

Dwelling in the Secret Place

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust. Ps 91:1,2

By Sonica Veith

Dedication

Dwelling in the Secret Place is dedicated to our family; my husband and our three children, who, through thick and thin, through blessings and trials, for richer and for poorer, stayed together and fought the battles together – brave ‘Veithers’ for the truth!

Preface

This book is the story of how God found us, steeped in occultism and atheism, and false religion, and how He set our feet on a new path. In all our trials along the way He trained us for a higher calling, through the many afflictions He brought joy and patience, and healing from the scars of our past life. Through the windows of His endless love we saw mankind in a different light and we longed to bring to every soul the peace and salvation that we had found.

The stories in this book were written intermittently over a period of twenty years, and although I was not able to pen some of the events in the right sequence, the events themselves are portrayed as accurately as possible, as I recalled them from the many years that had since passed. Some names of people have been changed to protect their privacy, but many even more traumatic experiences that impacted our family directly were not included for the sake of prudence.

My hope is that my story will be an encouragement to those who have just embarked on a similar journey, those who are struggling with temptations, fighting against the powers of darkness, or who have lost hope along the way. May you also find in Him your secret place to dwell in.

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history. – {CET 204.1}

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Little Fish out of the Water

Chapter 1

Eze 34:11 *Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.*

The chilling evening breeze folds its icy fingers around my neck as we come to a halt in the middle of the lagoon. In the distance the endless waves crash onto the shimmering beach and white foam drifts gracefully into the ink blue night sky. Beyond the sand dunes the rising moon scatters its blood red beams across the landscape. The smell of seaweed and salt in the blanket of mist on the water momentarily brings back a flood of memories from my stormy past.

“Shine the spot light to the right side of the boat,” our guide says. Seconds after the light had penetrated the black waters, suddenly shiny silver fish start flipping out of the water all around the boat like cascading water fountains dancing in the moonlight. Within minutes the boat is filled with writhing bodies, mouths gaping for oxygen. What an experience –exhilarating, but at the same time strange, seeing the otherwise agile creatures now so vulnerable, totally at the mercy of our guide on the boat. Helpless little fish out of the water. What is it that made them leave the safety and comfort of their watery home and venture into the unknown, even at the risk of losing their lives, I wonder.

Relieved, I watch as Walter starts tossing the fish back into the water and my thoughts are involuntarily being drawn to our life story. Images from my childhood more than sixty years ago flash through my mind, and as I peer down into the black lagoon, I once again find myself walking the stony road up and down the treacherous mountains of life, through both parched deserts and beautiful green meadows. How far we have come from the dark waters of our mysterious past into the unknown realm of our exhausting but intriguing present, and the exciting expectation of even more to come....

I remember so clearly the day I walked home from school in my first grade. I noticed a German Shepherd barking fiercely at nothing at all in the grass and as I investigated closer, I saw a mole the size of the dog’s paw, squinting against the blinding sunlight while bravely standing his ground against the enemy. Poor little furry ‘fish’ out of the water.

I always had great compassion for the underdog, or in this case the under-mole, and hurried to protect the defenceless creature, but to my horror I was rewarded with a couple of bleeding holes in my hand. Not discouraged and having a rather forgiving

nature, I managed to wrap it into some clothing and took it home with me. It was only much later in life that I understood and experienced on a larger scale the saying: 'Biting the hand that feeds you'!

My mother was a kind and tactful woman who, through her example, taught us not to offend anyone by expressing negative thoughts or feelings. She had spent a small fortune to get rid of the increasing mole population in our garden, but as I proudly presented my precious find to her, she merely said: "That's nice, dear" and silently watched an explicitly irate and ungrateful mole disappear into one of her pot plants.

Just like the mole, I learned to fend for myself from an early age, and just like the mole I had no chance. The world out there was too big and nasty and I was too small. Both my parents worked and out of necessity my brother and I were pretty much left to fend for ourselves. At the age of about seven I started taking ballet classes, which happened to be on the other side of the city. We lived in the beautiful sub-tropical city of Durban on the east coast of the face-shaped province of Natal, in those days sometimes referred to as 'the last outpost of the British Empire' in South Africa, with its quaint British architecture and shops, but also with no mercy for the Afrikaans-speaking residents.

"I don't speak that Dutch language!" the bus driver would bark at me as I tried to explain where I would like to get off the bus. I had to take a bus to central Durban and then another bus to my ballet class. I often missed the bus in the city and in the hustle and bustle of thousands of people I would panic and start running up and down the streets, crying out in my broken English, "I can't find my bus, I lost my bus!" until some concerned lady would take me to a store to phone my parents. I was terrified of crowds and traffic. Even today I don't walk across a street, I run. When you're a seven-year-old little girl, people are big and busses are huge, but the fear of being lost is even bigger.



My dad worked in the city at a reputable advertising agency. He was a very talented and creative man, a real dreamer, always searching for meaning in life, but never seeming to find it. After work he had to fetch me at my ballet class on his way home, but he often forgot, and having learnt the necessary independence for survival in the city, I would start walking the approximately twenty kilometres in the direction of my home.

Now there is one thing that is worse than the fear of being lost, and that is being lost in the dark! Every big house looked to me like a haunted house with its dimmed lights and lace curtains casting mysterious shadows on the walls, and every car

that stopped to offer me a ride home looked like the Mafia, or some other creepy

characters from one of the many scary books we used to read. Sometimes my mother would find me along the road, but more often concerned strangers would stop and take me home.

My parents were both brought up in Christian homes, but they went out into the world of so-called higher education and found that they had no need for God, in fact my father ridiculed churchgoers and warned us to stay away from them.

“They will only confuse you and teach you all sorts of lies,” he said.

Their disappointment with the Dutch Reformed Church, which was the largest church in South Africa in those days, is understandable. The church was a small Calvinistic remnant, descendants of the Huguenots, who had fled the persecution in Europe and settled on the southern tip of Africa. A statue of a young woman with the Bible in the one hand and a broken chain in the other was erected in the little town of Franschoek, depicting God’s church that had broken the chains of bondage to the dictating, persecuting church of the Middle Ages, while clinging to the Bible as their only authority. Now, more than three hundred years later, church and state once again joined forces and the church had become the cloak to cover the dark motives and deeds of the politicians, and, of course, vice versa.

I had great respect for my parents; both were intelligent and refined, respectful to others, as well as being respected and loved by others. As a successful young newspaper reporter, my father was asked to investigate supernatural occurrences, such as the escalating so-called *poltergeist* reports. At first, he was very sceptical, but soon he was drawn into every conceivable mystical realm, from spiritism to eastern religions, the New Age movement and even Scientology. In one of his books he recorded his experiences during the hundreds of séances he attended, and his *poltergeist* investigations, as well as his own ‘Astral Projection’, or ‘Out Of Body’ experiences.

One of the séances became the turning point in his life. At this particular meeting he was secretly trying to find wires or any evidence that the alleged contact with the dead, or spirits speaking through mediums, was a mere moneymaking deception.

“Now where could they have hidden the speakers?” he mumbled to himself while groping under the table.

Suddenly an eerie voice spoke in the semi-dark: “There is one amongst you who does not believe. Let him be warned....”

Now my father was even more determined to find those speakers and he started investigating all around in the room. The next minute he received a blow to his head and he was tossed across the room like a rag doll. He had neither seen nor heard anyone or anything attacking him and he realized that this was the doing of some supernatural force. He left for home that night with a strange mixture of exhilaration and fear in his heart, and a large bump on his forehead, leaving his

unbelief and scoffing behind. He was now convinced that these manifestations were real and he developed an intense interest in the dark world of this hitherto poorly researched mystical realm.

One of the investigations my father and his camera man conducted for the newspaper, was the incident with the baby. The distraught parents told them that after they put their baby to sleep, they would hear the baby cry, and as they entered the room, the baby was sitting, balanced by an unseen hand, on top of the cupboard. The minute they entered, the baby would topple over and fall into their hands.

That night, after the baby had been put to bed, my father proceeded to secure the room with tape to ensure that no-one entered the baby room. They waited in the next room, and after a while the baby started crying. They rushed to the room, broke the tape, and sure enough, there was the baby sitting on the cupboard.

He documented several of these incidents, and one of the most disturbing ones was the case of the baboon. A farmer had contacted the police about an aggressive baboon that seemed to know when the family would sit down around the table to have their dinner. As soon as the father would start to pray for the food, the baboon would appear from no-where and jump on the table, scattering the food across the room and smashing the crockery. Then it would run into the kitchen and disappear.

That day, at dinner time, they all went to sit around the table, not expecting anything to happen, but as the farmer started to pray, a huge baboon appeared and headed towards the table. The police jumped up, grabbed their weapons, and one of them managed to shoot the baboon. It ran around the corner into the kitchen, and everyone followed. What they saw was tragic and shocking. On the floor lay the family's house keeper in a pool of blood, but no sign of any baboon.

Now there was an added dimension to this mystery. My father was convinced that these manifestations were the work of unhappy departed spirits of deceased humans who never had 'closure' with situations and people before they died. But he also believed that there are 'good' departed spirits who watch over their loved ones and even communicate with them. This is why in the séances he attended, they would pray to the 'good' spirits to protect them against the 'bad' ones during the session.

My mother, on the other hand, was more academically inclined, a fine teacher and lecturer, and later professor at the university. She never seemed to be interested in all the weird ideas and phenomena that had become so part of our lives. She never did say how she felt when her deceased father's walking sticks would start rattling all by themselves, or when an unseen guest would sit and breathe audibly in one of the lounge seats. We believed it was grandpa visiting us and it became a normal part of our lives.

However, I was intensely aware of the fact that I was different from all the other children at school. A little fish out of the water. I was the only child, or so it seemed

to me, who never went to church on Sundays. We never baked cake for the church fete, never knitted multicoloured squares for blankets for the poor, or sang in the church choir. After a couple of brief clashes with my parents, the local minister must have realized he was wasting his time and never returned to ask for donations to build his new church.

Back then, in the sixties, South Africa was still one of the last Protestant strongholds, a country of strong principles, refusing to adopt the corruptive ways of Hollywood, which had swept across the world. Sermons were preached against the decadence of the West, and against atheism and communism of Eastern Europe. Government allowed no television until the seventies and a censor board screened the films that were permitted to play in the movie theatres.

The young South Africa, then referred to as a 'land of milk and honey', prospered and grew, its mineral and agricultural wealth and technical and medical excellence surpassing that of many of the developed nations. Up until the early eighties a Rand was worth as much as a US Dollar, and before that it had almost the same value as the British Pound. World powers took note of this promising land with its gold and diamonds, and before anyone noticed, the hyenas moved in to steal away the hard-earned meal from the lions. South Africa had become the special target of these powers who had planned a silent take-over, a 'new order of things' for this country and its people.

But as a child I knew little about politics or religion. All I cared about was to be accepted by my peers. On Sundays, while my parents were working in the garden, the neighbouring families would come walking by, all dressed up in gloves, hats, silk stockings and suits and ties with the Bible under the arm. They would exchange mutually disdainful stares with my parents and then disappear into the large church around the corner with its 'phallic symbol', as my father jokingly called the tall steeple. It was more than thirty years later that I understood what he meant! Innocence, but never ignorance, is bliss! Or rather, as I discovered later, not even innocence is bliss in this perverted world. There's bound to be someone to take advantage of it.

My brother, who was five years older than I, was handicapped to a certain extent. Shortly after receiving the polio vaccine my parents noticed abnormal function and development in his right leg. One specialist after another shook his head in frustration as they failed to diagnose the boy's condition, but it never occurred to anyone that the vaccine could have caused the dreaded disease.

He had numerous operations, during which doctors attempted to transplant muscles and nerves from the healthy leg to the affected one, and after many years he was able to get by on a rake-thin leg with a club-like foot. Children can be cruel and once he even got into a fight at school with someone who mocked him. While on the surface it seemed that he was coping well with his condition, he suffered from a poor self-image, and it was only when we were alone together at home, (which was most of the time), that he started revealing the frustration and bitterness in his

heart. His fits of rage and the projection of his insecurity upon me, drove me away from home during the day and I spent most of my time roaming the streets.

Some nights my parents would go out for dinner. I hated more than anything being alone with my brother at night. He would tell me horror stories, make dreadful noises, switch off the main light switch and blackmail me into doing whatever he wanted before he switched it back on again. I became terrified of wolves (although there are none in Africa!), black cats, and any scary thing that I imagined was lurking under my bed. Often my parents would come home after the night out and find me sleeping with an axe or a saw for my protection beside me in bed, with all the lights on! Of course, when you live in a sub-tropical region without screens on the windows, that meant coming home to thousands of flying ants, beetles, moths and mosquitoes that were drawn to the light on those hot and humid summer nights.

South Africa was a beautiful country. And for someone who loved all living creatures (except those under my bed), Natal, as it was called then, was paradise. My greatest joy were those large green chameleons. In those days there were still many of them and at one stage I had up to twenty in my bedroom on pot plants. We even had tribes of monkeys in our garden and they all had names. One of the females we named 'Stompstert', which meant she had no tail, but apparently that didn't deter the menfolk. One day she proudly came to show us her pink, hairless little newborn, when, all of a sudden one of the younger females leaped forward and snatched the baby away from the mother. The bewildered mother tried to grab the baby back and to our horror, before our eyes, the baby was torn to pieces. The most frightening crying sound rang through the forest and for many days we never saw them again.

Then, early one morning, she was back again, all alone, looking nervous and bewildered. Evidently, she was considered a poor mother, a reproach to the whole community and had to leave the tribe, another lonely fish out of the water. Even at my tender age I began to understand and experience injustice as I learned it in the lesson book of nature. But as I grew up, I realised that the so-called more advanced form of life, the human being, would excel in even worse than beastly behaviour.

I would often think of my childhood friend Ivan, wondering how he was surviving in this cruel world. I missed the days when he lived just a few houses away from us in Johannesburg. Ivan's mother, Merle, was a colleague of my father and had more marriages and children from different marriages than anyone cared to know. She would often bring five-year-old Ivan to play at our house, and then disappear. After a week she would come breezing into our home and exclaim:

"So, this is where Ivy has been all this time!"

My mother faithfully took care of him and kept some extra clothes, knowing that he would soon be back the next time his mother punished him by making him sit outside the front door in the cold and dark. How often would he run to our house, and knock at the door.

“Please may I sleep here with Sonica tonight?” and then he would crawl with his cold feet into my bed, snuggle up and fall asleep.



Even though I was not much older than three, my mother occasionally let me walk the short distance down the road to his house where we spent endless hours in his back yard climbing trees and finding insects. Having the advantage of being older and a thoroughbred Englishman, Ivan took it upon himself to teach his little Afrikaans-speaking friend the English tongue.

“Bet you don’t know what a caterpillar is,” he once said with a know-it-all smile on his face.

“Ag, of course I know, man. It’s a pillow which a cat sleeps on,” I said without hesitating in my broken English and resumed my search for some more insects, or ‘goggos’, as we called them.

For a while Ivan looked puzzled. He had to admit - I certainly seemed to have a point!

One day I was on my way to Ivan’s house, when, a few houses from his home, I looked up and stopped dead in my tracks. At the gate of that house stood an old lady dressed in black with a black pointed hat. On the wall beside her sat a black cat, its tail twitching ever so slightly as he and his mistress looked silently at me.

I stood frozen for what seemed hours, my legs felt like jelly, but then I took off at a speed down the road back home. I must have been screaming my little head off, because a lady came rushing out into the street, caught me and tried to calm me down.

“What happened, dearie, what’s wrong?” she asked, but I couldn’t utter one intelligible word. I wriggled my way out of her grip and ran home. Needless to say, I never walked that road again. My parents thought I was imagining things, but my fear was very real, and it never dawned upon them that the beautifully illustrated books with fairy tales and witches could have such a powerful effect on a little child’s mind.

That seemed like such a long time ago.....

“What are you thinking?” My little friend down the road was staring at me. She was my only friend in Durban – just another little redheaded, freckled fish out of the water. Katie’s life wasn’t exactly a bed of roses either. Her father was up north at the mines earning money while her mother and pretty blonde sisters seemed to earn better money entertaining men. During such occasions Katie was locked into her room or sent out of the house. We spent many hours together stealing strawberries and granadillas from the nuns’ garden, climbing trees or just lying in the long Natal grass telling stories while watching the clouds form the shapes of animals as they drifted along.

“Remember the Bible my grandma sent me, you know, the big one with the gold letters?” I asked.

Katie nodded.

“Well, someone stole it today from out of my desk. I took it to school to show my teacher and then after break it was gone. One of the girls said, ‘So what, you don’t need it anyway, you don’t even go to church.’”

Katie said nothing. She shook her head slowly and handed me a succulent stem from a tuft of grass to chew on.

As time went by, I became more and more withdrawn. I had a very real battle raging inside me. I wanted to end the constant abuse by my brother but knew that telling my parents would destroy relationships, and apart from his blackmailing threats, I loved my family, even my brother, too much to see them hurt. Although I did well at school, I struggled to communicate with anyone, other than Katie, and my father thought it well to send me to Scientology for a few sessions to ‘clear’ my karma, or whatever they thought it was that needed clearing.

I was probably the most unwilling twelve-year-old guinea pig the organisation ever had to deal with. I resisted answering their personal prying while attached to a ‘lie detector’, called an E-meter, and was subsequently unable to ‘clear’ the first level, let alone the following higher levels. My refusal to co-operate frustrated them, but later proved to have protected me against future involvement in any such experiments in mind control. The experience, however, served to make my condition worse and I was unable to speak for many years thereafter, even into my adult life.

There is one lesson my parents taught me for which I am forever grateful, and that is not to accept everything you hear, but to search for yourself, although they probably never dreamt that it would lead me into a direction they hardly dared to explore themselves. One Sunday, as I watched the *kerkgoggas*, or ‘church creepy crawlies’ as my parents called them, go to church, I felt prompted to find out what was inside a church, despite my father’s warnings.

The following day when I came home from school, my brother was waiting for me. I was once again too timid to stand up to him or tell my parents what he was doing,

but just ran off into the streets. Tears poured down my face as I ran to the nearest church and tried to get inside. The Dutch Reformed Church was secure and solid – no intruders allowed. I kept walking, hoping that somewhere there would be a place where I would be safe, but the Methodist Church was also locked and dark inside, so was the Presbyterian church, and likewise the church of the *Doppers*, a reform splinter group of the Dutch Reformed Church.

“What use is their God when He is locked inside the church?” I thought as I walked aimlessly along the busy Umbilo Road. Then I noticed tucked away among a clump of trees, a little stone chapel with some mossy graves alongside. I walked quietly up the cobble stone path towards the solid front door. It seemed abandoned; the pathway was covered in dead leaves and twigs and the roses had died. I turned the brass knob, expecting to be disappointed once again.



But the door swung open with a whining creak. Inside it was dark and the air was stale. There was the smell of old oak, much like in wine cellars. As my eyes grew accustomed to the dark, I saw pews covered in soft red velvet, some pictures and figures on the walls and organ pipes on the gallery. I stood frozen for a few minutes, waiting to be scolded and thrown out, but I was alone. I sat down in the pews, looked up at the small stained-glass window and started singing. I sang Christmas carols at first, simply because I knew no other religious songs.

When I had run out of Christmas songs, I started making up my own. I sang for hours, the child's voice echoing through the empty church, while tears of relief trickled down my face. A passion for singing and music stirred my heart, and an unknown sense of freedom flooded my soul for the first time. I knew I had found my own secret safe place - for now, anyway.



Island Friendship

Chapter 2

Pro 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

“Hurry! We have to drive a long way to fetch your brother and his friend,” my mother called as she started the car. My brother had come up to Natal from his university in the Cape Province where he was studying, with his German roommate to spend the holidays with us. Just before they started climbing the long hill to Richmond, his faithful student car, Ilse, threw in the towel, and a few nuts and bolts as well. She refused to go an inch further and had to be towed to the scrap heap.

The two were standing beside the road as we pulled into the small town. They looked scruffy and tired, as students often do. I was curious about my brother’s new friend, but hardly had the courage to look. For a brief moment I wondered what he would think of me in my cheap crimplene dress that I had made myself, our old car and a Community Chest building scheme house in a back-street area of the Bluff. We had no carpets on the cold vinyl floors, nor any curtains in the living area, simply because there was no money for it. Not to mention my father leaving his well-paid job to print his mystical books in the garage. Or the taxman breathing down his neck for not paying tax for the past couple of years, which cost me all my accumulated savings to help keep my dad out of jail!

The car was droning on monotonously from Richmond back to Durban. I managed to steal a few distrusting but inquisitive glimpses of this self-confident, boisterous young German student. He wore white stovepipe jeans and a red T-shirt with big holes in the front, which, he explained, got caught in a windmill. His blonde hair was almost down to his shoulders and his blue eyes were constantly challenging those around him. He was always teasing and joking, often pulling hideous faces and making weird sounds. I thought he was a bit crazy, but he was different and fun to be with.

I was quieter than usual on the way back, struggling to hold back the tears as we travelled the same road on which my childhood friend Ivan was killed a few months earlier. He had moved to Natal to study at the University in Pietermaritzburg and had phoned to say that he was on his way to visit me. I waited all day, but no sign of him. Towards evening there was a knock at the door and a young fellow student of his told us that the beach buggy Ivan and his friends had been travelling in, overturned on one of the notorious Natal corners, killing Ivan instantly.

After the young man had left, I sat down in silence at my piano and composed a song for Ivan, hoping that he was listening on the other side. But I found no comfort and I

longed to find a place where I could once again pour out my soul to the unseen, unknown God I had found in the little chapel as a young child.

One of the girls in my class at that time was the daughter of a Dutch Reformed minister. They lived about ten kilometres from us in the parsonage adjacent to the large church of a well-off parish. One Sunday morning I decided to visit her and join her for the church service. I got out of bed quietly, so as not to wake anyone, got dressed in my best clothes, and started walking towards the church in my shiny, new heeled shoes, and Sunday hat.

It was a hot and humid morning, and my feet started to chafe, but I continued till I reached the front door of my friend's house. The minister opened the door and looked at me in surprise.

"Hello, who are you?" he asked with an impatient tone of voice.

"Hello, I...I have come to visit René..." I stammered.

"No, sorry, you can't see her now," was his brief answer, and he closed the door.

At the church service René was not allowed to sit with me, neither was I allowed to sit with her and her family, and I found myself a place where I could hide behind a large man in the back of the church until the service was over. During the last hymn I slipped out and started the two hour walk back home. No-one had greeted me, nor asked where I came from, or even asked me if they could give me a ride back home, and I felt sad that I had found no comfort there. When I eventually got home, bathed in sweat and with blisters on my feet, my parents looked at me as if I had lost my mind, but no-one said a word and despondently I hid myself in my room.

