygmies. He contacted Bishop David Maindi in Uganda. "Do you know any white man who would be prepared to go into the forest and take the Gospel to this tribe?" he inquired.

Fergus was delighted when Bishop David Maindi contacted him. He grew up in Northern Zambia on the Congo border and was very interested in the Pygmies. He often wondered just how small they were.

He knew this mission was not going to be easy. The Congo Basin spans six countries – Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. It is a

vast area and the second-largest tropical rainforest on earth comprising 2.5 million square hectares.



The Congo Basin

How would they find a small tribe in such a vast jungle? The Holy Spirit knows exactly how! The tracker went back into the rainforest. Suddenly three completely naked little people approached him. “We are waiting,” they said in their dialect. He understood they were expecting someone to share Good News with them! He clothed them and sent a photograph to Fergus.



“We are coming,” Fergus said. That’s how this miracle story began.

Fergus contracted a severe strain of Malaria after ministering in a Sudanese refugee camp in Sudan, followed by a ministry trip with Bishop David in Northern Uganda. The doctors in London feared for his life. He had Malaria many times, but this turned out to be one of the most dangerous strains. The Lord healed him, and the doctors were amazed. Two people had just died of Malaria in their hospital.

Malaria is rife in the Congo. So is Ebola and other dreadful tropical diseases. Reports of rebels in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) hijacking vehicles and robbing people of their luggage and money filtered through. Bishop David wrote to tell him about a Pastor traveling near the border who contracted Ebola and died on the way to the hospital. Nothing discouraged Fergus and Joanne. They had heard the voice of Jesus and were determined to carry out this mission.

“I have been fasting and praying,” he wrote to me. “and seeking the Lord for direction, discernment, and a greater filling of the Holy Spirit.”

Fergus, Bishop David, and Pastor Charles (the tracker) began planning. They set a date for him to leave the UK on 30 September 2019.

As Christian friends heard about the mission to the Pygmies, they prayed the Lord would protect him from all the unseen dangers, sicknesses of any kind, and give him the strength to spread the gospel in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Contributions and donations towards costs started coming in. A radio interview with Fergus in London helped spread the news.

Trouble was not far away. Bishop David became seriously ill. Visa problems forced them to delay Fergus' departure date until October 8. He was feeling frustrated, and the Lord encouraged him. He received a message from a believer. She knew nothing of the issues facing him.

"In my dream, we were at a meeting together," she wrote. "I was going to pray for you and Auntie Jo as you were about to go on a trip. Before I began to pray, I got a word I had to pray to break the white walls around you that were stopping you from reaching some people. I don't know what this means, but I heard God saying, 'I will not forsake them.'"

She was unaware of the visa problems. When he told her, she immediately responded, "We will pray the visa comes through very quickly without complications." The Lord answered prayer, and the problem was resolved in time for Fergus' flight.

Fergus knew the journey would not be an easy one. "It was the most exciting, testing, and fulfilling ministry of my life," he said on his return. "The Congo Basin / Ituri forest was everything (and better) than I have ever dreamed. I saw God's unspoiled creation firsthand, and I was in absolute awe."

His dream and vision of reaching the Pygmy peoples started many years ago, and finally, the time came to reach these largely forgotten people.

Fergus was very excited when he left London on October 8 as planned. He met his friend and co-worker, Bishop David Maindi, in Uganda. After spending the night in Kampala, they planned to set out for the Congolese border at 4 am the next day.

Pastor David (the tracker), a local lady Pastor, and David, their driver, made up the rest of the team.

Another setback faced them. “The brakes on our vehicle are defective,” David, their driver, informed them. “We must wait for another one to be delivered.”

To make matters worse, the Visa card with most of their traveling dollars was nowhere to be found.

The team finally left Kampala at midday and headed for the Uganda/DRC border. To their dismay, the border was already closed when they finally reached it.

“We spent the night in a not-so-nice guesthouse, full of mosquitoes and rats,” Fergus said.

Early the next morning, they passed through the border post on their way to the Congo basin. An eleven-hour journey in a Land Rover followed. “The roads were terrible,” Fergus said, “the most atrocious I have ever seen.”

It was a dangerous mission in a war zone. At times they drove at high speed to avoid being shot by snipers.

A 15 km hike (about 9 miles) through the jungle was next.



How would the team find this tribe? “Do not worry,” the Lord told Fergus. “Walk into the jungle. They will find you.”