I continued my quest for solace for many a Sunday, and eventually I was allowed short five minute visits with the minister's daughter, as long as I "didn't sit on her bed", for some unexplained reason. However, I was never accepted because of my 'heathen' background, and eventually I stopped my search for God altogether...

"Are you listening?"

"What? Yes, I'm listening!"

"No, you're not."

"Yes, I am!"

"Then repeat what we said."

My brother's friend was irritating me, and I felt like spinning my cocoon and shutting myself away from everyone, but his eyes were challenging me, rudely drawing me away from my memories. That night I went to bed wondering what had brought him across my path.



About a year later my brother and his German friend Walter planned to drive up to Mozambique and spend their winter holidays on the tropical island Magaruque. My brother brought his girlfriend along, and since Walter was alone, there was space in the car for little sister. Although, I wasn't so little anymore - I was in my final year at school and had just turned seventeen.

The trip up north was interesting, to say the least; the roads were bad, the people were hostile and there were guerrilla fighters and army tanks everywhere. We lost our exhaust along the road and I wondered if we would make it in Walter's little

Renault. At last we arrived in Lorenzo Marques (later known as Maputo), where life didn't seem to be affected much by the war, apart from tanks passing through the city from time to time. The nightclubs and streets were alive, and people were enjoying the famous Mozambican food out on the sidewalks.

Our first trip was a boat ride to the island Inhaca. It was a grey and blustery day, and the ocean was restless with intimidating swells all around the small boat. We had only covered a short distance of the more than thirty kilometres from the mainland to the island, when the waves started crashing onto the boat. By now Walter was no longer sitting, his body was limply drooped over the side of the boat like a rag doll, 'feeding' the fish all the way until we arrived on the island!

There was no harbour, and no dock, but instead, the locals ran into the waves and hauled us onto the beach. The wind had subsided and the sun was peeping through the clouds, but Walter was still decidedly green around the gills and lay down under a palm tree. The island beaches were soft and white and beautifully decorated with coconut trees and interesting mangroves. The little town had only a few residents and tourists, with shops scattered among the evergreen trees. Beautiful coral reefs and fish glimmered under the water, but we had no time to spend there, we had to return to take the boat to our final destination.

Back on the mainland we bought some bread and a few necessities and set off for the boat that would take us to the island Magaruque. This island was wild and unpopulated. There were no buildings or shops, no huts, no drinking water, and only one dilapidated toilet at the beach. We disembarked with our drums of water, tents, food and clothing to last us till the boat would return in one week's time.

To the right we found a spot among some trees where we pitched our tent and had some privacy from the couple of other campers a little further down the beach. It was June, but the winter sun was warm and relaxing. There was hardly a ripple on the unpolluted turquoise water, save for a gentle swishing as little waves spilled shells and other undiscovered gems onto the white sands.

I watched Walter, now recovered from his nausea spell, doing everything at high speed, but efficiently, ever joking and making fun of someone, but at the same time letting no one get too close. That night the other two were asleep already, when Walter and I were still sitting on the beach, watching the tide come in. The moon had drawn a quivering silver line on the surface of the ocean and only the swishing sound of little waves breaking on the shore filled the air.

“Are you tired?” he suddenly asked, without looking at me.

“No” I answered tentatively.

“Well, no wonder, you’re always sleeping in the car. We’ll have to tie you to the roof rack every time you fall asleep.”

He chuckled softly. There were a few moments of silence as he brushed the sand off his clothes.

“You know, people are like stones”, he suddenly said in a serious tone.

“Huh?” I wasn’t sure what he was trying to say but noticed a little crack in his armour. He had left a small opening in the door of his soul for me to peep through and the rest of that moonlit night a friendship developed that was to last forever.

Above us some nocturnal bird was screeching. The cool night breeze made me shiver and I crept into my sleeping bag as Walter started telling me his story...

Just before the Second World War his father, who was a confectioner, had come from Germany to South Africa to try and earn money to sustain his struggling family in Germany. He was a young Catholic who was going to be a priest, but he met Walter’s mother, who was a faithful Lutheran, also of German descent.



He nevertheless decided to marry her, even though it was frowned upon in those days. They managed to arrange a double wedding, since his mother was one of twins; first they married in the Catholic Church and straight after that in the Lutheran Church together with her twin sister. Because of the war, Walter's father was interned in a South African concentration camp for almost ten years, which resulted in Walter being ten years younger than his only sister, who emigrated first to Australia and then to the United States of America when she was 18.

Walter's father, the confectioner

Walter was sent to the predominantly Lutheran German School in Cape Town where, being raised Catholic, he had separate religious instruction with a nun from the local convent. At the age of 8 years he learned that his mother had cancer. This nun would visit Walter's mother while she was bedridden, but instead of offering to help the struggling family, she persistently tried to persuade his mother to become Catholic. This was in the time before the Vatican 2 decision that people may remain in their respective denominations, provided they acknowledge the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

"It's such a shame that your mother will have to go to hell forever," the nun said in religious instruction class one day. By this time the little boy had started resenting the nun and hated the God she represented for being so cruel to the mother he loved so much. He became so rebellious that he tore the catechism book and tossed it at the stern-faced nun and was consequently expelled from that class indefinitely. Occasionally the headmaster would do his rounds and find the defiant little boy sitting outside the class, at which he would inquire what the reason was.



"The old cow threw me out," was the only answer he received, and the inevitable result was a good thrashing in the headmaster's office. This continued for years while his mother hung onto life, knowing that her young son still needed her. Radiation was still in the experimental stage and often they would leave her too long in the radiation room and she would be burnt to a crisp. At night her screams of pain would cut through bone and marrow and the young boy felt helpless and angry lying in his bed alone at night, wondering what kind of God would let his mother suffer so much. But he never spoke about his problems to anyone.



At home his father, who worked day and night to feed his family, had little patience with anyone, especially a boy who seemed to be difficult at school. At times he would lash out at him and hit his son through the face and when his bleeding nose stained the wooden floor, he gave him another good thrashing and made him scrub it all clean.

As time went by and his mother was virtually at the brink of death, another visit from the nun resulted in his pale and weakened mother bursting into tears. For the first time Walter's father heard what the nun had said and too late he realised what had been going on. The big German with his even bigger German temperament took hold of the nun by the back of her long black dress and physically walked her to the

door, forbidding her to ever set foot in his house again.

But the damage was done. At school the other staff members were biased against the rebellious and defiant child. One teacher would strike him though the face every day before he even started his class. Another subtracted marks from one subject to punish him for bad behaviour in another class. And so it went on until his mother died when he was 12. He failed that year at school and his hatred for schools and teachers and God grew daily.



Walter with his mother

To make things worse, Walter's father remarried very soon after the death of his wife. One night, as in the story of Hansel and Gretel, he tiptoed down the dark passage and overheard his stepmother say,

"I refuse to live with that boy in the house. He will have to go."

He was subsequently placed in the dormitory of the German school, where he ran away a couple of times into the forest. When the teachers came looking for him, he climbed up a pine tree where he was out of reach and bombarded them with pinecones from above. He hated schools so much, that he fabricated his own bomb and blew up a huge tree on some school grounds. The explosion was so powerful, that the whole tree took off, glided through the air and landed on the rugby field. At another occasion he catapulted rocks onto the roof of a school building, using poplar trees, a sling and a home-made pulley system, and then unobtrusively joined the crowd that had gathered to see what had happened.

It wasn't long after this that his stepmother convinced his father that the boy was useless and needed to leave school to learn a trade of some sorts, but his defiant nature resisted their decision and he refused to leave school. Fortunately, his uncle was inspector of schools at that time and managed to get him into one of the prestigious boys' schools, where, as was to be expected, the next disaster was awaiting him. The school was predominantly Jewish, and he was German! But he knew he was there on probation and was determined to try his best to stay out of trouble and finish school.

But his cocky attitude seemed to attract trouble like an insect to the sticky tendrils of a Venus Flytrap. One of the Jewish boys took a disliking to Walter and started ramming into him whenever he saw him, provoking him and swearing at him for being a German 'Hitler'. Then one day, after the boy had rammed Walter with his shoulder again, something snapped in him and he grabbed the Jewish boy, dragged him into the classroom, stuck his head into a desk and slammed the lid down on his face. Blood was streaming from his nose, and both were summoned into the headmaster's office.

"It's over, I'm dead!" Walter thought to himself as he awaited the verdict of the headmaster after they reported what had happened. The headmaster told the Jewish boy to wait outside, and Walter was bracing himself for the worst.

But the headmaster calmly said, "I cannot condone what you did, and I will have to do some fancy footwork when that boy's parents hear about this, but I do believe that you have been punished enough already. And for the sake of peace, we will now have to pretend to go through the motions." He picked up his cane that had an honorary place in the bookcase and struck the back of his armchair several times. He pulled straight his jacket and went to the door to call the Jewish boy in.

"Now, if your face wasn't so messed up, I would also give you the trashing of your life. If you ever provoke this young man again, you will be expelled. Is that clear?" and with a twinkle in his eye, he sent them back to class.

The rest of Walter's life at the new school was uneventful and he regained some degree of respect for teachers and schools. When he finished school at the end of 1967, he had to serve in the army for a year, after which he decided to go to university, but his father was forbidden by his stepmother to pay for his studies, even though he had the money. His stepmother started to reveal more and more of the selfish reasons why she married his father. Through hard work his father had become a wealthy man and she was intent on inheriting as much of it as possible. Walter went to work at the railways and restaurants every weekend and holidays to pay for his university education. He enrolled at Stellenbosch University and ended up sharing a room in the dormitory with my brother...

“Are you tired now?” The sun was just rising on the watery horizon, spreading a spectacular splash of colours across the sky.

“Yes, and there’s no roof rack to tie me to.” I yawned and fell asleep on the cool sand to the sound of the island birds chirping in the tree.

After a few days we had eaten our last bread, so we went spear fishing just a few meters offshore. Masses of exotic tropical fish and schools like silver moonbeams casually drifted by. Groupers bigger than the size of grown men inquisitively brushed against us as we respectfully tried to stay clear of their huge mouths, big enough to swallow a man.

On the beach we made a fire and cooked the few fish my brother and Walter had caught. We were worried. There were still a few days left before the boat would return and we were hungry. We had nothing left to eat, but for some peri-peri and rice. That evening, when the moon came out, we decided to harvest some of the thousands of giant crabs that surfaced from their holes in the sand at night, scurrying across the shimmering beaches. In a short while we were heading back to the tent, our pillowcases filled with our clawing, scratching meal.

The next day we spent hours cleaning the crabs and my brother’s girl friend prepared them with the last rice and the peri-peri we had. She obviously never cooked with anything as spicy and hot as that before and needless to say, we ended up just as hungry as before and our crab meal became fish food. A few days later and a few kilograms lighter we watched with a sigh of relief as the boat from the mainland pulled ashore.



Haunted House

Chapter 3

Eph 5:11 *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*

The train pulled into the Durban station dead on time. There was a commotion on the platform as people shoved and pushed to get their luggage into the right compartments and settle down for the long trip.

“Do you have everything now? And don’t forget to write as soon as you get there,” my mother said through the window. There were no e-mails or cell phones back then in the ‘good old times’ and long-distance phone calls were definitely not within our budget. No sooner had we said our last good-byes, than the train started its three-day trip down to the Cape. It wasn’t my first overnight train trip. When we were little, my father sometimes took us on a train journey. It was the best holiday I ever had. In those days the steam trains would stop at every little station in the night and load milk cans. I would be sleeping in the top bunk and wake up hearing the conductors on the platform chat as they loaded the cans and some other goods to be transported. Then the whistle would blow and the train would move on through the dark night, rocking me back to sleep.....

I resisted the pangs of loneliness and the uncertainty of a new life at Stellenbosch University. I would be far away from my parents and home in a place I had never seen before. To make things worse, I still struggled to speak when I was nervous. How would I ever get by? My only comfort was the fact that Walter would be there to fetch me at the station and help me settle into my new life for the next three years.

When at last the train pulled into the Stellenbosch station, I looked up and down the platform, but there was no sign of a familiar face. I felt the tears rise as I walked outside, dragging my heavy suitcases, but I couldn’t see him in the parking lot either. I waited for more than an hour and then walked to the phone booth and back three times. Eventually I searched for coins in my almost empty purse to phone a taxi. After a painful few minutes of stammering and explaining, the person on the other side understood and promised to send a car.

Fear gripped my heart as I wondered why Walter never came. After our trip to Mozambique he wrote me letters twice a week and even drove more than three thousand kilometres to visit me for just one weekend! Had he forgotten me so easily? He had no phone on the farm where he lived and I had no idea where to find him. I hardly took notice of the beautiful town with its typical Cape-Dutch houses and lanes of majestic oak trees. When I arrived at the dormitory, something worse was awaiting me. No one had warned me about initiation. A whole panel of bossy, military type second and third year students greeted me, shouting their insane rules

and instructions and ordered me to my room. My heart sank as I learned that we were not to have any contact with the outside world for two weeks.

Thereafter strict coming in and going out rules were to be observed for the rest of the year, plus being servants to any senior at any time, performing any duty, however unpleasant. Girls were not to be seen outside the dormitory with casual clothing ever and always had to wear stockings and gloves on Sundays to the student Dutch Reform Church. If you were late for anything, you were humiliated in front of everyone, together with receiving extra duties. I was tired. I felt so abandoned and lonely that I wished I had never come. My uncontrollable tears ever haunted me, making me run from the laughter and mocking of the older students to the toilets, the only safe place I knew.

Then one day the matron called me down to her office. A funny-looking little man stood waiting for me. He was a fellow post-graduate student of Walter at the Zoology Department.

“You had better go with this man; I believe your friend is in hospital, but you may only stay one hour and then come straight back,” she said as she impatiently shooed us out.

Walter looked really sick. He tried to explain to me why he never arrived to fetch me at the station, but it was difficult for him to speak. His throat was too inflamed and swollen. The previous few months he had worked very hard at his studies, while at the same time working to earn money to pay his fees. He had very little money to live on and subsisted for a while on tea he made from guava leaves to try and get some vitamins into his body. But he had had no substantial meal in a long time and ended up in hospital with malnutrition and a total immune system collapse. As he extended his hand to mine and gave me a weak squeeze, I felt secure and relieved, and knew why I had come to the Cape.



The next few years we spent studying hard, but also leading a typical student life of socialising and drinking ‘Tassies’, the cheap red wine that characterised student life. Walter’s fellow students often invited us over but I felt so small in their company. I was only 17, turning 18 then, and they were self-confident post-graduates, most of them in their mid-twenties. Their intimidating jokes and questions made me shrink back even more and Walter would then take over the conversation to protect me. Being a hard worker and a cum laude student, he was offered a research post at the Zoology Department, which helped bridge the financial crisis.

But a better financial position led to a worse lifestyle and at several occasions Walter would inevitably get drunk and lose the few inhibitions he had. More than once he would end up standing on a restaurant table, telling jokes, with the whole restaurant roaring and rolling off their chairs with laughter. Wherever he went he turned out to be a one-man circus, displaying the classical 'displacement behaviour' in an effort to deal with his frustration and hurt of the past.

At one occasion we went camping with my brother. The two of them nearly finished a whole 5 litre bottle of Tassies and fell asleep on the beach in a stupor. In the middle of the night I woke up to a strange gurgling sound. Walter had been sick during the night and was choking, too inebriated to do anything about it. In a panic I turned him onto his side to free his air passages and cleaned him up, but he was oblivious to the nocturnal drama he had created.

The next day, when he heard what had happened, he just laughed without admitting or fully realising that he had been saved from sure death, or even contemplating the detrimental effect his drinking had on his body. Even when he contracted jaundice a few years later and was hospitalised with a body yellow enough to attract a swarm of bees, he still refused to stop drinking. The effect of the alcohol on his damaged liver was now even worse, but he merely visited the chemist more often in an attempt to alleviate the aftereffects.

One day he decided to try and patch things up and make peace with his father and stepmother and he took me along to Cape Town to meet them. They lived close to Kloof Neck where the cable cars cart hundreds of tourists to the top of Table Mountain. From here the view is breath-taking. In the front lies the whole harbour, with the shoreline extending towards Blouwberg Strand. To the right sits Devil's Peak, to the left Lion's Head and Signal Hill with the spectacular Camp's Bay on the other side of the mountain. His father possessed quite a few houses and part of a block of flats up against the mountain and was always building and speculating, although he was a confectioner by profession. Walter had told me a lot about his stepmother, but I had the childlike belief that all people are good, and if they are mean to me, it is probably because I deserve it.

I was, however, not prepared for Walter's stepmother. She seemed to have climbed out of a fairy tale. We arrived at their house five minutes later than stipulated and she refused to come out of the kitchen to greet us. During the next awkward hours of the afternoon, she would continue to sling accusations at us and after more than a few glasses of wine she lost her pose and started whining, "It's mine! It should all be mine! I have slaved myself to death for your father and now this little tramp will be getting all of it!"

For a couple of seconds there was silence in the house. I dared not look up. What was she thinking? We weren't even married yet! My mind felt numb. I had never before been confronted with a situation such as this. In our home we treated one another with respect and I cannot recall ever hearing my parents raise their voices or arguing about anything, let alone treat a visitor in such a way. Noticeably Germans

did things differently! This was more than I could handle, and I ran into the nearest room crying.

Like a flash she followed me, saying, "That's good! I hope you cry for the rest of your life," and with that she returned to her kitchen with an indescribably smug expression on her face. That was the first time I was cursed, but not the last.

Much to her frustration we did get married in June 1974 and moved to Natal where Walter was offered a post at the University of Durban-Westville. We bought a house not more than ten kilometres from my parents in the beautiful Gillitts area. We had two acres of land with banana trees, a little stream passing through the middle of the property and a little indigenous forest with Cycads and wild orchids.

During the time we lived there, we often visited my parents. We spent many hours talking late into the night about my father's extraordinary experiences as a journalist. One night as we came home from their house, we drove into the garage and without any physical reason, our car smashed into the sidewall. The driveway wasn't slippery; in fact, we had almost come to a halt, when the car moved rapidly sideways.

"I don't believe it! This car is jinxed! What else can go wrong with this stupid car?" Walter exclaimed angrily. We had bought the pick-up brand new and already the clutch had been replaced thirteen times. The gearbox was replaced twice, not to mention the fact that the car boiled the very first few kilometres as we drove it out of the showroom. It turned out that the radiator was solid; there was no exit for the water to the engine!

A few days later we were driving around in Durban, when we slowed down as we approached a car in front of us at a stop street. But as Walter applied brakes, nothing happened. He tried to swerve to the left and then to the right to avoid crashing into the car in front of us, but our car merely kept on gliding along at an even pace until we hit the other car. And there was nothing wrong with the brakes. We were confused and frustrated but wrote it off as bad luck and traded our unworthy mode of transport in for a little green two-door Passat.

It was round about this time that an old school friend of Walter's visited us. He claimed that he had been communicating with the dead by using the Ouija board. We didn't believe it was possible but agreed to try and see if Walter could contact his mother. Even as an adult, he missed her greatly, but of course with a 'boys-don't-cry' upbringing, he refused to admit it. Even at her funeral his brave smile gave the wrong impression that he was not perturbed about her death, while in reality he felt that the only one who really loved him, was no longer there to protect him. He was now completely on his own. Underneath his nonchalant behaviour at the gravesite, he remembered how determined she was to hang onto life four years longer than expected, dreading to leave her young boy in the hands of this cruel world.

Our friend set up the table with letters of the alphabet placed in a circle and a liqueur glass in the middle. The glass started moving slowly at first with each question, but without spelling out any recognisable word. Then, all of a sudden, it took off at high speed and spelt out some words with such force, that the letters shot off the table. We went ice cold when we realised what was spelt out:

“G-o-t-o-h-e-l-l”

We tried another question, but with the same force the same words were spelt out: “Go to hell” and with the last letter the glass shot off the table. We realised too late that we had scratched open the surface of something sinister that had better be left alone.

The following weeks were the beginning of a long walk of confusion and darkness. We had invited my parents and some friends over for supper. My brother was visiting the family for the holidays and joined us. While we were busy in the kitchen, my brother came to Walter.

“There’s something funny going on here,” he laughed, but we knew he was serious. “The glass jumped off your table onto my foot, just like that!” and he gestured with his hand.

Walter and I looked at each other. We felt very uncomfortable but reasoned that my brother might have had a few glasses of wine too many. That night, after the guests had left, we washed the dishes and stacked them in the drying rack and went to bed, not giving the incident any further thought.

We had a very clever Rottweiler. We named her Mayet after a Hindu god, since the University of Durban Westville where Walter worked was predominantly Indian, as was a large part of Durban. Not only was Mayet clever, but she had all the attributes one desires in a good watchdog. She was gentle with people but had amazing discernment as to who was permitted on our property, and who had no business there. On many occasions she protected me from potential harm, where people looking for work just walked into the house while I was alone at home. In those days we hardly locked our doors in South Africa, but times have certainly changed. Now every citizen lives in his own private jail.

We always believed that our pets were part of the family and Mayet slept with us in the bedroom beside the bed. Besides the dog, we also had a Persian, as well as a Siamese cat who thought the dog was her mother. She used to sleep on top of Mayet or between her front legs with the huge black and tan paw over her head. The dog would fetch whatever you asked, even the cat. When we said, “Fetch the cat!” she would run and find her and return with the cat’s whole head in her mouth, the body and legs dangling limply in the air. At the command she would then drop the wet cat gently at your feet and sit and wait eagerly to be patted and praised.



Mayet carrying the cat

This particular night we got to bed pretty late and fell asleep straight away. It wasn't long before a crashing noise woke us up. Mayet rushed towards the living area to investigate but came back after a while and lay down again. When we plucked up the courage to go and see what had happened, we found the drying rack standing at a 45-degree angle and most of the dishes broken on the floor.

The cats were soundly asleep in the lounge and not a breeze stirred the air. An eerie feeling crept up our spines as we hurried back to bed, grateful that we at least had a big dog with us. Not that it was any use for that which we were now confronted with. Something bigger than our human understanding of natural forces was happening and Walter's scientific mind had difficulty dealing with it.



It was not long before things between Walter and me started deteriorating rapidly. We discovered that we were not happy in our house anymore. We were petrified of coming into the house after dark and more and more we started arguing over the slightest thing. One night we crept into our bedroom after we had been out, ever thankful that Mayet was there waiting faithfully for us, and pulled back the covers of the bed. On Walter's side lay the stuffed black cat that my mother's aunt had made for me when I was a child. It had been in a box high up in our built-in cupboard from the time that we moved to Natal and there was no possibility that it could have gotten in the bed by itself. This is where Walter lost his composure and he started shaking.

"Too many things have gone wrong. We must find help," he whispered through chattering teeth as we crept deeper under the blankets.

The next day we phoned my father. He had more experience with these things than anyone we knew, we thought.

"This is quite common, you know." He thought for a while and then continued. "We once had a woman who worked for us who put her bed in the back room on bricks. When I asked her why, she said, so the Tokoloshe (a well-known little demon in the Zulu mythology) wouldn't be able to get onto her bed. But one night we heard her scream and when I ran out to her room, she told me Tokoloshe tried to strangle her,

bricks or no bricks under the bed! I set some stuff alight in her room and smoked old Tokoloshe out,” he chuckled and then continued on a more serious note,

“It is quite possible that a worker in the garden could have buried some voodoo charms in your garden. Did you perhaps fire someone lately?”

“No, no. Nothing like that happened,” we assured him.

“Well, maybe the previous owner caused the problem. I’ll come over tonight and see if I can do something.”

It never dawned upon us that our Ouija board experiment could have opened a channel for unseen evil forces to enter directly into our lives.

That night my dad arrived armed with plenty of garlic. He walked through the house tossing garlic cloves into the corners and making the sign of the pentagram with his right hand.

“Let’s see what happens. I hope the smell won’t chase you away as well,” he joked and left.

But it seemed that the spirits had no problem with garlic, nor with occult signs. The unusual incidences continued, and my father suggested that we visit a spiritualist church to find out if some departed spirit had advice for us about our situation. He explained to us where to go and the next Sunday we dressed in our only reasonably presentable clothing and set out to find some answers.

The church looked like any regular church; the congregation sat in regular pews and looked like regular churchgoers. There were no weird characters dressed in black with long black fingernails, holding a crystal ball. The ‘priest’ in front said a few words and then proceeded to let his eyes roam through the congregation until his gaze settled upon us.

“There is a lady standing behind you, dressed in a long dress – from about the late eighteen hundreds, it seems – she wants to communicate to you that you will be starting with a family earlier than you think,” and with that he turned slightly and focussed on someone else.

Walter and I looked at each other. What does a baby have to do with our problem at home? We were driving home discouraged, when Walter suddenly remembered that Catholic priests were exorcists. He sheepishly admitted to me that his science and analytical mind had no solution to the problem and felt he needed to find a priest who could deal with the spiritual realm. The Catholic Church certainly seemed to have had some strange lasting influence on him, especially in view of the fact that he was raised Catholic only for the first eight years of his life, after which he refused to have anything to do with them. But they say, ‘Once a Catholic, always a Catholic’

or as the Jesuit motto by the founder of the order, Ignatius Loyola goes, “Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man.”

“Well,” I thought to myself, “I don’t know what good this will do,” but I faithfully went along as he hastened to the nearest priest in our neighbourhood. I had hardly waited a few minutes in the car, when Walter came rushing out. We were always very different, like chalk and cheese, he would be extremely hyperactive and I always super calm under stressful conditions, which often annoyed him even more.

“He’s coming right now! He said its no problem – he’s done it before. Let’s go! Let’s go!”

The priest’s ammunition was hardly more impressive than my father’s. He had some holy water in a bottle and a little book in his hand. He started by sprinkling a few drops of water in the lounge area and continued through the house, at the same time reading from his little exorcist book. When he was done, he greeted us and left.

“That was it?” I asked sceptically. Walter raised his shoulders and we continued with our work around the house without saying a word. But that same night the most terrifying thing happened. As we were getting ready for bed, we both heard footsteps come down the passage towards our bedroom. We froze. Our bedroom door was open and Mayet growled and stormed towards the door to meet the intruder, but she stopped and became strangely quiet as she looked down the passage. The next minute there was a loud knock on the bedroom door, and then absolute silence. Too scared to look for ourselves, we watched Mayet as she stood there for a little while, her head turned sideways in anticipation, but clearly, she could see nothing and returned to her bed.

It seemed like we were holding our breaths for hours. Mayet was fast asleep once more and at long last we realised the ‘thing’ had gone. The unseen intruder had come to announce that it was leaving and in the following months we had to admit that this time it was for good. It was hard to give credit to the priest who had solved our problem with some water and a little book and soon the incidence was well and securely tucked away in the archives of our minds, never to be recalled again. Or so we thought.



Groping through Darkness.....

Chapter 4

Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

A few months later we discovered that I was pregnant. We were baffled that the prediction of 'the lady from the nineteenth century' actually came true. Was my father right after all? Could it be that there is an unseen realm where the spirits of the dead live? And if they were not the dead, who were they?

The company my father was working for had moved to Johannesburg and my father came home only for the weekends, sometimes only every second weekend. My mother was unable to quit her post at the University because of the house and other commitments and it wasn't long before they started drifting apart. A male friend of the family, one of my mother's colleagues, started taking care of things around the house and a friendship developed which brought my mother to the point where she felt torn between the two, but couldn't make a decision.

One night we woke up with soft tapping on our bedroom window. We peeped through the curtains and to our surprise my father was standing outside in the dark.

"I don't know what to do with your mother, she won't wake up," he said with an unusual urgency in his voice. We knew she sometimes took something to help her sleep, but something didn't seem right. We quickly got dressed and followed my father home in our car.

The moment we saw my mother lying there, sprawled out in an unusual position, we knew something really serious was wrong. She had a sickly greyish complexion and wouldn't respond to anything.

"This is bad, this is very bad," Walter said to himself as he inspected the bottles of pills on her bedside table. It was obvious that she had taken an overdose of sleeping tablets. We carried her to the car and struggled to get her onto the back seat of our two-door Passat. I was about seven months pregnant at the time and struggled to hold her on my lap as we raced her to the nearest hospital, only to learn that they refused to take suicide cases! We then had to drive all the way to a hospital in Durban approximately thirty kilometres away. Walter pushed our little car to its limit and we arrived not a minute too soon. Her life was saved, but, unfortunately, as we learned later, not her marriage.

The rest of our stay in Natal was rather uneventful. Walter had proved himself in the academic world and was offered a better post at his alma mater, Stellenbosch University. We were happy to go back, so that I could finish my BA degree and Walter his Ph.D., but we struggled to sell the house in an increasingly unstable political and economic climate. We were forced to rent it out to a young lawyer and his wife, who proved that professional people are not always the best tenants. Within a year our lovely home was reduced to an unsightly ruined house and when it was eventually sold, we barely recovered the loan we had on the house.

By the time we had to move, I was eight months pregnant, so we decided that I fly down to the Cape, leaving Walter with the gruelling task of driving the approximate 1500 km with a Rottweiler, a Persian and a Siamese cat in a little two-door car stacked to the ceiling with our personal belongings.

We rented a little labourer's cottage on a farm on top of Helshoogte Pass just outside Stellenbosch. It wasn't the best with its huge cracks in the damp walls, only a sink in the room that was supposed to be a kitchen and no cupboards at all. We had very little money and hardly any furniture but managed to prepare a room for the baby that was soon to be born by scraping together some second-hand odds and ends.



Our first son was a few months old, when riots broke out in the entire Cape area. Everywhere mobs stoned passing cars and some areas were impossible to pass through. Since we lived up on the mountain some ten kilometres from Stellenbosch, we had to travel down the pass and through a little village to get to the town. This was impossible without getting killed, therefore the farming community was escorted to town with an armed police vehicle in the front and one at the back of the convoy. Farmers and even their

coloured labourers were also threatened by the rioters, and we were mostly confined to our homes. It was not unusual for farm workers to knock at our door, in desperate need of medical attention after having been stabbed several times by their own people.

In view of the increasing violence, we decided to move to town, where it would be safer for me and the baby during the day while Walter was at work. We moved into a small semi-detached house in Stellenbosch and when our son Martin was just over one and a half years old, I needed to complete my degree, or else my first two years of studying would have been in vain, while Walter was completing his PhD. I enrolled the toddler at a crèche and after many tears shed by both mother and child, we eventually settled down and I was able to concentrate on my studies.

Although he got sick quite often and we got very little sleep, Martin was a placid child, who spent hours playing quietly by himself and we managed to complete our

degrees. Two years later our daughter was born, and we decided to have our first house built in an area where the children would have space to run around. We managed to make some profit from the house we sold and soon we moved into the new house with a small loan from the bank.

I started doing pottery and giving classes at home and at the technical college, in order to be with the children and to supplement our income, while Walter was getting more and more involved in his work and the research he was doing. He now had his doctorate and many post-graduate students, apart from the hundreds of undergraduates. He was successful and passionate about his work and was satisfied that the theory of evolution, as was taught to the students, provided adequate proof of our origins. He needed no God and had no intention of bringing Him into our lives. Besides, the spectacle some of the charismatic churchgoers made of themselves on Sunday television made him turn away in disgust and anger.

When students dared to disagree about the theory of evolution, he enjoyed pulling them to pieces in front of all the other students. Even the strongest of men battled to survive the sting of this German tongue, which, as personal experience taught me, seemed to have the ability to cut through concrete and steel. But even worse is an ardent atheist German tongue, which is something you would rather not wish to encounter.

During this time we tried to give Walter's father and stepmother the opportunity to see the grandchildren, but his stepmother made it so unpleasant and difficult for all of us, that we had to meet his father in a hotel when he wanted to see us. One Sunday, when Walter tried to phone his father, he couldn't get through and after several attempts, he gave up. The whole week he tried to reach his father's house, but with no success. Eventually, as he was ready to contact the telephone company, the phone rang and his stepmother answered.

"You'll have to come and see your father. He's not normal, you know," she laughed. "When I show him a bunch of keys, he tells me it's an apple!"

We hurriedly got the children into the car and drove to Cape Town. Walter's father was lying in bed, staring with a distant look in his eyes at the commotion around him. His stepmother picked up the keys from the table and asked mockingly, "Now, Juli, tell me, what am I holding in my hand?"

His eyes turned towards her hand. "Flowers. Bunch of flowers" he said. She smiled with a strange 'I told you so' expression on her face.

"So now it's flowers. Are you sure it's flowers, Juli?" Then she turned to us and said, "You know, when you give him something to read out loud, he'll make up his own story. His mind is gone."

"How long has he been like this?" Walter was concerned and annoyed at her mocking his father in his condition.

“Oh, a few days.”

“Why didn’t you phone us earlier?”

She hesitated. “I didn’t want to bother you.”

Walter shook his head in disbelief and mumbled something to himself as he started dressing his father to take him to the hospital. After doing the necessary brain scans, the neurologists discovered a brain tumour in such a delicate spot in the brain that surgery would be impossible and after a few days he was sent home with the sure sentence of only a few months to live. We decided to take him home with us and make his last few days as pleasant as possible, out in the country with his children and grandchildren and away from the constant conflict in his home. Walter’s stepmother complained bitterly, but we insisted.

After a few weeks with us, he seemed to recover slightly and had some moments of clarity, during which he asked us what was wrong with him. When he realised he had little time to live, he told us that his testament was in a trust at some insurance company and that he had made Walter one of the executors of his will. He also mentioned who was to inherit what and wanted confirmation that everything was still in order and asked Walter to contact his wife for the details.

When Walter told her of his father’s wish, she went on a tangent, accusing us of trying to meddle with his will and refused to disclose any details. We didn’t want to cause the dying man any further pain and left it at that.

After his death a few months later, we discovered why Walter’s stepmother had reacted so strangely. According to two acquaintances down the road from their house, they were asked by his stepmother to come to his father’s house one day. His wife had noticed that something was wrong with his mind and saw a golden opportunity. She took the phone off the hook for one week, which explained why we couldn’t get through. She then proceeded to have a Codicil to his Will and Testament drawn up, bequeathing to herself some property he had, and got the two ladies to come up to the house to be the witnesses to the signing of the document.

When they arrived, the confused man was in bed. She brought him the document and asked him to sign it. He received the document and pen without questioning it, but was unable to sign, whereupon his wife placed the pen in his hand and guided the signature along the line. The signature did not turn out to be on the line but at almost 45 degrees to the line and was very shaky, nothing like the firm handwriting he had before.

In the meantime, the insurance company that handled the trust refused even to speak to Walter, let alone allow him to have any insights into the will, even though he was one of the executors. We learnt that his stepmother had blackened his name to such a degree with the company, where her brother happened to be one of the

previous directors, that they refused to deal with 'someone of such vile and deceptive character'. His stepmother no doubt reasoned that, if he was discredited, Walter wouldn't have insight into the will, and her little deception might have remained a secret forever, little knowing that the two witnesses had already contacted us.

When Walter's sister in America heard what had happened, she insisted we take the stepmother to court, not to regain the property in question, but primarily to see justice done. Walter, his sister and the advocate felt that they had a good case, seeing that the two witnesses were willing to testify, but what happened made us realise that there is no justice on this earth. We had to learn the very expensive lesson that no earthly advocate or judge or any human being was able to protect us and fight our case against injustice and set the record straight.

The case was brought to the Supreme Court and the neurologists at the hospital testified that there was no possibility that his father was able to comprehend what he was signing. Unlike America, the South-African judicial system does not require a person to be 'by sound body *and* mind' when he or she signs a document, thus the defence argued that the document was valid, even if he hadn't agreed to it or didn't understand it's contents fully. The judge, after thorough questioning, realised what the outcome would be and took Walter and his advocate aside and asked them to withdraw the case, his reason being that he had "no doubt as to the stepmother's character", but according to the letter of the law he would have had to grant verdict in her favour, which he found very hard to do.

They withdrew and we were liable for all costs, but at least Walter's credibility was restored to some extent, and he was able to work together with the insurance company that handled the trust without further unpleasantness.

The next hurdle, however, was awaiting them. There was the inevitable contention of where his father was to be buried. While alive, his wish was to be buried in the family grave of Walter's mother, but the stepmother refused and after many bitter discussions, they decided to leave the location of the grave to the undertaker. After Walter's poor father had been on ice for many days, the day of the funeral arrived and to everyone's surprise, the undertaker had chosen out of thousands of available ones, a space so close to his mother's grave, that the two corners met.

As they all watched the coffin sink down into the depths of the earth, Walter's eyes swept over his mother's grave and he wondered if this was coincidence, or interference from the 'spirit world'. Had his deceased mother guided the undertaker in his choice? His stepmother naturally thought that some bribery had taken place and never spoke a word to us at the funeral or ever after that.

The saddest of all was that a few weeks after the will was settled and she received her inheritance along with the self-bequeathed property, she suddenly died without warning. Her death certificate stated: "Cause of death unknown." We strangely felt

sorry for the lonely soul who was so unhappy in this life and failed to find peace, neither in earthly relationships, nor in possessions.

It was a few months before the dust had settled and our lives were more or less back to normal, when my father phoned. He explained that he and my mother got divorced and that he remarried none other than Merle, the many-times-divorced mother of my childhood friend Ivan, who had died in the car accident in Natal.

“Oh no,” I said tiredly to Walter, “now we have to deal with another stepmother, but at least she couldn’t possibly be anything like yours was. At least I don’t think so...”

They had moved down from Johannesburg to the Cape and settled in a little seaside resort Hermanus, just over an hour’s drive from Stellenbosch. My father was working at an advertising agency in Cape Town and found it too hard to drive the distance from Hermanus, so we encouraged him to stay with us during the week and drive home for the weekend. We got on well with my father and our two children, Martin and Tanya, enjoyed him very much. He thought they were the best-behaved little ones he had ever seen and spent much time playing and talking with them. He was no trouble at all and stayed with us for more than two years.

My mother, however, was concerned about the fact that my father and his wife had moved into our lives. During conversations with my mother as well as my father we learned that my stepmother was deeply involved in the New Age Movement and was considered to be one of the ‘enlightened teachers’ of courses such as ‘A Course in Miracles’. In this course students are taught that they need to realise and develop their own inner power, which will enable them to perform any kind of miracle. According to her teaching, any human being had the ability to become like God, they only needed to discover their own divinity. Once a day she would meditate and sometimes some spirit being would manifest himself to her to teach and guide her.

We started feeling very uncomfortable about my father’s involvement with her, especially after we were told that her sister, a well-known, award-winning author and poetess had doused herself in fuel, stretched herself out on a cross on a hill in Spain and set herself alight. She survived but claimed that it was an accident and in her badly scarred state she continued her writing in South Africa.

During this time I seemed to be constantly sick. I had either pneumonia or bronchitis and constant asthma. When I fell pregnant with our third child, I was so sick and had lost so much weight, that I had to be hospitalised. My doctor didn’t know what was wrong – I had no infection in my lungs this time but had a constant high fever. They suspected uterine septicaemia, usually caused by the death of the foetus and the doctors were ready to do an abortion, when Walter decided to take me to have an ultra-sound scan. In those days the hospitals were not equipped to do the tests and patients were sent to private medical centres. I was too weak to walk and had a high temperature, which meant he had to drive me there and physically carry me with the drip still attached to my arm up the stairs and into the building.

The scan showed a tiny little fellow, the size of a finger, happily sucking his thumb. We were back at the drawing board. No physical explanation could be given for my condition and after a few days of antibiotics I was sent home. The rest of my pregnancy I struggled from one fever to the next and had a constant, irritating cough for most of the nine months.

When Robert was born, he had a deep frown in his little forehead and screamed night and day. I struggled to feed him and had to keep him wrapped up tightly to prevent him from scratching himself and fighting everything around him. I didn't have a moment's peace, not even to have a meal. The little guy constantly needed to be rocked and I even tried to tie him onto my back as the African women do, but I wasn't well enough endowed at the right places to keep him there and he kept on slipping down. At night he slept a restless hour or two at a time, waking up and screaming for an hour in between. We were tired beyond description. Fortunately, Martin, aged nine and Tanya, who was five, were at school during the morning and in the afternoons they were able to help with taking care of their very demanding brother.

At the same time the pressure at Walter's work was increasing. He was working in a very competitive department with socially amiable (as long as you got drunk with them) but professionally hostile colleagues. The undergraduate as well as post-graduate student load was high and the tension and lack of sleep at home contributed to his irritability and bad moods. It became nothing unusual for him to put his fist right through a door in a fit of rage and then bemoan his situation when his hand got stuck! He was constantly scolding and complaining and more than once he turned over the table with all the cups of coffee and other breakables on it and left me to clean up the mess.

The children and I, as well as our pets, developed the skill of staying out of his way when he had a bad day at work. It was usually only after the first whiskey of the evening, a beer and a few glasses of wine, that he started to calm down. I began to wonder what had happened to that positive in-control person I used to know. Even his facial expression changed, and a dark, restless look started settling in his blue eyes. Many nights I lay awake on my tear-drenched pillow while the others were sleeping, remembering the unkind words of Walter's stepmother, "I hope you cry for the rest of your life." Her wish certainly seemed to have come true. Was there no one who understood what I was going through? Was there no one who could help?

One night something happened that would be the catalyst for changing our lives forever. Exactly at two in the morning, Walter woke up, struggling to breathe, with his heart racing.

"I had a terrible dream. I dreamt someone was trying to strangle me," he panted as he wiped the beads of perspiration from his face.

He had hardly finished telling me, when Robert started screaming at a bloodcurdling pitch. He was now about one and a half years old and, although his sleeping pattern

had slightly improved, he usually still had a restless night. But this was something different. As we ran to his room, our first thought was that somehow he managed to fall from his cot, but he was lying on his back in bed, his little hands stretched out for us to pick him up and his eyes wide and filled with fear.

“Maybe he had a bad dream too,” I said as he settled down somewhat in my arms. But as I was holding him, I could feel his temperature rising and no medicine or cold-water sponges seemed to bring much relief. We struggled through the night to keep his temperature down and just before dawn he fell asleep.

The next day I took him to the doctor, who found no infection in the ears or throat, or in his lungs. He was, however, not well for almost a week, but recovered eventually and soon all was forgotten. Although he had become generally easier to handle during the day, he was insecure and hated being alone.

A couple of weeks later, the same thing happened. At two o'clock Walter dreamt that he was being strangled and a few seconds later Robert would be screaming in his bedroom next to ours. Once again, his temperature would rise to above 40 degrees, but this time we were not able to control the temperature and he subsequently got fever fits. We phoned our doctor and rushed him to the hospital, where they put a drip on him and placed him in a cooling tent to try and stabilise him. The nursing staff battled through the night and by morning there was a slight improvement. He was kept in hospital for a few days and sent home, where he struggled to regain his strength.

This carried on several times and each time the child would turn almost at the grave. It became more and more clear to us that this was no normal situation. Though clutching at any natural explanation at first, we had to admit that once again there was some supernatural interference in our lives, as during the time when we lived in Natal. When we asked my father, he had no explanation as to why this was happening to us. In Natal, he reasoned, it could have been some unhappy departed spirit that returned to the family that lived in the house before us, but in this case no one lived there before us, since we built the house ourselves! And fortunately, he didn't offer his garlic remedy again.

Just as we thought we had some peace, it would happen again. One particular night, Robert was lying in his hospital bed with the usual high fever. The doctor had inserted the drip into a vein in his head just above the eye, because his arms were punctured and swollen from the drips, which made it difficult to find a vein. Walter and I had been taking turns to stay with him in hospital and this night was Walter's turn. He had taken the students' exam scripts with him and was sitting on the vacant hospital bed marking them, when Robert started shaking and shivering from the fever. It was two o'clock. Walter picked him up and tried to calm him down, but his little body was shaking so badly, that the drip was torn from his head. Blood poured from the wound and streamed down his haggard little face.

As he stood there with the child in his arms, Walter said to himself, "This has gone too far. It's way beyond coincidence - I have to find help. I cannot handle one second more of this."

His mind went back to the problem we had in our house in Natal, and he suddenly remembered that the Catholic priest was able to put an end to the trouble. All the years he was unwilling to admit it, but now we were desperate and had nowhere to turn to. I arrived at the hospital to take over the morning shift and found him in a nervous state, not merely from a lack of sleep, but from the realisation that he once again was facing a problem that he couldn't resolve himself. For him, with his 'I can do it myself and I don't need any help' mindset, this was a major traumatic experience!

He left the hospital and went straight to the Catholic Church in Stellenbosch. He had to search for it, but eventually found the little parish and knocked on the door, rolling up his sleeves to try and hide Robert's blood on his cuffs. Who knows what the priest would think when he saw that!

He had to knock a second time before the door was opened a teeny crack, just enough to peep through.

"Yes?" a man's voice asked hoarsely.

"I have to see the priest." Walter was ever so slightly irritated with the fact that he was forced to ask for help from an institute which hardly brought back fond memories.

"About what?" came the same voice.

"Well, I have a problem...."

The door opened wide enough for Walter to see the drawn, unshaven face and sallow complexion of a man in his forties or early fifties.

"Come inside." The man turned, offered Walter a chair and sat down behind his desk. "What is it you would like to tell me?"

Walter realized that this was the priest, but he wasn't anything like he expected him to be. As a little boy he had a great respect, bordering on fear for the priest on the other side of the confessional box, who seemed to know everything and had so much power.