“We lived on bananas and guavas,” he said. “I longed for a nice cold Coca-Cola. The jungle was hot and humid. The biggest obstacle of trying to reach these people was getting there. It is the remotest place I have ever been to in my life.”

They found three tribes in different areas deep in the forest. “The people don’t mix,” he said. “They just keep traveling in small groups.”

The team was excited to find the first Pygmy tribe. “My heart was pounding with excitement and expectation when I first laid eyes on these amazing little people,” Fergus said. “My heart just melted.”

The Pygmies had never seen a White man. Their only limited contact had been with very few Black men in the rainforest. “They were very fearful of me. At first, they thought I was going to kill them,” he said. “I towered above them, and they kept their distance.”





As they shared the Word of God, using the Heart chart donated by Pastor Ferdie Warwick, many received the Lord Jesus Christ as Personal Savior.



“Using an interpreter, I shared a simple message about my King who sent His Son to die for our sins. I told them how Jesus rose again and lives today. They were spellbound.”

The response was instant. “I went down on my knees, and the group followed my leading. I lifted my right hand and asked them to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. Through my interpreter, they said the sinner’s prayer, and we closed with a resounding Amen!!”



They found the second group in the Komanda region. Their response was immediate, and many received the Lord as Savior.

“I was asked to pray for a lady who had suffered a serious head wound from a falling tree,” Fergus said. “She had a massive fracture of the skull. The wound was packed with banana leaves. She sensed I meant no harm and allowed me to lay my hands on her. We are trusting the Lord for full healing and, hopefully, one day hearing the good news.”

“We left gifts of salt and soap, which were well received and then made the long return trip to our base. I could hardly sleep that night as I praised the Lord for His goodness,” Fergus said.

To find the third group, they crossed the Ituri River. “Legend has it that Sir Henry Morton Stanley, the Welsh journalist, and explorer, in his search for David Livingstone, was lost here and climbed a small hill to find his way out,” Fergus said. “We drove another 100 km into the forest.”

The tracker was worried. The day before, rebels ambushed and killed eighteen soldiers and ten civilians. “Sir,” he said, “pray we don’t break down here!”

After parking their cruiser, they had a 12 km walk to try and find the third group of Pygmies. “It was the thickest bush I have ever walked in,” Fergus said. “Trees towered over three stories high with a great canopy over us, closing out much of the light.



They, too, responded joyfully to the Gospel.



Altogether, more than 110 Pygmies gave their lives to the Lord, kneeling in the hot sand. “Their names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life,” he rejoiced.

There are no churches or Pastors in the area. Who would follow them up and teach them?

“These little people often walk stark naked for weeks,” Fergus messaged. They wear clothes when they set up camp. The tracker told me they moved around a lot. He said if I go back to their camp in two days, they would be gone, never to be seen again.”

Fergus was encouraged by the Lord. The Holy Spirit, who initiated this outreach, will complete His work of grace in these beautiful people. As Paul said in Philippians 1:6, “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns” Philippians 1:6 NLT.

It was sad to say goodbye, but the team left for the arduous journey home, rejoicing. The Holy Spirit had accomplished a great work of grace in the lives of this unreached Pygmy people group.



Fergus’ team was fearful of the rebels finding out about the presence of a White man in the region. They reminded him there was a real possibility of

being attacked and killed by rebels. Their fears were not unfounded. One hundred government soldiers were killed in an attack the day the team left the Ituri Forest.

“I felt your prayers,” Fergus said. “We got out safely. An eleven-hour drive on the worst roads I’ve ever seen, and a fifteen km walk both ways was worth it. What a privilege it is to hasten the Lord’s Return in a small way! Thank you, Lord, for using us.”

I’m so excited to have witnessed God at work through His servant *With My Own Eyes*.

For further information about Fergus & Joanne Buchan, visit their website at [Messiah Ministries International London](#).

Email Fergus at <mailto:buchan@gmail.com>

About The Author



Val Waldeck, a well-known South African author, international Bible teacher and conference speaker, has written several books and writes regular columns for JOY, the South African National Christian magazine. She was awarded the prestigious South African Writer's Circle "Writer of the Year" award in 2001 and 2002.

Val has been in full-time Christian ministry since December 1973. She graduated from the Bible Institute of South Africa in 1972, and holds a Diploma in Theology at the University of London and a Doctorate in Theology with Teamwork International.

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