Walter's eyes scanned the office. It was dark and stuffy. On the desk stood a brandy bottle. The room smelt of stale air and old dusty books.

"I have a problem in my home," Walter started cautiously as he watched the disinterested expression on the priest's face. "There are strange things happening in my house...."

He got no further, when the priest sat upright and said, "I don't want to hear anything about that. I don't deal with that. I will have someone contact you. Just give me your phone number." And with that he greeted Walter and showed him to the door.

Irritated and disgruntled Walter walked back to his car, mumbling to himself, "Thanks for nothing!" while his mind was reverting back to finding his own solution to the problem. He went home, had a quick shower and drove to work, putting the experience of the night and the morning out of his mind.

A few days later, we received an unusual phone call. A priest, who calmly introduced himself as Father McAllen, said that he had been informed of our situation and would like to see Walter at the convent in the Strand, which was some twenty kilometres from Stellenbosch. We were amazed. We had given up all hope of any help from the church and to tell the truth, we had second thoughts and were reluctant to get them involved. What if they didn't believe us and thought we were crazy? We had spoken to no one, besides my father and wished to keep it that way.

That same day Walter drove to the convent, where he was taken to the small lounge to meet with Father McAllen. He was a very dignified man in his seventies, very calm and polite and made a good impression on Walter. He started talking slowly and in a serious tone.

"I am glad that you have come. I know it has been a difficult time for you and I would like to help you."

"Maybe I should tell you first what has been going on...." Walter said as he shifted a little to prepare to tell him the story.

"Oh, that won't be necessary at all. I know the devil is trying to kill your youngest child," he said as he nodded his head in sympathy.

Walter nearly fell off the chair. "How...just how...? Did anyone tell you this?" he stammered, frantically trying to remember whether he had told anyone else but my father.

"No," came the answer calmly, "but I can tell you this: I already have the permission to say a mass in your home. You see, your case is very serious, and I do believe it will be necessary to say a mass. You say you are a Catholic?"

Walter just nodded somewhat sheepishly, hoping that the old man cannot read his thoughts as well.

“Then you do know,” the priest continued, “that we cannot say mass just anywhere, but under rare and special conditions it is allowed. I’ve had the letter of permission from the bishop and have been fasting for you for a week already but had to wait till I could be here in the Strand to meet with you. If it would be convenient for you, you can take me to your house now and then bring me back to the convent afterwards, if you please.”

“Of course,” Walter said softly. As they walked to the car, he searched his memory, trying to understand how it was possible that the priest could have asked the bishop for permission almost a week before Walter even spoke to the local priest in Stellenbosch. On top of it all he knew what had been going on without anyone telling him! Where did he get his information from?

On the way to Stellenbosch Walter asked him whether he often had to deal with this kind of situation. “Oh yes, many times. I deal mainly with exorcisms, but not all of the same nature as in your case.”

They drove on in silence for a couple of minutes, when Walter remembered that only Catholics could take part in the mass. “What about my wife? She’s not Catholic, will that make any difference?”

“No, but don’t worry, she will believe,” was all that the exorcist priest had to say.

When I walked into the lounge to meet Father McAllen, he greeted courteously, and I saw the imprints of a long and mysterious life in his face. He asked me to fetch some water in a bowl from the kitchen, which he placed on the table and then proceeded to take a little box from his pocket.

He opened the box, took some ‘consecrated’ salt from it and sprinkled it in the form of a cross on the water, thus creating the holy water. He walked from one window to the next and painted a cross on the glass with his finger. As the water evaporated, it left a visible salt cross on the windowpane. When he came to Robert’s room, it seemed like he was losing his balance and started swerving backwards and forwards. Walter stood behind him, ready to catch him, thinking he was perhaps feeling faint, but he recovered and continued to the next room as if nothing had happened. When he came into our bedroom, he once again seemed to have lost his balance for a while and then turned facing us.

“We will have to say the mass in the baby’s room. It’s worst there,” he mumbled as if to himself, looking distressed.

I hurried to fetch a table and a white tablecloth and some chairs. An awkward nervous silence descended upon our home as we sat and watched as the old priest prepared for the mass. From his wide priestly gown he presented several little boxes and placed them on the table. He opened the larger one, revealing some round wafers. Once again his hand disappeared into an invisible pocket to reach for his little book. He paged slowly through it and then started to read something in Latin.

Through the monotonous foreign droning I heard the sound of footsteps softly pattering down the passage. Our faithful furry friend Mayet came walking into the baby room, followed by our Persian and Siamese cats. They made themselves comfortable and quietly watched the proceedings. The priest lifted the round wafer up and pronounced that the bread, through the mediation of the priest, had been transformed into the body of Christ. I felt uneasy and confused. "What strange thing is happening to us?" I thought. I just wanted it all to go away, I desperately wanted my life back. Everything had become so complicated....

I watched as Walter opened his mouth to receive the little round host the priest placed on his tongue. After some more prayers and Latin citations, the mass was over, and the priest opened the other little boxes. In them were some genuine relics of some saint that the old man received from Lourdes.

"These you have to hang above the beds of your other two children, as well as your own for protection." The old man paused for a while, and I noticed that he was very tired. He then took his own ordination cross from his neck and gave it to us. "This you must hang above the bed of your youngest son."

We invited him to stay for something to drink, but he wanted to be taken back to the convent as soon as possible.

"What do we owe you?" Walter asked.

His scientific mind still seemed to refuse to see the unusual happenings as anything other than merely a business deal - a service rendered. The priest wanted no money, but I refused to let him leave without anything, so I ran to my pottery studio to fetch my largest and best pot that I had made and urged him to take it as a token of our gratitude.

"All right," he said, "I shall donate it to the nuns in Cape Town that never see the outside world," and after greeting, they left.

As I watched the car disappear around the corner, I mulled over the strange things that had happened, but soon it was put out of my mind as I rushed to fetch the children from school.

That night, when it was time to put the children to bed, we hung the amulets above Martin and Tanya's beds and the crucifix above Robert's bed. We braced ourselves as we carried Robert to his bedroom, expecting the usual ritual of screaming and the consequent lengthy rocking procedure to get him to fall asleep.

But tonight was different. We put him down in his cot and waited for him to let loose his familiar siren. But to our surprise, instead of curling up into a foetus position, he lay flat on his back, chattering to himself for a little while and fell asleep with his arms spread out in a relaxed position. This was the first time it happened in almost

two years. Walter and I looked at each other and that awkward uneasy feeling crept over us once more. We were forced to acknowledge that the Catholic Church had done it again - once again peace and health returned to our home.

In the weeks and months to come we held our breaths, wondering how long it would last. There was still that nagging feeling at the back of our minds, relentlessly popping up like a scary Jack-in-the-Box character. Was there any guarantee that a mere human being could permanently save us from our sentence of misery on this wretched planet? And this through some salty water, a little round biscuit, a couple of bone chips from a deceased good Catholic, and some Latin words?



Into the Light

Chapter 5

Isa 58:8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily...

It is amazing what a lack of sleep can do to one's mind. But more amazing is, what enough sleep can do! Now that we had no more nocturnal escapades - other than the usual occasional disturbances not unfamiliar to those who have taken upon themselves the daunting task of raising little human creatures – we suddenly felt that we had a life once more. One day we were setting the table for lunch, and we kept on bumping into one another trying to squeeze through the narrow doorway between the kitchen and the dining room.

“This wall has to go.” Walter threatened.

“No, it doesn't.” I knew his German temperament meant business, and that meant lots of trouble for me.

“Yes, it will have to go,” he said with finality. After lunch he climbed into the ceiling to check the position of the roof beams and without warning started bashing down the kitchen wall with a twelve-pound hammer.

I hurried to save my entire kitchen, all breakables, pots and pans and utensils from the devastating blows and bricks and mortar flying through the air. Within a few hours I had a mountain of rubble on my dining room carpet and broken and messed up kitchen cupboards and surfaces.

“We'll just have to put in a new kitchen at some time,” Walter said as he mused with satisfaction over the large space he had created.

“At some time...?” I mumbled to myself.

“Now we can walk straight from the kitchen to the dining room. Isn't that nice, Wify?” He beamed like a little boy who had just built his first paper plane.

‘Wify’ wasn't impressed. “Nice for whom?” I thought as I wondered how on earth I was going to cook for us. As I turned my eyes to the other side of the room, I saw three little grey figures standing quietly in the door. Their hair and clothes were covered in a thick layer of dust, and they looked like little grey old gnomes. We couldn't help laughing and started to enjoy the idea of a change in the home, even though I had to spend the next few months cooking on gas cookers in the garage!

Walter's kitchen inspiration bubbled over into the rest of the house and before I knew it, my whole house was full of holes and rubble. We could smell and taste dust all day long, but the reward was worth the suffering. We were slowly transforming our tiny dollhouse into a semi-mansion with a swimming pool, patios with pergolas and generous splashes of colourful ground covers cascading down the rocky slopes.

One cold, rainy morning I heard the bulldozer start up. The previous day the earthmoving contractor had pushed over a wall at the back of our house so we could extend the house and put in a swimming pool for those sweltering summer days. I suddenly realised that the huge earth-gobbling machine was heading towards my flowerbed, and I ran out to save some of my precious plants.

There was no time to fetch a garden fork and I started digging my hands into the earth under the ground cover and shrubs to loosen the roots. The next minute I felt a sharp pain in my hand. I peered carefully into the bushes and saw something brown and coiled moving slowly deeper into the shadows of the plants. My stomach turned as I realised that I had been bitten by a snake. I ran back into the house, my mind racing to try and remember the correct procedure for snake bite.

Although we had school holidays and the children were at home, Walter still had to be at the university. I called out to our oldest son, Martin, to phone his dad and tell him what had happened. Within five minutes Walter managed to be home, a trip which usually took him about fifteen minutes. He had driven through the red traffic lights and stop streets and over pavements, ignoring the threats and indignant looks he received from the other motorists and pedestrians.

We phoned our doctor, who met us at the local small-town hospital. My hand was burning, and my arm was turning bluish, but fortunately it seemed that the snake was asleep when I disturbed it and wasn't able to get a firm grip on my hand. There was only a small hole in my middle finger and a little scratch just over a centimetre apart. By the spacing between the two fangs, the experts postulated that the snake must have been either a cape cobra, or a puff adder, both extremely poisonous snakes.

The venom of the cobra affects the nervous system, and that of the puff adder causes cell degeneration and the flesh of the affected limb will slowly start to rot away. The doctor was in a dilemma: the correct anti-serum must be administered, or else the antidote can cause the victim's death. Then my eyes started drooping, which was symptomatic of the neurotoxin of a cobra, but first I had to be tested for any allergic reaction. After a few seemingly endless minutes, the test indicated that I seemed to be slightly allergic, but the doctor made a calculated split-second decision and injected me with the life-saving fluid.

I was rushed to a larger hospital where they had a respirator and were able to monitor me more efficiently. During the trip in the ambulance I must have lost consciousness, but I was told that we almost didn't reach the hospital. Our country was still politically in turmoil and sporadic riots and necklace murders along our

roads had become part of our daily life. As the ambulance took a short cut to the hospital, we turned into a road that was blocked by hundreds of rioters. They attacked the vehicle and started to rock it in their usual attempt to overthrow it. Then Walter shouted to the driver, "Put you foot down, just go, go, go!"

The bewildered ambulance driver dug his foot deep into the accelerator and sped away. The mob parted like the Red Sea during the Exodus as the people scattered out the way, and we were saved from certain death. During the following three days I slipped in and out of a coma-like state. Sometimes I was aware of what was going on around me, but I was unable to move or speak, or even open my eyes. I could hear the doctor enter the room and ask the sister, who was sitting at my bedside, how I was doing. She would then answer and say that she was worried that I was sleeping all the time. I wanted to shout out that I wasn't sleeping, but I couldn't, and wondered whether I was permanently paralysed. Or worse, I was worried that they would think that I was dead and then bury me alive! But after a few days I recovered quickly and was able to go home, where our children were waiting, their faces pale with anxiety.

After my encounter with our unwanted venomous garden boarder, I wore gloves and boots and used garden tools like a sensible gardener. Soon we had our garden looking even more beautiful than before. But I still didn't have a kitchen.

Now the search was on for the best kitchen designer. We phoned around and came across a cabinetmaker in the Strand, and when my husband heard that he was German, the decision was made.

"Germans are best in everything they do, we'll take him."

I merely lifted my eyebrows at that statement, mumbling inaudibly to myself: "Yes, they're also best at being conceited, it seems!"

The next day a dark-haired man arrived to take the measurements. He was efficient and business-like, not entirely a typical German and different to those we were usually involved with. The typical German would go to the *Kegel Bahn*, play *Skat* for hours and eat *Bockwurst* and *Sauerkraut* while they down one *Stiefel* of beer after the other. Yes, this German was very different.

One day when he came to install some units, he said to us in a by-the-way manner: "I would just like to say that I walk with the Lord. He's the partner in my business," and with that he handed Walter a pamphlet.

"O, brother, not one of those 'Jesus freaks' again," he thought. I looked at Walter, reading his predictable mind and cringed at the thought that he might say what he was thinking.

He took a brief glance at the paper in his hand and said: "That's fine by me – you walk with whomever you want, but I just want a kitchen." Then he opened a nearby

drawer and gratefully flicked the pamphlet inside and out of sight, and changed the subject.

At long last our home was finished, and as we started enjoying the luxury of having so much space, a strange feeling of guilt crept out from under the covers of our nightmare past. We were basking in the sunlight of a trouble-free life without giving credit to the one who seemingly created the sun, the Catholic Church. Twice they had solved our problem with the spirit world and now we had to reciprocate, or we feared the blessing would turn into a curse. We had sold our holiday house in Vermont and after discussing the matter, we decided to donate some money to repair the roof of the church, which was in a pitiful state.



Our completed house in Stellenbosch

With that conscience-soothing decision, Walter rushed down to the church to hand the priest the cheque, but to his surprise the man, without a word of gratitude, took the cheque as if it were worth no more than a piece of paper and said he would hand it over to his superior. Disappointed that he didn't get some form of absolution from something or at least some accolades, Walter drove back home, still feeling guilty. What more are we supposed to do to earn our sunshine?

A few weeks later the guilt had driven Walter to the point where he decided to start going back to church. To protect his family, he was even willing to go through his most terrifying childhood experience, the confessional. He couldn't imagine anything more humiliating for an atheist scientist than to sit in a stuffy box and whisper his heart's secrets to another man. Not to mention what that would do to his image! What if a student sees him at church? That would without doubt destroy his professional credibility.

Fortunately, there was a solution to his dilemma. This solution was about eleven years old at the time. "If someone should ask," Walter thought, "I could easily say I was taking my oldest son to church!"

Martin was always willing to please and the following Sunday he accompanied his father for the first time in his life to church, and during the week he attended catechism classes. Soon it had become a way of life, and besides, it wasn't that much of a sacrifice, they would go to church in their squash clothes and after mass we would all go down to the squash club to play a few games with our friends and drink beer. I even started attending church from time to time, although I just observed and didn't take part in all the ritual bowing, responsive readings and the Hail Marys and of course, I wasn't allowed to take part in the mass because I wasn't catholic.

About a year later Walter, in his usual passionate way, tried to explain to his large first year class the intricacies of our origins, when a girl once again interrupted him and stood up in class.

"Dr. Veith, I just want to say that I don't agree. I know that God created us, so how can this evolution theory be right?"

Walter wasn't sure that he had heard right. How on earth could someone be so ignorant! How can anyone in this day and age still believe in such a ridiculous myth? During the following few minutes he used a combination of his sarcastic sharp tongue and all the wrath stored up since his childhood against God, to humiliate the young girl in front of the whole class. When the students started sniggering, she sat down in a flushed state and started crying. Egged on by the response of the class, Walter revelled in his victory for a while and then continued with the class.

Back in his office the little nagging voice of his conscience started to plague him. "What a hypocrite you are!" he said to himself. "You go to church because they helped you with a problem, but you refuse to admit there is a God!" He was feeling increasingly unhappy about his behaviour in class and decided to visit the priest. Maybe confessing, as much as he disliked it, would free him from his guilty feelings and he could get on with his life as usual.

When he arrived at the parish, there was not a soul in sight. He stood around for a while and then entered the small dark chapel. The church was empty. Walter sat down in the pews and looked through the security bars that separated the altar area from the rest of the chapel. The little red light was shining, which meant that the host, which had been transformed by the priest into the actual body of Christ, was in its holy place. He suddenly felt very uncomfortable and confused with the idea that an intelligent, thinking adult could believe that God was locked up in a little box behind bars, and then only when the little red light was shining! Feeling disgusted with himself and everything around him, he stood up and said loudly: "God, how can I believe in You? If you really exist, You will have to show me!" and with that challenge he walked out of the church.

A few days later Walter was searching for something, as usual. He wasn't much of an organised person and always relied on me to keep track of his misplaced items. To

tell the truth, he hasn't changed much over the last more than thirty years, but I did. I don't try to keep track of his misplaced items any longer!

"Where did you hide the manual for my angle grinder!?" he shouted more than asked.

I rolled my eyes. I wanted to say, "How should I know? O, I remember, I think I last used your angle grinder to carve the roast chicken." I giggled to myself but I dared not frustrate him even further. Instead, like a well-trained wife, I hurried to help him look for it before he loses his temper completely. When I arrived in the kitchen, he had pulled open every cupboard and drawer and was ruffling through some papers in the top drawer. He pulled out a pamphlet and started reading it silently, turning it over a couple of times.

"What is it?" I asked, thankful for the distraction.

"Remember, that guy gave it to us when he came to install the kitchen cupboards." He said musingly.

I looked at the pamphlet for the first time. It was written in German and on the inside there were the simple words: ***The Catholic Church changed the Commandments of God.*** Underneath were three columns of three different versions of the Ten Commandments; the first, the Biblical version, the second, the Catholic and the third was the Lutheran version.

We looked at each other and an indescribably strange but serious feeling gripped my heart. I didn't understand what the significance was, but I knew this was something very important.

"Where's Martin's catechism book, I want to check this out," Walter said as he kept on staring at the paper in his hand. I fetched our son's lesson book and we discovered that the Catholic Ten Commandments were exactly as described on the pamphlet.

"Do we have a Bible in the house?" he asked. We searched all our bookshelves but found nothing. Then Walter remembered Tante Kippie. For many years Walter's father had visited the old German lady in a wheelchair and after his death, we



Tante Kippie

continued to visit her and take her out. When she died, she left all her belongings to us: one box full of books and a few odds and ends. Walter hurried to the garage where he had stacked away the box, rummaged through the items and pulled out a little well-read German Bible.

With an unusual urgency we scanned the Bible for Exodus 20 and discovered that the Ten

Commandments were indeed different from the Catholic version, just as indicated on the pamphlet. The Lutheran Church's version was exactly the same as the Catholic commandments, even though Tante Kippie's old Lutheran Bible told a different story.

Comparing the two sets of Commandments, we discovered that the second commandment (which forbade bowing down and worshipping idols), was removed entirely and in order to have ten again, the last command (which forbids coveting anything someone else has), was split into two different categories of the same commandment, forbidding coveting your neighbour's wife, as well as coveting his goods. We further noticed with amazement that our son's catechism book spoke of the Sabbath day being the Sunday, the first day of the week, whereas the Bible refers to the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, which is the Saturday. We always thought that Sunday was the seventh day, but when we checked the calendar and the dictionary, it was clearly indicated that Sunday was the first day of the week.

"Why would they want to change something from the Bible," we wondered, "Shouldn't church doctrines be based on the Bible?"

Confused and eager to understand more, we decided to phone the man who had given us the pamphlet almost a year before and ask him what this all meant. Walter struggled to get through, but eventually the phone rang, and the cabinetmaker answered. When Walter explained to him that we would like to know more about what it said on the pamphlet, he said:

"This is strange, after such a long time I suddenly had the feeling I should phone you, but I couldn't get through, because you were trying to phone me!" They laughed and Werner promised to pay us a visit after work.

In the meantime, Walter had set off to buy us each an English Bible, not as lovely as the one that was stolen from me when I was a child, but it seemed good enough. That evening Werner arrived armed with his German Bible, and we sat down around the dining room table to discuss the questions we had.

He explained to us how it was predicted in Daniel Chapter 7 that, after the fall of the great empires of the world, whereupon Europe would be divided, another power would arise that would eventually control all the nations and religions right until the end of time on this earth. All the characteristics of this power were spelt out more than a thousand years before the appearance of this 'little horn' and the description fits only one possible political and religious entity, and that is the Papacy.

We were stunned about this information. Could it be that the church that delivered us from evil spirits, and brought peace to our home, was the antichrist spoken of in the Bible? We talked almost right through the night until Werner's eyes looked like two great pools of blood. We were insatiable, and being, by then, no longer a full-blown atheist, but a good agnostic scientist, Walter decided to check the evidence

with the Theology and History departments at the his university. He had everyone running around in circles trying to gather the information he needed, but eventually he had to admit that the facts as so clearly depicted in the Bible, were correct.

Our studies of the Bible together with Werner continued throughout the next couple of nights. In no time we had studied through the whole book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, where it clearly predicts what will happen on the earth at the time of the end and even beyond the time on this earth as we know it. At every possible opportunity during the day, Walter and I would read and study as much as we could absorb, sometimes non-stop through the day and night.

At this point we decided to give the Catholic Church the opportunity to give their viewpoint and Walter phoned the priest to ask him to visit us and explain why the Catholic Church changed the Commandments of the Bible.

To our surprise the priest merely said, "I don't know, I'm not into Scripture," and that was the last we ever heard of him.

Walter refused to give up and invited the ministers of some of the protestant churches to explain their views on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation. Although they proved to be more 'into Scripture' than the Catholic priest, they left totally bewildered and rattled after they saw some things in the Bible that their theological seminaries never taught them.

We noticed, though, that our youngest son, was becoming increasingly more restless; during the day he would start crying as soon as we took up the Bible to read, and at night he seemed to revert back to his fitful sleeping pattern.

One day, after we had gobbled down our lunch during Walter's lunch break, we eagerly sat down in the lounge to study the Bible. Robert was playing quietly in the room with us, when he found an empty wine bottle from the previous evening, and, throwing it down onto the tiled floor, he proceeded to walk over the shattered glass. Which resulted in him almost severing his big toe! Off to the doctor it was again, which put an unpleasant end to our studies for a while.

We told our new-found friend about the incident and, after briefly explaining to him what we had gone through with Robert and how the priest intervened, Werner said, "I will come tonight and show you in the Bible what had happened to you and your son."

That evening we began to unravel a mystery that has plagued mankind since the beginning of time - what happens to people when they die, and can we interact with the so-called departed spirits? Werner showed us a couple of texts in the Bible, which clearly described that death is a state similar to sleep, during which the dead know nothing until the day that they are resurrected at the end of time, that is, when the Rock in Daniel 2 strikes the prophetic feet of clay and iron, and God himself intervenes on the earth. In the meantime, the dead do not exist in an unseen realm,

looking down on this earth or even going back to their families and homes to change into a ghostly vapour to scare or communicate with the living. They don't even go to heaven or hell after death, neither do they continue to exist in a Catholic place called Purgatory, where they pay the price for sins already forgiven by a priest in order to be able to move on to heaven!

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6 For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing...Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Psalms 146:4 His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Walter and I looked at each other in disbelief. "Then who is it that appears to people in the form of a ghost and what is this 'poltergeist' that throws things around in haunted houses?" I asked anxiously.

"The Bible says that God's archenemy, Satan, will deceive many people by pretending to be an 'angel of light'. He and his evil angels will do great and wonderful things and can work through human beings to achieve their goals. They can pretend to be the deceased child of some bereaved parents, and will even be able to impersonate that child one hundred percent, appearance and voice, everything," Werner explained as he read to us 2 Corinthians 11:14 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9,10.

"God also warned His people not to go to mediums and try and speak to the dead, because by doing so they are opening a channel for Satan to enter into their lives," he continued as he paged to several texts in the Bible, such as Deuteronomy 18: 10, Jeremiah 27:9 and Isaiah 8:19.

"Does that mean that we spoke to demons when we played the Ouija board? And not to your mother?" I asked Walter in disgust.

Walter was silent, but Werner just nodded.

It was as if scales had dropped from my eyes and I continued excitedly: "Now, if I understand it correctly, the Pope claims to be equal to or even higher than God, they changed God's commandments and persecuted God's faithful Bible-believing Christians throughout the ages. Therefore, they cannot be on God's side, but on Satan's side! Does that mean it wasn't God that worked through the priest from the Catholic Church to bring peace to our home, but Satan?"

Werner nodded again. I struggled to define that uneasy feeling again as Walter and I glanced at each other. Our German friend looked at his watch. It was after twelve already and he got ready to leave. We thanked him for his time and said goodbye. We struggled to digest everything and wondered why the Catholic priest would want to go to all the trouble to 'exorcise' demons if the Catholic church is their undercover agents in the first place! Little did we know that in a few days we would have the

answer to that question. We went to bed that night wondering how it was that a door had opened to such a remarkable and intriguing new episode in our lives.

The next day Robert was very ill. He hardly slept and had been running a temperature right through the night. All had been well and now suddenly this again. Later that day Werner told us that a group of friends had been praying day and night for a week for Robert, but the previous night one of the group thought the danger was over, so she didn't get up during the night for her turn to pray. This prayer thing was so new to us, and we didn't understand it fully, but we started to realise that it was something powerful and that there must be a God, and not a man, nor an institution, who had the power to protect us.

A few days later, after almost a year of no contact, Father McAllen phoned Walter, sounding desperate.

"Dr Veith, I have to speak with you urgently..."

"Yes, what is it, is something wrong?" Walter felt his heart pounding in anticipation.

"Well, you haven't been attending church for a while. It is of vital importance that you return as soon as possible and say a mass for your father, who..."

"My father?" Walter interrupted, "My father has been dead for a few years already!"

"I know, and that is why he needs you desperately. He is in great trouble on the other side, but if you would have the mass said for him, it could relieve his agony and..."

Walter was beginning to get the picture. "And how do you know this?" he asked.

The priest lowered his voice and said: "The nuns that never see the outside world told me. They have contact with the other side."

Now everything was as clear as crystal to us. For the first time we understood how the old priest knew what was happening in our house more than a week before Walter even went to ask for help at the Catholic church. The nuns that 'never see the outside world' must have been having regular spiritualistic meetings, during which demons provide them with information. And Walter's father, who was dead and 'sleeping', according to the Bible, was neither in purgatory, nor in heaven, or hell.

Now we also understood that the spiritual attack on us and the subsequent 'solving' of the problem by the priest, were intended to draw Walter and his whole family back into the snare of a false system of worship, where Satan and his agents would be able to continue to deceive and harass us. I shuddered at the thought.

The following evening Werner brought a young pastor with him. He explained to us that Satan had had full control in our lives and that we needed to turn to the one and only true God, admit that we have been wrong, and place our family under His protection. Walter and I were asked to go to our bedroom and pray, while Werner and the pastor would pray in the lounge.

In the bedroom we looked at each other sheepishly. We had never prayed before; how does one do that? I found myself giggling nervously as we got down on our knees, wondering what our highly educated friends and family would think if they could see us now. After stammering through a few words of prayer, asking God to take control of our lives, we returned to the lounge.

For the first time the feeling of uneasiness and uncertainty was lifted. It was as if we had travelled all our life on cul-de-sac roads that lead to no-where, and now for the first time we were on a highway. Although we still didn't know our destination, at least we knew we would somehow get there.

There was, however, one giant hurdle - the Sabbath issue. We understood that Catholicism was the antichrist by trying to act in the place of God on earth, by changing God's commandments and persecuting the faithful Christians throughout all the ages, but we didn't understand the significance of worshipping on a specific day, the seventh day.

"You say Genesis 1 speaks of God creating the earth in six literal days? That's impossible! Everyone knows that we came into existence through millions of years of evolutionary processes!" Walter one day said to Werner. "It's absolutely ridiculous to suggest that an organism as complicated as the human being was created by God speaking just a few words!" he said and proceeded to explain to the silent cabinetmaker the intricacies of the mastermind called evolution.

Not being a scientist and wise enough not to argue with him, Werner calmly said: "God created us and everything on this entire earth in six days and on the seventh day he rested and made it holy...."

"Prove it!" Walter interrupted, "Those days in the Bible can't be seven literal days, we need longer ages to explain how we got here. Prove to me it's literal!"

"I'll bring you books to read", Werner said as he got up to leave. The next day he returned with a pile of books, which Walter studied and returned promptly.

"I have never read so much rubbish in my life," he grunted with disgust as he shoved the pile of books into the arms of the surprised man. The following day Werner returned again with a stack of books larger than the first, which Walter scanned in no time and returned with even more disdain than before.

"I really don't know how you can believe that nonsense. How can God expect people to acknowledge and commemorate the seventh day as a literal day if there is no

proof that creation took place in six literal days? We all know that fossils have been dated hundreds of thousands of years old, not to mention the millions of years for rocks.... Is it really so significant that the Pope changed the day of worship from the Saturday to the Sunday? You know, maybe the six days actually represent something like six million years. But how then could the whole world justify keeping one day holy instead of a million years. No, that doesn't make sense either. How about if ...", Walter babbled on as he tried to find a way out of this new challenge.

Werner was slowly getting frustrated, and after a while, he suddenly interrupted and said: "You know, I can't prove it to you, but I don't have a problem with the Biblical creation account. You have the problem, so you solve it," and with that he gathered his pile of library books and left. It wasn't often that someone managed to take the wind out of Walter's sails, but that day he was quiet for at least a few blissful hours!

During the next few weeks a whole new world was opened to us. It was like looking through 3D-glasses – suddenly you find yourself walking through a dimension that was there all the time, but because of your limited vision, you never knew about it.

One day Walter brought a multi-page document home that someone at work had given him to read. Since he was too busy trying to sort out the confusion about Creation and Evolution, he absentmindedly dumped the papers onto my lap. "Won't you just see what that is all about. I don't have time right now."

The next morning while the children were at school, Walter at work and Robert playing quietly with his toys, I tackled the lengthy document and after reading through the first few pages, I realised it was about the Saturday Sabbath. I wondered why Walter's colleague gave him this specific article. He hadn't told anyone about what had been happening in our lives, especially not that we had been studying the Bible.

The writer attempted to prove that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday to commemorate Christ rising from the dead on the first day of the week. He proceeded to quote numerous priests and bishops from the Catholic Church who claimed that this change was a mark, a sign of their authority above God and the Scriptures. Not once did they refer to any Bible texts.

Now I was really interested. I flipped open my new Bible and a most remarkable thing happened. As I paged from one section of the Bible to the next, it was as if the words 'Ten Commandments' and 'Sabbath' stood out more clearly than all the other words, almost as if written in bold. Every page I turned to happened to refer to either the commandments or the Sabbath, and in every instance their importance and holiness were emphasised. After studying for a few hours, I pushed the document aside and closed my Bible. I had made my decision. The document that was supposed to turn the reader away from the Bible and the Sabbath that Jesus Himself instituted and kept, convinced me that the Biblical seventh day, Saturday, was the correct day of worship, and not the Sunday.

Walter's day turned out to be even more astounding. During his free period, he hurried down to the Zoology Department's library, which was probably one of the largest evolutionary-based libraries in the Southern Hemisphere. The librarian had stepped out for a few minutes and Walter found himself standing in front of the rows and rows of books, not knowing where to start or even what he was looking for. In desperation he mumbled: "God, I don't understand how the Biblical account of our origins can be correct. But if the evolution theory is wrong, then You will have to show me."

He took a book from the shelf, signed it out and walked towards his office. One of his colleagues approached him in the corridor from the front, but instead of just greeting him casually as usual, he crossed over towards Walter and asked about the book in his hand.

"Why don't you take the new edition - it just arrived? Come, I'll show you." Stunned that a colleague, in a department known for its fierce scientific rivalry, should take an interest in him, he nevertheless followed him back into the library. Walter thanked the man, but not wanting to go through the process of signing the books in and out again, he decided to take both.

In his office he started to page through both books at the same time, comparing them page by page. To his amazement he noticed that, in many instances, where the old edition clearly admitted that there was a lack of evidence to prove certain assumptions, such as evidence for intermediary fossils between birds and reptiles, or the hippo and the whale, the new edition had removed all the doubts, presenting the assumptions as facts.

And if that wasn't enough, a few days later a most remarkable thing happened. A visiting professor from the United States was to present a lecture at the Zoology department and the entire staff and students were expected to attend. Walter felt he had more important things to do and mumbled to himself as he impatiently waited for the speaker to begin.

Then something strange happened. As the professor rummaged through his briefcase for his lecture, he looked up in disbelief and said: "I'm sorry, ladies and gentlemen, I seem to have misplaced the lecture I was to present to you. I must have left it at the hotel."

He shook his head as he continued to search through his papers and slides and said apologetically: "I do, however, have another lecture with me, one of an anthropological nature. Would you like me to present this lecture? I really do apologise for the inconvenience...."

Since classes had already been cancelled in order to attend the lecture, the audience agreed to listen to the lecture, which, for most of the Zoologists, seemed insignificant and boring. But as the lecturer continued to explain how the different races migrated and changed as they populated the earth in recent timeframes,

Walter suddenly realised that God was once again answering another question related to the accepted scientific views on long ages. According to science, evolutionary changes had to take place over millions of years and, in the case of the human being, over hundreds of thousands of years. But according to this professor and his research, the aborigine, for instance, originated from Asia, and the changes in appearance and structure took place within approximately 4000 years.

Walter was amazed. He now realised that the original lecture was misplaced in order for him to hear about more evidence that the Biblical account of creation and the flood, which, according to the Scriptures, happened about 4500 years ago, was not so improbable as he first thought. Once again God had taken up Walter's 'Then-show-me'-challenge to reveal to this 'unbelieving Thomas' an entirely new spectrum on life, one that would radically change his thinking forever.

After a few weeks of intense study of the theory of evolution, but with new eyes, he was able to detect a multitude of errors that are taught as straight facts in the textbooks, both in schools and at the tertiary level. He even discovered the problems with radiometric dating, realising that it was possible that everything wasn't as old as they claimed after all. With shame he remembered how he belittled and embarrassed the students who dared to stand up for the Biblical Creation account.

In a few days he was to lead out in a discussion with the entire academic staff and the post-graduate students and he knew this was an opportunity to try and redeem his actions of the past. But he shuddered as he thought of his hardened atheist colleagues' reaction if he showed them that their illustrious castle was built on sand.

The day arrived when he had to face some of the most well-known and respected zoologists and palaeontologists in the country. Walter stood up and started to present his findings to the group, tentatively at first, but after a while, with a hitherto unknown power, every listener was shaken to the core. An awkward silence fell upon the group of scientists, and then pandemonium broke loose. One of the professors swore and threw his pen at Walter, another started to scream at the top of his voice, literally foaming at the mouth, while others were slinging insults from a safer distance.



The Science building, Stellenbosch University

Then one of the post-graduate students stood up. Instead of addressing Walter, she looked at the lecturers and said, almost sadly, "When I came to this institute, I believed in God, but after learning about evolution, I stopped believing. Now Dr Veith showed me that what you've taught us, wasn't based on fact at all, but on assumption. You have robbed me of my faith."

Bathed in perspiration, Walter managed to slip out unnoticed and returned to his office, relieved to leave the noisy hornets' nest behind him. He was now more convinced than ever that God was preparing him to face the momentous and eternal battle between truth and error. Little did he know that this was but the beginning, merely the tiniest tip of the iceberg, and that much hardship and pain would follow after he took the first step to unravel and uncover deception in its myriad of forms.

Relations at work deteriorated rapidly and Walter realised he couldn't teach his classes with the same enthusiasm as before. He wanted to shout out to the students that evolution was a deception, but he knew he couldn't. It was spelt out to him in no uncertain terms that there was no place for a Creationist in his department. Theistic Evolutionists were still acceptable, in fact, many of his colleagues would faithfully go to the Dutch Reformed Church on Sundays, serving as deacons or elders, and teaching their children about Noah and his ark. But during the week they would, with equal comfort, slip into the Church of Evolution and worship their other god. They accepted evolution as the mechanism through which God worked to establish everything on earth. Such a compromise used 'natural selection' and death as the creating force, whereas the Bible states that everything was created perfect, and that death only entered the world after the moral fall of man. It was clearly impossible to marry the two!

After agonising over his problem, he decided to resign. He knew that this meant the end of his career that he had worked so hard for, and saying goodbye to the teaching profession and interaction with the students, which he loved. It also meant the end of his credibility as a scientist, or so he thought. When the acting rector at that time received his resignation, he called Walter to his office and asked him why he resigned.

Walter explained the situation to him and was promptly offered promotion to a professorship if he stayed, but with the understanding that he wouldn't rock the evolutionary boat, nor Noah's ark, for that matter! But he had made up his mind. He knew his life would be hell in a department filled with so much animosity towards him. The rector nodded pensively, but as Walter was about to leave, he asked:

"Tell me, Dr Veith, who do you think has the truth?"

Totally unprepared for such a question, Walter squirmed as he tried to avoid getting into a religious discussion with an academic. He tried to explain to him the history of the Protestants that broke free from Catholicism with their creed 'sola scriptura', the Bible and the Bible alone, but the rector interrupted him and said:

"No, what I mean is, which denomination has the truth today?"

For an ex-catholic-atheist scientist this was the most difficult challenge of his life. He took a deep breath and said:

“I believe there is only one remaining denomination on this earth that holds to the Bible and fulfils all the criteria as given in Revelation 12:17, and that is, according to my research, the Seventh Day Adventist Church.”

The rector nodded slowly and then, without pursuing the issue further, greeted Walter and wished him well for his future. One small step for Walter, one giant step for a totally oblivious mankind that had never experienced the intensity of a passionate, unquenchable German on a mission to uncover even more of this hidden treasure!



Test in the Wilderness

Chapter 6

Deut 1:31 *And in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that the LORD thy God bare thee, as a man doth bear his son, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.*

“Would you like to come to church with us and then have lunch at our house afterwards?” Werner asked and when Walter hesitated, he quickly added, “We can do a Bible study in the afternoon...”

Going to church was something we did not actually have in mind for Saturdays. It was our regular squash game and ‘braai’ day with our friends. Walter was an expert barbecuer and was famous for his grilled marinated pork ribs. Although we had accepted the Sabbath as the true day of worship, we had hoped that we could keep it more or less to ourselves! We didn’t need confrontation with family and friends at that stage. But we felt a strange sense of urgency and agreed to meet them at their house in Somerset West on Saturday morning.

Being in a rather defiant mood that Sabbath morning, Walter rummaged impatiently through his untidy cupboard.

“Where’s my holy shirt? Haven’t you washed it yet?” He used to call his favourite T-shirt his ‘holy shirt’, firstly because it was full of holes from a near-death experience on a windmill, and secondly because I wasn’t allowed to touch it or threaten to get rid of it.

“You’re not going to wear your holy shirt!” I protested.

“Of course I can, I could wear anything I wanted to the Catholic Church...”

“Yes, but this is different. Wear something nice.”

He grumbled to himself and fished out a creased T-shirt that had seen better days and his shabby jeans. I said nothing further, only too grateful he backed down so easily.

When we arrived at the church, Walter gave me a grin only I understood as we watched the immaculate church members in their suits and ties and smart dresses gathered outside the church. Even I felt embarrassed; I didn’t even possess a dress, let alone a church dress. But the people greeted us with so much warmth and enthusiasm that we soon felt at home. Our new friends took our children to the

children's classes, and we were able to drink in all the knowledge and thoughts that were expressed and exchanged.

After church a group of friends of Werner and his wife, Inge, met at their house for lunch. The ladies were scurrying backwards and forwards with large strange-looking dishes. We soon found out that they were vegetarian because of health benefits, and they proceeded to show us in the Bible that God even gave the Jews some health laws to protect them from disease. We discovered for the first time that certain foods were declared 'unclean', or not fit for human consumption, such as pork and shellfish as described in Leviticus 11. I looked at Walter for a brief moment, wondering what our friends would say if we told them he's not cooking his famous pork ribs anymore because they're unclean!

"I can understand if God says it's unclean, then it's unclean, but nowhere in the Bible does He say you must be a vegetarian. I'm sorry to say, but this green stuff isn't food. Every scientist can tell you that the human being is a carnivore, it needs meat, it needs protein, something like a big, juicy steak this size." Walter gestured with his hands as he tried to convince these people that they were on the wrong track.

"Well, you know," came the timid voice from a little lady, called Jane, sitting to the right of Walter, "nuts are a very good source of protein; they're very, very good for you, especially almonds." She shifted slightly away from him, almost as if she was expecting the agitated German to pounce on her.

"Sure, they're very, very good for you, especially if you like cyanide. That's what's in them, didn't you know?"

An uneasy silence fell over the group. Some gave an embarrassed chuckle and tried to change the topic. My eyes followed the circle of people around the large table and a fear gripped my heart as I noticed their way of dressing, the way they speak, their pale faces and watery innocent eyes and I suddenly felt I had to get out. Everything seemed so different to the world and the people we knew.

"Take me home, I want to go home," I whispered to Walter.

"We can't go home now, it'll be rude. Ok, we'll just say we want to go for a drive."

That evidently wasn't the best excuse, because they insisted that we leave our children with them, who were happily climbing trees with the other children in the back yard, until we return. This, of course, meant we had to return.

We drove to Stellenbosch in silence, each struggling with his own thoughts, wondering and fretting about how we got ourselves into such a situation. At home I was totally overwhelmed and ran to our bedroom and sobbed for an hour. Walter tried to comfort me but felt equally confused and helpless. My heart was torn between my family and our familiar environment, and this strange new world, where I knew the only eternal truth was. I cried inconsolably for my father, who I realised

was living a life of dreadful deception and danger and I longed for my parents to understand that without God we are all lost forever. For God alone has life and immortality to give to those who accept his free gift, and even though my parents were wonderful people and gave us a respectable upbringing, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God", and needed to be covered by His righteousness. (Romans 3:23)

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Romans 5:12

"For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 6:23

I closed my Bible and looked helplessly at Walter. It felt like the weight of the whole world was resting on my feeble shoulders.

"We better go back. Wash your face, everything will be OK now." Walter said. We drove all the way back and joined the crowd without anyone noticing our distress.

During the following weeks we continued to study our Bible and discovered some amazing truths that are so clear and logical but are not practised by most of the Christian denominations. We learnt, for instance, that the wine that was condoned in the Scriptures was in fact 'new wine', or unfermented wine, that is, grape juice. This is the "*new wine . . . found in the cluster,*" of which the Scripture says, "*Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it.*" (Isaiah 65:8)

But the wine that is condemned is alcoholic, fermented wine as found in a number of texts.

"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him], and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!" Habakkuk 2:15

"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 20:1.

We understood for the first time that the wine that Jesus provided at the wedding in Cana was not fermented wine, but pure, fresh grape juice of the very best quality. He would never place such a temptation before the people He was trying to save from those very destructive habits they had fallen into. As children we were always told that Jesus changed water into alcohol and therefore it was good for private use, as well as for use as a symbol of His blood during Communion. How could something that degrades and destroys lives be connected to something so sacred as God's Son being offered to save lives? You only have to live in a country like South Africa to understand how many people's lives have been destroyed because of alcoholism after the system of payment with wine on the wine farms was introduced. Even among the academics heavy drinking was nothing unusual and over the years I had

become more and more concerned about the effect the alcohol had on Walter's already damaged liver. After we stopped drinking, we saved almost a quarter of our salary, which we used to spend on beer, wine and spirits and on medication to pep up the liver and help with the inevitable hangovers.

The more I learned about this God of the Bible, the more grateful I became that he had sought us and brought to us these wonderful life-saving principles. I felt for the first time that God had taken a personal interest in me, in my fears, my happiness and my needs.

When I was very small, my grandmother sometimes took care of me and to keep me busy, she would give me a magnet to find pins and other metal objects that had slipped in between the wooden floorboards or into the cracks in the wood. She probably tossed the pins there deliberately, but there was nothing I enjoyed more, because besides the pins, I sometimes drew out what I called 'my secret treasure'. Occasionally my granny by accident dropped some piece of jewellery or pretty metal buttons and other tiny objects, which I kept in a little treasure box. It was my own treasure, which I discovered and brought to the surface all by myself and it was more valuable to me than all the money in the world. Just like my childhood treasure box with its valuable bits and pieces, my new treasure box was being filled daily with new valuable gems of light from the Bible, gems of understanding, acceptance and grace from the God I had always secretly been hoping to find.

It was a warm spring day and bees were droning busily in the jasmine bush outside the dining room window. While we were still seated around the table after lunch, we started discussing a text we found in Malachi 3:8-11, where God challenges us to give to him a tenth of our income, a tithe for the furtherance of his work, promising 'such blessing, that there will not be room enough to receive it'. For Walter this was a bitter pill to swallow. He felt he wanted to decide for himself what to do with his hard-earned money, and who knows what the church will do with it.

But being the kind of person he was, he liked a challenge and decided to pay his first tithe. He began working out a figure but came up with two different possibilities, one on his salary after deductions and the other on the full salary. Quite frustrated, he said, "Lord, if I really have to pay this tithe as you say in the Bible, then You will once again have to show me how much."

A few minutes later we heard footsteps at the front door as the postman approached and slipped the post through the slit in the door. We opened the letter and found a small repayment cheque from a lawyer from Walter's father's deceased estate. For a moment we stood motionless as we struggled to believe the figure written on the cheque: it was the exact amount of one of the figures for the tithe Walter had just worked out. This was the sign that Walter had asked for, but it was the higher amount! Well, we thought, if God paid his own first tithe, he will certainly find ways to help us pay the next one, and the next.

The following Sabbath we went to church again. We met at Werner and Inge's home and Walter offered to stay with the little children at their home so that the mothers could go to the service. During this time he decided to read the book of Job, but as he was reading, he became more and more agitated. His scientific mind struggled to grasp how the sores on Job could just appear from nowhere. Every sane person knows that sores will appear after some kind of infection or disease, but not just out of the blue, he thought to himself. A creeping feeling of unbelief started to take hold of him and he wondered if we had been deceived; maybe all the things that led us to this faith were purely coincidental, maybe there was no God at all and the Bible was just a book of myths....

As he was ready to close the Bible, he started noticing a dull ache on the side of his leg. At first he tried to ignore it, but it got increasingly hotter and more painful. In the bathroom he noticed that an unusual sore was developing on his upper leg. It was like nothing he had ever seen before - a hot, painful, round, red, bumpy area from which a clear, watery fluid was oozing down his leg. The skin was not broken; it wasn't an open sore, and yet fluid was flowing through the skin, almost like perspiration.

"Okay God, I believe You. I believe Job's sores did appear from nowhere", Walter mumbled to himself as he continued to read the book of Job. Soon he noticed that the pain had subsided and there was hardly any evidence of any sore on his leg.

After lunch with our new friends, we drove home, discussing the strange event of the morning. Walter was in a pensive, irritable mood. "You know," he said after a while, "it must have all been coincidence, possibly just an insect bite or something. It's utter nonsense – I really don't believe that Satan could literally touch Job and he would break out in boils. How could I be so gullible to take everything literally in the Bible?" he said with more than a hint of defiance.

As we were speaking, I noticed him rubbing his leg from time to time and by the time we arrived home, the sore on his 'Job's leg' had returned with more vengeance than before. This time it persisted for a week, but during that time the unbelieving Thomas resolved to lay down his so-called advanced scientific perceptions, based on 'the evidence of things seen', and venture on a new journey of faith, 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' (Hebrews 11:1)

As we continued to study our Bibles, we came to the realisation that we had to be baptised as a confession of our new-found faith. We felt a little embarrassed and uneasy with the concept but determined to walk in the footsteps of the One who endured much more suffering, ridicule and persecution in order to save mankind from the utterly degraded state it had sunken to. Because man, by choosing to obey the enemy of God, gave dominion of this earth to Satan. The beautiful creation of love and freedom was enslaved to sin and bondage, and only the Son of God, the One who created man, could redeem him from the mistake of the past and the sad consequences of the present and future.

Little did we know that ‘the servant is not greater than the Master’, for soon we experienced fierce opposition and ridicule from our friends and family, and to our surprise, more so from those who claimed to be Christians. Before we embarked on our strange but exhilarating journey of the Scriptures, Walter’s family from Cape Town used to visit us every weekend. We would drink beer together, grill pork sausages and play ‘Skat’, a German card game designed for only the ‘intellectual elite’, till late in the night. Walter, in his by then inebriated state was always the centre of the party with his gift of telling jokes and impersonating people.

After we decided to quit drinking and eating meat unfit for our health as described in the Bible, we tried to explain to them that we would like to continue meeting with them, but if they don’t mind, we would no longer drink or eat the pork. The reaction of his family was astounding and even painful to us. Walter’s cousin, who was Walter’s best childhood friend, broke all ties with us from that moment onwards and refused to ever put his foot in our house again – a promise he kept faithfully up until this very day. The family expressed their concern that something really sinister had happened to Walter, or that his “much learning doth make thee mad”, as Festus said to Paul, and that he needed a well-deserved long holiday, as someone whispered to me.

But when they were not able to sway us from our conviction, their ridicule turned into open opposition and contempt. Walter’s cousin and his Catholic wife were the godparents to two of our children and they decided to take us to court and have us proclaimed unfit parents, who ‘deprive’ their children by changing their religion. The lawyer evidently could not file such a case and our children were not removed from us and placed into the custody of the godparents, as they had hoped. But their bitterness and rejection remained till this day, even after several attempts from our side to repair the friendship.

Amidst all the opposition we decided to continue with our decision to be baptised, which caused some commotion in the church. The pastor of the college church refused to baptize us, for whatever reason. My guess was that he didn’t care to be involved with such an opinionated academic and his family with their dubious spiritualistic history - a realm, which most clergymen refuse to either acknowledge, or deal with. The youth pastor was, however, willing to visit us and work through some of the general vows to prepare us for baptism.

That blessed morning in April 1987 arrived, and we set off to church early on that beautiful Sabbath morning in our best clothing. I had specially made a skirt for the occasion and for many months it was the only one I possessed. The tranquil church with its high stained-glass windows and cascading gardens was set against the foot of the Helderberg Mountain, in those years still covered in dark green forests, with exquisite views of the ocean from a little higher up.



A soft serene hue from the yellow stained glass spilled over the comfortable pews inside the church. Hundreds of inquisitive faces watched as we were summoned to the front of the church. With us was another German lady, Tessi, who was also to be baptised. Little did we know that this would not be the last time our paths would cross. As we came up out of the water in the baptismal font, the Helderberg choir was singing a beautiful hymn. It sounded to me like the angel choirs were singing and praising God for the miracle that was taking place. I couldn't hold back the tears of joy and felt like Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. I wanted to say, "Lord, it is good for us to be here, if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles..."

But we had to go back down into the valley where, as we soon found out, we would have to contend with the 'demon-possessed' of this daily spiritual struggle. Oh, if only we had the faith of a mustard seed, we would have been able to move the mountain that was lying ahead of us.

The following week we started to seriously consider our future. In three months' time we would have no more salary cheques, no savings in the bank, with debt on our house and car, three little children, two of them attending an elite school at an elite tariff, and a dog and two cats to care for. As we discussed our dilemma with Werner, the idea crystallised in both the men's minds that we could go farming together. Werner wanted to opt out of his cabinet-making business and move away from the city. We could sell our house and he his house and business, and invest in a dairy farm together. That would provide some income for the two families.

Tessi, who was baptised with us, was good friends with Werner and Inge and she and her retired husband, Heinrich, decided to join us as a third party in the farming venture, even though her husband had not accepted the Bible truth. We searched for a farm and soon went out to view a farm in the Montagu district, some two hours' drive from Cape Town.

“What do you think? Is this the right farm? It does have two houses and enough to get started. It has apricots and grapes and bore holes and a fountain. Heinrich will set up the dairy and we can buy more cows,” Walter rambled on as he was thinking out loud. “We must pray and ask God if this is the right place, or rather, Werner, *you* pray and ask God, you have better connections with him, he knows you better - we’re very new at this prayer thing”, Walter continued.

Within 24 hours Werner had the answer from God; yes, this is the farm. We immediately put our house on the market and within a week our lovely home was sold to a well-known Western Province rugby fly half. We now had just enough money to secure our third of the investment, but Werner was still tied up in his business and being a foreigner, the bank would not give him a loan for his share of the farm. In order not to lose the purchase deal, Walter agreed to take the loan on his name until Werner’s business and house had sold. When the time came for us to take possession of the farm, our children still had to remain at their school and Walter had to round up his work at the university till the end of the term. Someone had to be at the farm, so the lot fell on me to go ahead, with three-year old Robert, to keep things ticking over.

Just prior to our selling the house Walter was driving out of town with Robert sitting in the back seat. In those days seat belts hardly existed in South Africa and children were not safely buckled into kiddies’ seats. This, strangely enough, saved Robert’s life. Just before Walter indicated to turn up a farm road off the freeway, Robert toppled over and fell asleep on the back seat. Seconds later a car came speeding from behind and struck my little yellow Volkswagen Beetle from behind as Walter was turning. The impact caused the rear window to take off like a frisbee and land some hundred meters from the car. If Robert had been sitting upright, his head would surely have been crushed. We thanked God for his protection and although my car was written off, we at least had Walter’s car. For a while, that is!

On the farm I faced the daunting task of milking a small herd of cows one by one in a dilapidated shed with antiquated equipment and no farm labourers to help. We planned to put up a new dairy, and the cheese factory that collects the milk suggested that we ask the neighbouring dairy farmer if we could deliver our milk to him until our tank arrived. My only transport was an open Jeep, and many cold, rainy winter mornings I would struggle alone to load the heavy milk canisters and deliver the milk to the neighbour. I didn’t dare to leave little Robert alone in the house and was obliged to wake him at four o’clock in the morning from his warm bed and take him with me into the cold and dark. When the day was over and my body was aching all over from handling obstinate cows and doing other farm duties, discouragement would take hold of me. I was so far from my family and there were no phones. I felt totally abandoned and worn out. Then, one night, in my bed I called to God.

“I am so tired, I’m so very tired, is there no-one who can help me?” I asked in despair and cried myself to sleep.

The next morning as I was rounding up the cows to be milked, I saw two figures walking through the mist up the dirt road. The two coloured men greeted me friendly and asked if there was work for them on the farm. The one man, called Aaron, had been working on a dairy farm in the Free State, as it was called then. I closed my eyes for a moment and thanked God for hearing my prayer. From that day on Aaron and his friend faithfully milked the cows and helped with other duties on the farm.

Then came the next trial. One day, as Walter was travelling between Somerset West and the farm, he was driving through a town. Suddenly a car came rushing through a stop street and smashed into our only remaining car. The driver of the other car, a headmaster at the local school, was shocked and flustered. He always stops at that stop street, he exclaimed, but he didn't know what happened that day!

Now we were totally without a vehicle and were obligated to rent a cheap little car. But it wasn't long before the rented car had battery trouble and we had to return it to the rental company to exchange the battery. I went with Walter back to Somerset West with many doubts and fears racing through my mind. The rapid changes and hardships had also been very difficult for our children. As if it weren't enough that they gave up sport activities and friends because of their willingness to keep the Sabbath together with us, they now had to go to a country school with uncouth children from a rough farming community.

When we arrived at the car rental company, I was pensively strolling around the car, when a man suddenly said to me in Afrikaans, my mother tongue, "Good morning, I see your husband has a very powerful weapon in the car." I looked at the coloured man with his round, friendly face in his blue worker's overall, wondering if we were in trouble for something.

"No," I said defensively, "my husband doesn't carry a gun..."

"I don't mean that kind of weapon. Come, let me show you."

At the car window he pointed to Walter's Bible on the console. "Oh, *that* weapon!" I merely laughed, too shy to say anything further. But the man continued, "Tell me, where do you worship?"

His question caught me off guard. "Um, up there, in Somerset West." I was still too embarrassed to say that I belonged to that strange group that seemed to believe everything contrary to the rest of the world.

"I mean, what church is that?"

Once again I had the opportunity to squirm my way out of it. "Well, it's Helderberg College Church, up there against the mountain."

“No, I mean, what denomination do you belong to?” I didn’t wait for the cock to crow for the third time, and answered shyly, “The Seventh Day Adventist Church.”

Instead of expected ridicule, the man smiled his healthy smile, pointing his index finger upwards to the sky, and said, “And they have the truth after all!” He turned and walked towards the front of the car, where he seemed to help sort out the problem with the battery.

Soon the new battery was installed, and we drove off. I told Walter about the interesting conversation I had with the coloured worker who helped to install the battery.

“But there was no coloured worker, the only one who helped with the battery, was the owner himself,” Walter argued.

“No, there was another man, the one in the blue overall,” I insisted and repeated my story, getting quite agitated that he wouldn’t believe me.

“I didn’t see anyone else, but if there were someone who said those things to you, he must have been an Adventist himself. Let’s go back and ask him.”

With that Walter turned the car around and headed back for the rental company. We asked around and searched, but there was no one of that description. In stunned silence we drove on, wondering how it was possible that he disappeared into thin air, how it was that only I saw him, and how he knew that the Bible in our car belonged to my husband and not to me. But most of all, how did a total stranger know that I had serious doubts in my mind about whether we had indeed made the right decisions.

Slowly it dawned upon me that God had taken a personal interest in me, my trials, my doubts and fears, and had stretched out his hand to strengthen and comfort me. That was the last time I ever doubted that this peculiar church with its peculiar people was the bearer of eternal and present truth, the John the Baptist who was to prepare the way for the Second Coming of the true Messiah. And what an awesome thought that I had a special role to play in all of this!



Psa 91:11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

The time came when all three families moved to the farm. The children looked forward to romping in the haystack and searching for wild animals and strange and wonderful insects.

We had almost unpacked all of our boxes when we came across a couple of heavy ones filled with bottles full of alcohol. When we packed all our

belongings from our house in Stellenbosch, we were uncertain as to what to do with our large collection of expensive red and white wines and spirits. We had stopped drinking alcohol entirely and felt it wasn't right to give it to our friends, for it is written in Habakkuk 2:15,

“Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him], and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!”

But it had cost us a fortune to build up such a sought-after collection of wines, some of them being private bin wines that sold for a couple of thousand rand a bottle at wine auctions, which was more than a month's salary in those days. So we decided to take the wines with us to the farm until we knew what to do with them.

Then we had an idea. We carried the heavy boxes to the bathroom and started pouring the expensive liquid down the toilet. It took us a whole morning to empty the bottles and wash them for future use when we planned to bottle some grape juice from our vineyards.

What we didn't know, however, was that the septic tank was maintained by a fine balance of bacteria. Too late we realised the next morning that the inebriated bacteria ceased to do their job and we had to call for the municipality to empty the tank! The man who operated the machines gave a few curious sniffs and said, “Strange, I've never in my entire life smelt such a fruity septic tank! Wonder what happened here...” We knew what had happened, but Walter and I merely looked at each other and chuckled to ourselves without saying a word.

The men started ploughing and sowing wheat, more cows were bought and soon the new dairy had been completed. We were now able to store our milk in our own tank and decided to pay the neighbour a visit to claim our share of the income for the milk we delivered to him. When Walter produced the record we kept of the amount delivered, the farmer looked calmly at him and asked, “What milk was this?”

“What do you mean, ‘What milk was this’? The milk my wife delivered faithfully to you for three months! You still wrote down the litres on a card in your dairy.”

“I'm sorry, but you know it's illegal to deliver milk to another dairy. I would never do anything illegal,” the farmer said with a condescending smile and continued shouting orders to his workers.

“Illegal? But the cheese factory told me to bring it to you till my tank was installed!” Walter exclaimed with a puzzled look. The man started walking off, calling over his shoulder, “Go ask them yourself!”

We couldn't believe the trap we had fallen into. All those months, and no fruits for my backbreaking labour. Thousands of rands had gone into the pockets of a crook! And to ruin relationships even more, the same farmer tried to sell us cows that belonged to another farmer at almost double the price the owner himself was

asking! Fortunately, Walter managed to hear about the scam and went straight to the owner and bought the cows at the original price.

In spite of our nasty experience, Walter was still willing to help, and when he heard that our neighbour was having difficulty inseminating his cows, he offered to go and teach him the technique he had learnt at the university. When he arrived at the neighbouring farm, the man was with his arm up to the shoulder stuck into the backside of a cow, swearing and blaspheming God for his unsuccessful attempts. As Walter patiently showed the rude, ungrateful man how to do it, he was wondering how long God would allow this man to continue in such a way.

A few days later a mighty storm came up. Branches were filing past our windows as the huge gum trees were bent low before the destructive wind. The damage on our farm was fortunately minimal – only a few corrugated roof plates were torn from the calf stalls. But for our unpleasant neighbour disaster had struck. The whole roof of his huge shed had been lifted in the wind, transported across the road to the opposite field and dumped onto his best stud cows, killing some of them instantly. And as if that wasn't enough, a few months later, the poor man was pulling up his pump from his bore hole, when the chain attached to the pump, shot loose from the tractor and wrapped itself around his leg, dragging him at great speed over the earth and dashed him against the bore hole structure. His neck was fractured, which left him permanently paralysed from the neck down. The sad ending to the story was that he had to give up farming and left, leaving his farm totally abandoned with only the sound of the rolling Small Karoo bushes scurrying over the sand and the lonely banging of an insect screen in the wind.

On our own farm we were struggling to make ends meet. Our income from the dairy was merely covering costs. The money we had kept aside for our family to survive for the first year was fast running out. We were also carrying the interest on the loan from the bank that we had taken out to secure Werner's third part in the farm. At that point Inge no longer wanted to live in such a remote part of the country and suddenly all our plans seemed to be falling apart. Then one day Werner announced that they decided to move to Australia and within a short while they were gone and we were on our own.

During this time more and more devastating incidents were slowly eating away at our faith in the fact that God had led us to this farm. The wheat we had sowed was standing higher and the grains were fuller than on any other farm in the neighbourhood. When farmers asked us what secret method we used, Walter presumptuously said, "We simply sowed, and God rewarded us because we are doing His will, we are keeping His commandments." How little did we know about the fine line between presumption and faith!

But then, just before harvest time, a great swarm of yellow finches settled on the farm and proceeded to devour our best field, the one that everyone was admiring. In vain we tried every method in the book to scare them away, but in no time a number of our best fields were destroyed. We looked in utter dismay over the

empty stalks swaying in the afternoon breeze as the guinea fowls pecked up a few stray kernels that were left behind.

“How can this be?” Walter gasped. “How can God allow this? I thought He promised in the Bible that he would protect us?”

But the onslaught wasn't over yet. When the remaining wheat was ready to be harvested, we rented a huge harvesting machine from a farmer in the district, hoping that we would at least get something for all our work. They worked the field furthest away first, which was situated all along the boundary of our neighbour on the other side of our farm. After the day's work, the harvester was left on the field for the night, but when the workers returned the next morning, they discovered that someone had climbed over the fence and poured sugar into the fuel tank of the harvester! This meant that the engine had to be taken apart and cleaned out, which cost us a great deal of time, money and nerves.

The following weeks we had to contend with a different challenge. Almost every Sabbath there seemed to be something wrong with the water. More than once the fountain up in the mountain suddenly stopped running on a Friday evening or on Sabbath morning. After inspection, Walter found that someone was deliberately blocking the inlet of the pipe to our houses. More than once the pipes were even slashed, with water gushing out at several places all along the kilometre long pipe.

Instead of relaxing with his family on the Sabbath, reading and singing songs, or telling stories to the children, Walter often had to struggle to fix the problem, returning to the house sweaty and stressed and in a bad mood. To make things worse, some church members were spreading the story that our farm was haunted because of our occult background and that that was the reason for Werner and his family leaving.

We hadn't spoken to anyone, least of all the church members, about the things that had happened on the farm and were disappointed when soon the church was buzzing with speculations. Those who once had promised their support for our project were now slowly dwindling. We found ourselves all alone, wrestling with God, day and night, trying to understand why He was allowing these things to happen. Our children were being bullied and ridiculed at school, the neighbouring farmers tried to ruin us, and those in the church we had looked up to were critical and unsupportive. Many days I would despair and cry to God till I slumped into a lifeless heap on the ground. I had no strength to continue any further.

One night I had a very disturbing dream. I woke up in a sweat, knowing immediately that this wasn't just another dream, born from some fear or an overworked mind. I dreamt I was walking in a beautiful orchard of trees that looked like orange trees. Some of the trees had lovely flowers and as I reached out to pick one of the flowers, a huge horned adder slithered up from under the lush green foliage and bit me in the hand. In terror I called out to Walter, who was a little while off and he rushed towards me. He brushed the snake aside, saying in a calm voice, “Don't worry, the

snake can do you no harm”, and with that the adder was suddenly transformed into a puny little snake, and it slid back into the tree. I then began to look with new interest at the trees that were in neat rows, some with fruit on and others with flowers and what seemed like healthy green leaves. But as I looked more closely, I discovered that the trees with the flowers were actually dead trees covered in a vine with beautiful flowers. Some trees were real and healthy with real fruit, but to my surprise, most were dead trees, overgrown with vines, under which, unbeknown to the passers-by, was hiding a dangerous viper.

At first we didn't see any significance of the dream in our lives, but soon after many disappointments, we were able to understand. As we continued to study the Bible, we understood that trees were often used as symbols for people in the Biblical context. The orchard was the church, and the trees were the people. Some people were 'good trees' with good fruit, but other members of the church were dead inside and merely looked good from the outside. They seemed to attract with their false beauty, but it was not Christ that dwelled under that façade, but Satan himself, and although it seemed that Satan had dealt us a deadly blow, we had nothing to fear. My dream served well to prepare us in our Christian walk as we continued to be disappointed by people we trusted, and it gave us the assurance that, come what may, God will not leave us.

Psalm 23:4 “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me...”

But there was still much more to come; the farm saga seemed to have shifted gears. One day I got an earache and before I reached the doctor, my eardrum had burst. After surgery I had to stay in bed for a few days and during this time I was trying to read my Bible as much as possible. When Heinrich and Tessi, who were living in the village ten kilometres away, came to visit me, Heinrich saw the Bible lying on the bed and suddenly complained bitterly about the fact that I was reading the Bible 'only'. Having been an atheist his whole life the old German was reluctant to accept Christianity and to give up his old habits, but he accepted the Sabbath half-heartedly for his wife's sake.

Reading through the first part of Genesis while recovering in bed, I happened to notice that the diet of man, according to Genesis 2 and 3, was originally only fruit from trees and seeds, and after the fall of man, also plants of the field were added. In Genesis 9 verse 3 when Noah and his family emerged from the ark onto barren, uncultivated land, God describes a further change of events and allows man to use clean animals for food. With a smile and a significant degree of embarrassment I remembered Walter as he shoved a frying pan with beef steak under the nose of some of our vegetarian friends, saying in his usual provoking way, “This is real food, not that artificial rubber stuff you're eating!”

A couple of weekends later, we had some friends from Somerset West for a visit till late that evening. The next morning, as we sat at the breakfast table, my eyes fell upon the chicken bones around the previous night's barbecue fire, on which big

green flies like vultures were noisily feasting. Our pet chickens were chatting and pecking as they strolled lazily across the lawn, now and then stretching a thin yellow leg like an ungraceful ballerina in the warm morning sun. I was suddenly repulsed by the entire scene and felt uncomfortable with the idea of the drumstick of our faithful mother hen on my plate. I even got second thoughts about eating the eggs as I watched the chickens peck up the fresh 'doggie pooh' on the lawn like tasty morsels! I looked down at my breakfast plate for a few moments in silence and then said tentatively, "I wonder if we shouldn't stop eating meat. It just doesn't seem right..."

Before I could explain myself, Walter interrupted, "That's strange, I've just been thinking the very same thing!" and without any further discussion on the subject we started putting our resolution into practice.

After Werner had left for Australia, Heinrich started getting more involved with the farming activities and usually arrived on the farm around our usual breakfast time, just after Walter had finished at the dairy. Occasionally he would sit down to have breakfast with us, but this particular morning he grunted disapprovingly at our simple meal of cereal and toast with avocado and fruit. He started to accuse us of being ridiculous and fanatical for not having the traditional German breakfast of sausages, cold meats and eggs. As he spoke, he became so irate, that he literally brushed some of the items off the table and walked out, never to join us for breakfast again. We were flabbergasted and hurt at such a reaction on a simple change we had made in our lifestyle, which, according to modern science, was much healthier anyway, but at the same time his attitude made us realise that this must be an important spiritual issue as well.

During this time a colporteur, our friend Jane's brother, would occasionally stop by on his way from Port Elizabeth to Cape Town. He was like balm sent from heaven for our wounds. After some discussions till late at night, he left us with enough reading material until he returned on his next journey. At first we didn't seem to find much time to read, but one day Walter received a strange phone call out of the blue from an ex-colleague at the Zoology Department, who accused him of being involved with a 'weird sect'. While Walter was trying to explain that they're not weird but only believe what is written in the Bible, this man interrupted him rudely and shouted, "You also believe in that kleptomaniac witch, Ellen White!"

Kleptomaniac witch? Walter thought. What on earth is this man talking about? We had vaguely heard about this woman writer from the previous century but had never read anything she wrote. Her writings were often also referred to as the 'Spirit of Prophecy', the gift which was given to Israel through the ages as well as to the church of the time of the end according to the book of Revelation.

*Rev 12:17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, **which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.***

Rev 19:10 *And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: **for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.***

We understood from the Bible that when God's people testified of the Law and the Lamb of God, only then could the gift of prophecy be given to them to prepare them for the great events which were to take place. When the Law and the Sabbath were once again rediscovered and restored after the Great Disappointment in 1844, then was the Spirit of Prophecy again manifested in God's church through a frail young girl, named Ellen Harmon, later by the name of Ellen G White after she married James White.

Lamentations 2:9 *Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes [are] among the Gentiles: **the law [is] no [more]; her prophets also find no vision from the LORD.***

Also, the Lord declares by the prophet Amos, that He "**will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.**" Amos 3:7

Well, we thought, if someone can have such a violent reaction and animosity against her, then it's time we investigate what it is that she wrote. We rummaged through the pile of books the colporteur had left us and started reading. As a mother and housewife, I was interested in the book called 'Councils on Diet and Foods' and was amazed to discover that her advice more than a hundred and fifty years earlier, was not to eat meat in this time that we are living in, simply because animals are not healthy anymore, which could cause numerous degenerative diseases of mind and body. Amazingly, God had impressed these things upon both of us even before we read it!

We discovered in every book that we read that her writings were in harmony with the Bible and could be trusted. The book 'Desire of Ages' on the life of Jesus made a deep impression on us. It was clear to us that the same Spirit that inspired the authors of the Bible also inspired Ellen White, God's final messenger for His church on earth. And the same rebellious spirit that condemns the plain teachings of the Bible also condemns the writings of E.G. White. Her writings were also perfectly in harmony with the beliefs of the Reformers of the Middle Ages, as well as some later reformers right up unto her own time. All of them, including herself, seemed to call God's people out of apostasy and pointed to 'present truth', as was revealed to them through 'diligently searching the Scriptures'. We were grateful that God had sent Jane's brother to brighten and broaden our horizon with the books he left us and realised it wasn't merely coincidence that he always arrived at the right time.

Relationships between Heinrich and us deteriorated even further after we started reading these books. He suddenly reverted to 'character assassination' when we were not influenced by his incessant ranting and raving against the Bible. I seemed to be doing everything wrong in his eyes; when I occasionally forgot to fetch his milk from the dairy, or failed to keep some eggs aside for him, he reminded me in strong

words that I should get my act together. And besides, he argued, I shouldn't be working on the farm, if I were a good Christian, I would be visiting the people in the old age homes and do some other charity work. True Christians don't study the Bible, they do good works. After harassing me for months, I began to withdraw under his constant insults, at which he declared that he 'couldn't work with me' and then proceeded to provoke Walter.

Having read Proverbs 17:28, *'Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: [and] he that shutteth his lips [is esteemed] a man of understanding'*, Walter determined not to lose his composure under any circumstances. But one unfortunate morning, while he was busy in the dairy, Heinrich started arguing about issues on the farm and our apparent weaknesses and character faults. At that point Walter lost sight of all his brave resolutions and gave Heinrich a piece of his mind, but instead of retaliating, Heinrich calmly brushed his hands together and said with a satisfied smirk, "I'm so glad you lost your temper, now I know you're not really a Christian", and like a dog that got the bone, he strutted off to revel in his victory. Too late we realised our mistake in doing business together with an unbeliever, who was constantly criticising God's ways and placing burdens upon His people.

As we reflected over the unjust treatment we endured during the year we spent on the farm in the 'wilderness', we discovered that God always led His people through such a period in their lives to teach them valuable lessons in faith. Moses had to spend 40 years in the wilderness before he was ready to do the work God assigned to him. The Israelites were led through the desert to teach them not to trust in their own judgement, but solely on divine revelation. Their characters were to be changed and strengthened and like Job they had to reach the point where they could say, *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."* (Job 13:15) But sadly, apart from only a few, they never learnt the lessons, and never saw the promised land.

One night, discouraged almost to the point of utter despair, we gathered to pray to God. "We cannot continue this way any longer", Walter said tiredly. "We've been here almost a year and had nothing but trouble. We have no more money and interest rates are soaring." He looked at my drawn tear-stained face and asked, "Didn't we leave our old ways for the Bible truth?"

I nodded as he continued, "Are we not trying to keep God's commandments to the best of our knowledge and ability?"

Again I nodded. "And are the promises in the Bible not also for us?"

"Yes," I sobbed.

"Then let us write a letter to God and ask him to fulfil His promises for us and deliver us from the situation we are in."

With new courage we proceeded to sit down and write our first letter to God. We explained to God our pain and disappointment, our pitiful financial situation, our

concerns for our children, regret about coming to the farm in the first place and placing our trust in mere man, and our despair about the future. We wrote down God's promises and his assurances that he would deliver and protect those that do His will and fulfil all their needs, and then claimed them. Then we both signed the document and placed it on the floor in front of us and knelt down to pray, asking God to hear our prayer and see our tears of desperation.

But God knew all these things already. He knows the end from the beginning. Our inspired pioneer wrote:

The Lord "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." Lamentations 3:33. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust." Psalm 103:13, 14. He knows our heart, for He reads every secret of the soul..... He knows the end from the beginning. {CH 375.2}

The very next morning Walter got a telephone call from a professor at another large University in the Cape, asking him if he would be willing to help out with a temporary post. Without even hesitating, Walter eagerly accepted and asked when he could start.

"Oh, that would take another few months before we get it approved by the rector and through all the committees, but we'll let you know," the professor said and then hung up.

That's no good, Walter thought disappointedly, in a few months we will probably be starved to death. Did God perhaps not understand our predicament? We continued our work on the farm in a depressed state, when, by late afternoon Walter received another call from the same professor.

"A very unusual thing happened this morning," the man said, a little baffled, "As I was walking to the rector's office to hand in the application for your appointment, I bumped into the rector himself. He was just on his way to the airport for some conference, which meant that our application would have had to wait till after his return in a few weeks. But then the rector asked, 'What is this all about?' and, when I explained it to him, he said, 'Just give it to me, I'll just sign it.' So, Dr Veith, it seems to me you will be starting your first lectures by next week."

Next week! Who's going to milk the cows in the meantime and take care of the farm? And how are we going to find a house to rent at such short notice and move all our belongings within less than a week? And what about schools for the children? In those days home schooling was still illegal in our country, which would have been a good option. Our minds were racing with a hundred ways to solve our problem when, once again, God had already solved it for us.

The next morning there was a knock at the door. A forlorn young couple stood at the door. They had been working on a farm in Zimbabwe, but they were forced to

leave because they wished to keep the Sabbath, and their manager refused to give them the day off. They didn't feel comfortable living in the city and only wanted a place to stay on a farm for a while and were just too grateful for the added bonus of the small income they would have from the dairy. Once again we were amazed at the providence and workings of God, who takes care of all the needs of His children.

In no time friends found us a house to rent in Somerset West and the day after our arrival, we set out to enrol our children at Helderberg College, the Adventist school. Our only problem was that we had no more than a few Rand to our name to buy school clothes and food for us until Walter receives his first salary. Fortunately, there was a cupboard at the school with some second-hand clothing and payment was due only at the end of the month.

With our last money we stopped at the cheapest clothing store to buy our daughter some school socks and when we returned to the car, Tanya saw a small brown envelope lying on the floor in the back of the car. When we opened it, there was a hundred and fifty Rand, just enough to buy some food and a few other necessities for a week! We hadn't told anyone about our plight, because for Walter it was the greatest insult and embarrassment to admit that he was struggling. As he always stated, he would rather cook and eat his shoes than to ask for anything or receive 'alms' from anyone.

But God knew his pride and slowly started training him to give up his self-dependence and those circumstances that he was able to control. A week later, we received another anonymous envelope with another one hundred and fifty Rand, just enough to see us through until Walter received his first salary cheque.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2Cor.4:7

After we had unpacked our boxes and moved our furniture in place, we sat down on the bed, and sighed a sigh of exhaustion, but also of relief. We were grateful that we were temporarily relieved of the burden of the farm but, apprehensively wondered what challenges were awaiting us on the new road that lay ahead.



In My Father's Business

Chapter 7

Luk 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

My brother and his family, and my father and stepmother also happened to be living in Somerset West at that time. Soon after we arrived and settled into our new environment, we were invited to a family gathering at my brother's house. Since we moved to the farm, we had very little contact with our family, apart from my brother who visited us on the farm once. Walter spent a whole Sunday afternoon explaining the Bible prophecies and the reasons for our change of religion to him. He was speechless when he realised how accurate the predictions in the Bible were and enthusiastically took some books home to show his wife.

Not long thereafter he returned the books and said he didn't have time to read them, without one word further on the subject. He probably realised that acknowledging that he had seen and heard truth, required too much sacrifice, as did the rich young ruler in Luke 18:18. The price the Saviour asked was too high and he turned and sadly walked away from Jesus.

"I don't care what you people say, but tonight I will have my pork", said my father as he defiantly waved a bag with pork ribs under our noses. We hadn't said a word to my family about what we eat and what we don't eat, and wondered how he knew. Nor did we try to tell others what they should and shouldn't eat.

That evening turned out to be very stressful for us when my stepmother tried to convince us that we still had to climb many steps before we would even begin to understand the Bible, which according to them, was nothing other than an esoteric book for the adept. Paul, according to her, was a spiritualistic medium and the disciples of Jesus were learning how to reach the level of Jesus, who was only one of the many so-called descended or reincarnated 'Masters' that had attained to that spiritual level. She also taught the popular course, 'A Course in Miracles' where people are brought to believe that they can perform the same miracles than Jesus did, and even more.

It was impossible to get them to listen to our view and we didn't want to argue but went home that night pained by their attitude and concerned for their eternal life, wondering how we could ever make them understand. The simple salvation of the Bible seemed like foolishness in their eyes, impossible to comprehend, and yet it is so profound that thousands of books have been written on the subject of salvation, and millions of uneducated people as well as brilliant scholars have understood it.

The next morning we received a phone call from the hospital to inform us that something serious had happened to my father. He had been in the train on his way to work, when he had an aneurysm. The main artery from the heart, the aorta, ruptured and normally he would have bled to death. But as he lost consciousness, his body leaned over forwards, obstructing free blood flow from the artery, thus saving his life.

After many weeks in hospital, he was sent home, with most of his gangrenous bladder and toes removed. The doctors had warned him repeatedly before the incident to stop smoking and drinking alcohol, and to avoid a high cholesterol diet, but he evidently hadn't taken the advice seriously. The once energetic self-sufficient man was now reduced to a sad heap of bones in a wheelchair. My heart ached for my father. If only we had known all these wonderful truths earlier, we could have taught him the basic health principles and he might have listened and been spared this trauma. If only mankind understood that God only has their welfare in mind; His precepts are for our protection and prosperity and not to restrict us.

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." Jer.29:11

During this time a man from the Adventist Businessman's Forum approached Walter and offered to send him to the Geoscience Institute at the Adventist University of Loma Linda in the USA for a six-week field trip to gather more scientific evidence on the Creation account and the Biblical universal flood. This offered him the opportunity to study with two of the best creation scientists of that time, one an expert on flood geology, particularly regarding 'para-conformities', that is, time gaps in the geological column, and the other a world authority on the petrified forest formations.

At first Walter was not able to accept the offer, because the students had just started writing exams at his University. Although his students were finished, there was no way he would be able to get six weeks' leave, especially since he had just started working there.

Then something really amazing happened. Riots suddenly broke out, the exams were frozen for six weeks, and no one was allowed to leave the campus, except those lecturers, whose students had all finished their exams. Walter happened to be one of the few fortunate ones and when he asked the head of department what he should do during that six-week period, the man said, "I don't care what you do. Go to the moon if you like."

Within a few days Walter was on his first overseas trip to an American Adventist institute, unknowingly leaving me behind to face some fierce trials all on my own. It became increasingly clear to us that the enemy of God was targeting our family to try and stop us from growing and discovering more and more of the wisdom and knowledge of God.

One day, when I went to visit my dad at their home, he greeted me with his tired smile and asked me to help him to get to the bathroom. He had been sitting for hours all alone in his wheelchair in the lounge, not able to feed himself or go to the bathroom. The untidy house smelt of old urine and dried blood, and the dirty dishes were piled up in the kitchen.

“Where’s Merle?” I asked anxiously.

“She’s busy in the bedroom, don’t disturb her”, he said in a weak voice.

“Busy with what? When last did you have anything to eat?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine”, he whispered tiredly. “Just leave her.”

I managed to clean him up somewhat and made him a sandwich from something in the fridge that could very well have been dog food.

The next day I decided to bring them both some lunch. I made soup with home baked bread and a baked dish and took it to their house. My dad was again sitting all alone in his wheelchair in the lounge, while Merle had locked herself into her bedroom. I gave him his food and then took a tray with her meal to the bedroom. When I knocked, she said she was sick, and refused to open the door. I started cleaning the kitchen, and at my father’s request I started to tidy and vacuum the lounge. Suddenly Merle’s bedroom door flung open and, with enough energy to climb Mount Everest, she stormed down the passage towards me like a bull aiming at a matador.

“How dare you touch my things? How dare you...?” she snorted with her pale bluish eyes flashing.

“I...I just wanted to help. I thought you were sick.” I stammered and started putting the vacuum cleaner away.

She turned around, marched back to her bedroom and slammed the door. It was only some time later that my dad told me that it was her ritual to communicate daily in her bedroom with her ‘spirit guide’, who often appeared to her physically and instructed her. I asked my father if he wanted to come home with me until he was better and he nodded and said softly, “Yes, that will be fine, thank you.”

The next day I went to fetch him with our Volkswagen van and took the children with me to help with their grandfather. While I was still busy getting my father’s things together, Merle was constantly slinging insults at me. I just listened and tried to explain to her that it was too much for her to take care of him and that I would bring him back as soon as he felt stronger. The next minute she filed past me through the front door towards the children. They were sitting in the car waiting for me, when she stuck her head through the window and blasted them for ‘stealing’ her husband

away from her. She cursed them and called them names and then disappeared back into the house and slammed the door.

When I saw their bewildered faces, I was angry in my heart that she poured out her venom on defenceless little children, but, as usual, I said nothing. I hated myself for not being able to stand up to anyone and wished I had Walter's sharp tongue. When we arrived home, I phoned our German friend, Hilde, who was a nurse, and asked her to come and advise me how to wash and care for my father in the best way. As we turned him onto his side in his bed, we were appalled by what we saw. He had bedsores almost as large as my hand, which had consumed away his flesh down to the bone. Hilde came every day for the first week to help and encourage him and we noticed an improvement daily.

"Why do you do this?" my father asked Hilde one day. "You don't get paid, I don't understand."

"I'm a Kreestian", she answered in her German accent, "I love my Saviour Jesus and I love oll ze peopol He died for. And I love you too. Now you yust rest and get better and I will see you in ze morning."

With a gentle smile on my father's face, he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

At lunchtime the first of a number of healthy meals arrived at our door, which the ladies of the church had organised to help me cope better. I was very grateful, since I had to spend hours with my dad, washing him and changing his dressings and bedding daily and still take care of my three children and all the other household and school duties without a husband. The interest the people in the church showed in him impressed my father deeply and he started asking questions about what we believe. Although he was still very weak, he was able to listen to some sermons on audiotape and take part in short conversations.

One evening my father was sitting in his wheelchair and Robert, our youngest son, by now four years old, was lying on the couch in the living room quietly talking to himself. The boy suddenly sat up, his eyes fixed on an area behind my father and then he started to scream at the top of his voice. I recognised that bloodcurdling sound and a long-forgotten fear gripped my heart. I regretted not having made more time to pray and to place my family under the protection of God. With my busy schedule I had forgotten that the enemy of souls was watching to find an entering wedge into our lives again. I rushed to pick him up, took him to my bedroom and lay him down with me on the bed, almost tucking him in under my body in an attempt to protect and comfort him.

He was sobbing relentlessly and with eyes wide and filled with terror, he continued to stare at something behind me. I dared not look and felt almost paralysed.

“Take that thing away, take that purple thing away,” he cried. I felt the hair rise in my neck, but still I didn’t have the courage to look behind me. Instead, I said, “Listen carefully. I want you to repeat after me, say ‘Jesus, help me!’”

Through his sobs the scared little boy said, “Jesus, help me”, and the next moment I felt a wind pass through my hair from behind me towards the window. There was no draught; the door behind me was closed. And then there was silence.

I breathed a sigh of relief as Robert calmed down and fell asleep. While I was holding him, I could feel his temperature rise and prayed silently that he would not get sick or be traumatised by the incident. I stayed with him for a while to make sure he was all right and then left to attend to the rest of the family. After a peaceful night, Robert was up the next morning and playing as usual as if nothing had happened. He never mentioned the incident and nothing of that nature ever happened again.

After my father had been with us for several weeks, my stepmother suddenly showed up. She had been in Johannesburg for a couple of weeks, which explains why I was unable to reach her at her home.

“I’ve come to fetch my husband,” she said as she breezed through the door like a gust straight from the North Pole. How similar this was to the time when she used to leave her now deceased son Ivan with my mother for weeks, and then suddenly appear in a daze to take him home as if it were nothing out of the ordinary. By now my father was able to walk a little and the bedsores and wounds had almost healed. The children were sorry to see their grandfather leave; even when he was weak and sick, he was always kind and warm, with a great sense of humour.

Almost a week later Walter returned from his trip to America. He was so excited about what he had learnt on his field trip to Yellowstone National Park, to the Old Faithful geyser, the Petrified Forests, Mount St. Helens and the Grand Canyon. Now he was able to defend the Biblical flood even more confidently with solid scientific evidence.

A few days later a man phoned and made an appointment to see us. When he arrived, he explained that he wanted Walter to work for him for an initial five-year period, during which time he would be lecturing countrywide on the topic Creation versus Evolution. The organization would arrange the venues and ask an attendance fee to generate enough money to pay for expenses and Walter’s salary. Furthermore, the man continued, Walter would have to sign a contract in which he promises not to speak about any other aspect of our faith, but only on the question of our origins.

We sat silently for a while, not saying a word. I got up to make us something to drink and the man followed me into the kitchen.

“If you take my offer, you will never have to worry about money again,” he said, “I’ll take care of you and your family and Walter will have a good job that he will enjoy.”

Suddenly images of our ordeal on the farm sprang up in my mind and I could hear warning bells ringing. I remembered Psalms 118:8; “It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man”, and I recalled how God Himself delivered us from a situation which seemed humanly impossible to resolve.

The temptation was great, especially in view of our escalating debt on the farm, and the insecurity of having only a temporary appointment at the University, but after thinking it through, Walter decided that he was not willing to make such a promise. He wasn’t willing to be silent about how God in his mercy had taken us out of a world of misery and darkness and into the beautiful truth that God had given to His remnant church to share with a dying world. A burning desire had taken hold of his heart and mind to warn every soul on this planet that they were being deceived in almost every aspect of life, and that knowing the truth will set them free, a passion that was to become the driving force behind his every word and action.

He agreed to give lectures on the subject of Creation for the organization at any time, but without signing any contract or receiving any payment for his work. He was sure that his commission was as given in Matthew 10:7.8:

“And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.”

Soon after our decision, the new pastor of the Helderberg College church started visiting us. He had heard about Walter and his evolution background and invited him to give a few lectures during an evangelistic campaign he was conducting at the church and at Walter’s alma mater, Stellenbosch. He was a tenacious man, and, although little in stature, he was large in heart and faith, relentlessly pursuing his mission of saving souls. We attended his lectures and soon our whole family grew very attached to Uncle Frenchie and Aunt Emma.

The Somerset West campaign yielded some fruits, and quite a few people were baptised after the lecture series, but in Stellenbosch Walter encountered his first public confrontation through vicious attacks and animosity from the mostly academic crowd. After his lecture, some snide personal remarks from some of his ex-colleagues left Walter no option but to expose their inconsistent and illogical paradigm. He referred them to Matthew 24:37-39, where Jesus Himself warns of a second approaching judgement, just as sure as the flood, His first universal judgement upon the earth.

“Tell me, Dr van den Vyver”, he said calmly, although inwardly trembling under the joint attack from the scientists, “how can you go to church every Sunday, supposedly believing in the Bible and salvation through Jesus, and at the same time deny the flood, to which Jesus Himself referred?”

His ex-colleague thought for a while and then said condescendingly, “Well, if Jesus said that, he must have lied.”

The whole audience broke out in a buzz of discussion while Walter and Uncle Frenchie were able to greet a few people and leave unobtrusively. He was deeply disappointed that no one understood what he was trying to tell them and struggled to come to terms with the fact that his friends and once fellow-students now hated him. Many years later he discovered that Dr van den Vyver had, over the years, obsessively collected every scrap of information regarding Walter, his lectures and his whereabouts. He actively opposed Walter on every possible radio and television program and ridiculed him in academic circles.

Walter vowed never to return to his old university, and was grateful for the text in Matthew 10:14, which supported his feelings, “*And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.*” Little did he know that he was still to encounter much worse than the wrath of his ex-colleagues, and far more painful too.

One day my father phoned to inform us that they were moving back to the little holiday resort, Hermanus, where a group of Merle’s New Age friends lived. He asked Walter to help him take some books to a friend and to sort out some things for him in the garage, since he was still too weak to do much lifting and carrying. When they arrived at the home of the friend, Walter and our oldest son carried the boxes up the steps and as they entered the house, they couldn’t believe their eyes.

What seemed like a normal house from the outside, was a sun temple on the inside. The main room was shaped in a triangle, and everything was decorated in deep purple. In the one corner was an altar draped with the sign of Aquarius and other zodiacal symbols decorated the walls. The owner of the house greeted them friendly and, thinking that Walter was ‘one of them’, he proceeded to boast of his influence and achievements.

During the conversation Walter learned that this man was the main ‘channel’ for Africa, through whom many heads of state, politicians, industrialists and members of the medical and sporting fraternity received channelled information and advice from ‘guides’ from the spiritual realm. My father was anxious to leave before the man disclosed too many secrets, but he continued to show Walter some of the letters from presidents and other world leaders, including one signed by the British Prime Minister and an American President, in which they thanked him personally for his help and guidance.

We kept regular contact with my dad and he often asked us what we believe and how we interpret certain portions of Scripture. We noticed a marked change in his attitude; he was more humble and accepting and often spoke of how impressed he was with the Adventists, whom he called ‘your people’. During this time tension between us and his wife grew, and we seldom visited him at his home, and to avoid

tension, he preferred coming to us. However, one day, when Walter needed to fetch something at their house, he experienced something he would not easily forget.

He was in a hurry, as usual, and hadn't been prepared for a spiritual battle. After ringing the doorbell, he heard Merle call, "Come in, I'll be right there," and he walked into the lounge. As he stood there waiting, he suddenly felt a sharp pain in his side, which grew stronger and stronger, forcing him down onto the floor. As he lay there, writhing in pain and struggling to breathe, he was reminded once again that there was a real battle going on between good and evil and without God's protection man had no chance against the onslaught of the archenemy of God.

He then suddenly remembered that he was on Satan's ground and as he heard Merle's footsteps approach down the passage, he prayed silently that God would give him the strength to get up so that she would not see him in such a state and gloat at his demise. After all, she believed she was equal to God and was able to perform any miracle Jesus did, and even more, and we poor souls had evidently 'not attained to that spiritual level'. Little did she know that she had no power of her own, but that it was "the spirits of devils, working miracles..." to deceive mankind. The serpent's lie to the couple in Eden, that when they disobey God, they would become wise like Him, was perpetuated through the ages and is still believed in many cultures and religions today.

The pain started subsiding slowly and he was able to stand up just before she entered the room. He took a deep breath, thanking God for hearing his prayer.

"You look pale this morning," she said as she handed him the object he had come for.

Walter thanked her and left quickly, grateful for the cold fresh air outside. Never again did we enter their house or any other place of occult activity without asking for God's protection.

A few weeks later we went to help them pack and move to Hermanus. "What shall we do with the books in the garage?" we asked as they got into the car to leave.

"I don't know, just throw everything away," my father said tiredly as he waved us goodbye, leaving us with a considerable mess to clean up. Which, of course, served a good purpose. By now we knew that nothing in our lives happened without a reason.

While sorting through all the rubbish, we discovered some very interesting esoteric books and other valuable material. In that dusty old garage a whole new door was opened to us. Our experiences gave Walter the opportunity to uncover more and more of this sinister world and to warn people of the deceptions taught in some religious systems, and later in the secret societies. We had no idea that our years of trials and hardship would someday serve to save souls.

But among all those books there was something missing – the writings of Blavatsky, who was a Theosophist and a contemporary of Ellen G White. Her writings were channelled by spiritual entities, or in plain terms, demons, and published by Lucifer Publishing Company, later called Lucis Trust. She was the prophetess of the New Age and her successor was Alice A Bailey. Her core philosophy was that of many organizations affiliated with the United Nations. She was the antithesis of the Spirit of Prophecy and claimed that Lucifer was the true son of God, and that all humanity, with the “exception perhaps of the Adventists”, as she wrote, would accept the Luciferian light for the New Age. She also claimed that modern Bible Translations have been so changed that they now reflect the New Age philosophy.

The complete writings of Blavatsky were no-where to be found and one day Walter decided to find these books and to visit the same sun temple where he had returned the books with my father. I was very reluctant to tread on Satan’s ground, but agreed to go with him.

When we arrived at the house, the security gate was closed and Walter rang the bell. After a while a man’s voice spoke over the intercom and asked us what we wanted.

“Good afternoon, I am the son-in-law of the man who returned some books to you a while ago, and I am here with his daughter. May we please speak to you?” Walter said.

The next moment the gate opened and we walked up the path to the front door of the house. Suddenly a window on the second floor opened and a woman with wild eyes and dishevelled black hair peered down while yelling unintelligible words at us. Simultaneously the door opened and the man asked us to wait a few minutes. He closed the door again and evidently went upstairs to silence the woman. He pulled her back in while she continued shouting, and then closed the window. We felt very uneasy and prayed silently for protection from God.

When he had returned, he invited us into his lounge. Here Walter boldly asked him if he had the original writings of Blavatsky, but the man ignored him and started to display on the table all the other books that he had available.

“I have read all those books,” Walter said almost impatiently, “I am interested only in the original books of Blavatsky.”

The man stopped arranging the books on the table and turned to face Walter. “If you are looking for Blavatsky’s writings, then you have arrived...” he said with a strange smile. “What order do you belong to?”

I could see Walter’s mind assessing the situation. He couldn’t lie, but he also couldn’t tell the man that he needed the material to prove to people how dangerous and evil these secret societies and their doctrines are. “I don’t belong to an order, I just know what my father-in-law taught me,” was his truthful answer.

The man started to pack away the books he had hoped to sell to Walter, and shook his head. "I'm sorry, I only have my own private set of Blavatsky writings, and they are not for sale."

"What do you want for them, I will buy them from you," Walter said eagerly.

"Oh no, you can't buy them, they are priceless, and besides, after my death they will be donated to the Theology Department at one of our universities. I have been teaching courses to the theologians for quite a while now," the man said proudly.

Now Walter was even more determined. "I really would like to have those books, are you sure you can't get me another set?"

The man shook his head, and was about to show us to the door, when he suddenly said, "I do have an old set but it is in a foreign language, I think it's Dutch, or perhaps German, I don't know..."

"That's a pity," Walter said without revealing his excitement, "but can I see them anyway please?"

The man shrugged and left to fetch the box with the books. While he was gone Walter saw a Bible commentary on the shelf, and quickly pulled out one of the books. Great was his amazement when he discovered that this was an esoteric commentary on the Bible, where Lucifer is depicted as the true son of God, the victim who was supposedly wrongly accused and thrown out of heaven by the imposter Jesus. In this commentary typical satanic reversal was the norm, good becomes evil and evil becomes good.

However, before the man arrived with the books, the woman on the second floor suddenly started screaming again and he had to run upstairs to calm her down. This gave Walter more time to page through the esoteric Bible commentary. When the man returned with the books, he was quite flustered, but proudly displayed a German translation of the original writings of Blavatsky. Walter offered to pay for the set, but the man again said it was priceless. Walter then took the small amount of cash he had on him and handed it to the man.

"This is all I have with me, please take it," he said, and to our utter surprise the man accepted the money and gave us the books.

We thanked the man and grateful to leave the dark atmosphere behind, we quickly walk out the gate before the woman could scream at us again. We realized that God had once again opened the door for us to receive the information that verified Walter's lectures. These books were used only for confirming the information and not for delving into occult mysteries, which we knew by experience was dangerous ground for believers to venture on.

We were grateful for these experiences and in the years to come we thanked God for the many people who listened to his lectures and tapes and accepted the Biblical truth; for the first time they understood the deceptions and the great controversy in the unseen realm between Christ and His enemy Satan, or Lucifer, as he is worshipped by numerous organisations. Through the leading of God a loud warning went out in our country and also abroad; by word and by pen people were made aware of the messages of the Three Angels of Revelation 14 and were called out of their comfort zones and out of the darkness, which they, like we did before, mistook for light.

Eph 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light...

Eph 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

We had just settled down nicely in our home in Somerset West, when Uncle Frenchie had other plans.

“Why don’t you come and work with me? I’ve just been transferred to Parow church and will be doing some evangelistic programs in that area. Your temporary post at the university will soon be over and I will speak to the Conference about offering you a job as assistant evangelist.”

We knew that God was once more opening a new door, but I felt sorry for our children, who had to be uprooted once again and sent to a new school. Fortunately, there was another Adventist school they could attend, where they would be safe from the ridicule and onslaughts that would assail them in the government schools. Or so we thought.

Within a few days everything was organised; we had a new job, a church house and place in the Adventist school for our children. Walter started preparing slides for new lectures and I started studying the books of Mrs White with enthusiasm. The criticism, that she was worshipped as the Adventist ‘guru’ and set on a pedestal higher than the Bible, proved to be totally unfounded. Her only life mission was to warn precious souls of the dangers of our time and to turn them to Jesus and the Bible.

I had never been an avid reader, but this changed overnight. I couldn’t wait for a stolen moment during the day to read and drink in more and still more information revealing Christian principles through studying the love and mercy-filled life of my Saviour, as was portrayed by the pen of this down-to-earth lady with her heavenly wisdom. I was eager to learn about the depth of experience I missed while living as an atheist and my heart ached for not having had the opportunity to raise our children in a secure and godly environment from birth. I envied the Adventist parents with their seemingly perfect characters and peaceful, balanced children, who had absolutely no idea how hard it was to correct the inherited traits of

character in ourselves and in our children and to deal with the consequences of the mistakes we had made in our ignorance. I prayed constantly that God would reveal to my family and me a healthier physical and spiritual life.

During this time I was suffering greatly from asthma, which I had for my entire adult life, and visited a local internist, who did every conceivable test on me. At last he looked at me, shaking his head and said, "I have checked you through and I have to be honest, I have no idea what causes your asthma. You will just have to continue using your asthma pump regularly and come and see me every six months for a check-up."

But I was determined to have my problem solved. I felt inadequate and weak from the constant coughing and wheezing and decided to try one more doctor. I had heard about an Adventist lady general practitioner and set out to find her in the telephone directory. After a couple of phone calls, I had an appointment with her straight away. She listened to my story and then handed me a pamphlet to read.

"Here is a whole list of food allergens, my guess is that you're allergic to dairy products – that seems to be the most common one. Try avoiding these products, especially cheese, which is hard to digest, for a few months and see what happens," she said as she showed me out the door.

"Stop eating dairy?" I thought disappointedly, "That's impossible! How does one prepare food without milk and cheese? Isn't there some kind of medication I could take instead?"

At home I listlessly rummaged through some of my favourite recipe books and came across the herb book, 'Back to Eden', written by a physician, Jethro Kloss. He described his success in placing his patients on an all-plant diet, and, together with natural treatments, he managed to cure even the most difficult cases of cancer and other life-threatening diseases. He was the first person to introduce the large-scale production of soymilk in the Western World and even provided some home recipes.

Suddenly, I knew that God had heard my prayer and, since there was nothing available in the stores in those days, I immediately started making my own soymilk. My only concern was that my family wouldn't accept this sudden change, but to my surprise they were willing to give it a try for my sake and even started to enjoy the taste after a while. Within six months I had no more trouble with asthma and even the children's coughs and sinus problems cleared up. And no more of the frequent stomach upsets for Walter! We had better health than ever before, but it came with a price. Our decision to change to a plant-based diet, which gave us so much joy, released an unwarranted reaction from most members of the church and proved to cause our children's sensitive feelings great harm in their future experience with God.

Our first series of lectures in Parow together with Pastor Frenchie had a good effect on the church and our family. The members started working together to bring the

last warnings of Revelation 14 to many interested listeners. Our own children attended the lectures and after hearing Uncle Frenchie speak on the life of Christ, our oldest son decided that he wanted to be baptised. Our shy, sensitive twelve-year-old's heart warmed towards God and his fellowmen, even though our decision to become Christians and to keep the Sabbath had caused much turmoil in his life. At school he was one of the top students, but always had time to encourage and strengthen others who were struggling academically and emotionally.

During our stay in Parow, Walter studied as much as he could and followed in the experienced and faithful footsteps of the best evangelist in the country. But towards the end of the year, the Conference announced that they had no more funds available, and we started wondering what the next phase of our life was going to be. The Geoscience Institute had been in contact with us and offered Walter a post in The United States, but at the last minute they also withdrew because of a change in their financial position. Our time was quickly running out. The house we lived in was needed for another pastor and we still had no idea where we had to go.

Again God had an answer that would provide even more insights and training for future evangelistic meetings. Out of the blue Walter was again offered a temporary post at the University of Cape Town where he stood in for the physiology lecturer who was on sabbatical leave. By now he had a reputation as a creationist and the campus student body asked him to present some lectures after hours on the subject of creation versus evolution. He did not really want to create waves at the university that had just employed him, but after some considerable soul searching he agreed to do it. Strange as it may seem, he immediately received opposition from a colleague, a fellow zoologist, who happened to be involved with the organization Campus Crusade for Christ. This man was a Christian but worked for this organization as a science lecturer.

Walter was surprised and asked him why he was so opposed to the idea of creation, and yet lectured for a religious campus body. His answer was "we train Christians when they come to the university to accept the theory of evolution because a belief in creation is contrary to science and makes a mockery of the Christian religion."

Walter tried to reason with him about the incompatibility of the Christian belief in the atonement and the theory of evolution, but to no avail. Stunned that a Christian body employed people to negate what God had said, Walter however proceeded to give his series of lectures, which were now attended by a large student body and many academics including geologists and zoologists.



During one of his lectures on catastrophism and the universal flood, a heated debate broke out among the academics when some openly embraced what Walter was saying, but this so enraged one of the geologists, that he got violently angry, got up and in front of all the people, spat in Walter's face, calling him a liar and a concocter of false information. Walter calmly took out his handkerchief, wiped his face, and watched as the two camps continued their heated argument. The next day Walter produced the scientific articles published in reputable journals which corroborated his story, and again there was pandemonium and great division among the audience.

Luk 12:51 *Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division...*

But soon this temporary job came to an end, and we wondered what God would provide next.

Then one day Walter received a phone call from the previous university where he had filled in almost a year before. The professor informed him that a junior post had become vacant and that he should apply. Although this meant that he would have to start right at the bottom at a much lower salary, Walter decided to apply and leave the rest to God.

A few weeks later the Professor informed him that, although Walter had more than the required qualifications, the new 'Affirmative Action' policy in South Africa required that the first choice should be made according to race. The professor apologised briefly and put down the phone. A feeling of hopelessness slowly crept over us as it seemed that all the possible doors had been closed on us.

During that year we had put the farm up for sale because the young couple needed to move on and the income from the farm was not enough to sustain them. The economy had dropped to its very lowest and interest rates were so high, that no one was able to sell their properties. We had tried to auction the farm, but the highest bid was lower than the bond we were still paying all by ourselves. Heinrich had calculated how much he invested in the farm and wanted every cent back when the farm was sold. Every month we were slowly slipping deeper and still deeper into the mire of debt.

But then, after having prayed for the Lord to release us from that mill stone around our necks, we received a phone call from a prospective buyer, and after months of legal complications the farm was sold at a much lower price than our original purchase price. Besides that loss, we had our first partner's debt in the form of the bond we took for him, plus the debt of Heinrich's investment on the farm.

This was a bitter pill to swallow. We had no job, no income and a quarter of a million Rand debt! We had lost our lovely home in Stellenbosch with its swimming pool and other luxuries. We had used up the entire pension that was paid out to us when Walter left the university to start a new life on the farm, and we had sold the property that Walter inherited from his father, and all my jewellery, just to survive.

In utter despair we turned once again to God and continually claimed His promise in Philippians 4:19 that He would 'supply all our needs'. It was a few days before we had to move out of the church house, with no idea of where to move to, when Walter received another phone call from the same professor at the University where he had applied for the position as lecturer.

"Have you found a job yet?" the man asked tentatively.

"No, not yet...Why?" Walter felt a tingle of expectation, a shimmering of hope as he listened, while holding his breath.

"Well, when we informed the other applicant that he got the post, he said he was not interested anymore because the salary was too low. You are therefore the next in line. Are you still interested?"

I saw Walter's face light up and he winked at me as he replied, "When can I start?"

Once again our Father had provided just what we needed at the very last minute. Walter once jokingly said he was going to speak to God about His nerve-racking timing when he gets to heaven. But as time went by and we started to understand the character of God better, we had to admit that God's timing was always absolutely perfect. How else would we gain experience and learn to understand and trust Him under all circumstances?

"The path that leads to eternal day is not the easiest to travel, and at times it will seem dark and thorny...He wants you to exercise earnest faith in Him, and learn to trust Him in the shadow as well as in the sunshine." (E.G. White, Sons and Daughters of God, p 323)



Growing in Grace

Chapter 8

2Co 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

With a sigh of relief the children and I watched as Walter turned the key to the front door of our Parow home for the last time. We had cleared the house of our last possessions and were glad to leave the busy city and move back to the country atmosphere of Somerset West. The children were looking forward to attending the rural primary and high schools, situated on the College grounds and surrounded by forests and green meadows, where Bambi-eyed Jersey cows were grazing peacefully.

Because Walter now had a permanent position at the University, he was able to get a 100% bond on a house and we decided to buy a small, old house near the railway line. Just like his humble position at the university, we had to start from scratch again with a humble home for our family. It was the cheapest we could find, and very neglected, but had a nice garden with a majestic oak tree and a little stream running along the south boundary. We were so excited about having our own home again and I couldn't wait to start renovating and doing some vegetable gardening.

Since most of our salary disappeared into our bottomless pit of debt from the farm, we still struggled to survive. It took fifteen gruelling years before we were rid of the debt that we incurred through that unfortunate episode. Now our old Volkswagen bus was living on borrowed time, and we needed another car desperately. Walter's only solution seemed to buy a car with a good engine and a bad body and then build the good engine into a similar model car with a bad engine and a good body.

Walter's brainwave didn't seem so complicated at the time, but it turned out to be really hard work. Every evening after work, we drove almost fifty kilometres to Cape Town where a friend offered to keep the scrap cars in his back yard and help us transfer the engine. We worked till late at night to transfer windows and other good parts from the one car to the other, and after many hours of frustration and bleeding fingers, we proudly looked upon our handiwork. Our metallic red rust-free Audi with its powerful engine purred all the way back to Somerset West and received its honorary position in the garage. It had become so much part of us, we felt like sleeping in the garage to keep it company.

Walter continued to do some evangelistic work together with Uncle Frenchie and started building up a formidable series of lectures by using mostly slides he had photographed himself. Some days we didn't have the money to develop the slides for the following lectures and without having told anyone about our problem, someone would unobtrusively slip some money into Walter's pocket after a lecture.

Great was our surprise when we discovered that it was always exactly the amount we needed, not more and not less.

But one day we had come to the point where we had no money to buy even the basic food. It was lunchtime and the aromas from the neighbours' barbecues drifted temptingly through our dining room window. As we sat down around our bare table, three worried faces were watching us intently. Walter started to pray and thanked God for everything he had done for us so far and then proceeded to thank Him for providing the food for this day. "What food?" I saw written all over the children's faces, but just as they were about to complain, the phone rang.

"Have you been to your front door?" a lady asked with a secretive voice.

"No, I don't think so; we came in through the back door. Why?" I answered.

"Well, maybe you should go and look, and have a very blessed day!"

I hastened to the front door and opened it. It was the prettiest sight I had seen in a long time. There at the door stood a huge box filled with fruits and vegetables, and bread and other edible goodies. "Look what someone left at our front door!" I said as I placed it on the table.

"Ooh!" every mouth breathed in unison.

"That's what you just prayed for, Pup!" our daughter laughed. From very small all our children called us Mum and Pup and up to date none of them are called by their given names either. How that came about is too long a story!

And we did have a very blessed day. We had food for a feast that day and enough to last us till the next bit of money came in.

During this time we were involved in a series of lectures that Uncle Frenchie was presenting in a small town called Paarl, some 60 km from Somerset West. Before the lectures started, the local little church had to be prepared and trained to help during and after the campaign, particularly since new people inevitably joined the church after such a series. Walter was sent to give some Bible studies to the members, who had slipped into such a state of complacency, that they hardly believed anything anymore.



One evening he did a study on Daniel with the small group. There were only a handful of discouraged older folk and one younger family. The younger man stubbornly opposed him on every point, which brought back his hitherto suppressed feelings of indignation.

The historical Paarl church

“How on earth is it possible that you call yourself an Adventist and you don’t know these things?” he asked agitatedly. Then, with greater fervour he continued to smother the poor man with facts.

At the end of a very long and heated Bible study, Walter stopped and looked around the small circle. There was silence. “No more questions?” he asked, but no one dared say a word.

Then someone shifted slightly, carefully summing up the situation, much like an intimidated male praying mantis would approach his cannibalistic female partner.

“Um.., thank you for your enlightening study, Dr. Veith. Um.., I would, however, like to point out to you that our young friend here is not a Seventh Day Adventist; this was his first Bible study...”

“Oops!” Walter thought, thoroughly embarrassed by his faux pas and impetuous behaviour. But by the grace of God, instead of his approach having an adverse effect, the man, after a few Bible studies, became convinced of the truth and attended the lectures and church regularly.

“...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Given his history, this was rather astounding, for he had opposed the message for many years, making his poor Adventist wife’s life a misery. He was renowned for throwing Adventist pastors out of his house and even bombarding them with dangerous objects. We later learned that his original purpose for attending the Bible studies was to disrupt them, but eventually he became more amiable and a few years later ended up studying theology and entered into the ministry.

The rest of the older church members were, however, quite happy with the status quo. One lady even prayed at the end of one of the Bible studies that God should please not send any new people from the meetings into the church, because that would be too much trouble for them!

The following Sabbath Walter had to take the service at the church. Because he intended to use the time to give the members a preparatory lecture, which would be longer than a sermon, he had planned to start a little earlier. Just before he was to start the lecture, Uncle Bob got up and came to the front. He said he just had a quick announcement to make. But it soon became evident that the almost ninety-year-old had forgotten his original mission and started telling some unrelated anecdotes from the archives of his well-lived mind. Walter was sitting on the edge of his seat behind the pulpit, looking constantly at his watch. Since he didn’t want to interrupt and seem disrespectful to the older man, he prayed silently that God would take the situation into His hands and solve the problem.

The next minute, while the unsuspecting brother was still speaking, one could hear a few clicking sounds as his braces shot loose, releasing his trousers, which fell like a stone to the ground. He stopped in mid-sentence, grabbed his pants and quickly walked out. Walter felt a little embarrassed himself, for he hadn't asked for such drastic measures, but was relieved to be able to continue the talk without further interruption. We wondered if we would ever meet that mischievous angel who unfastened the old man's braces!

Just after the commencement of the public lectures in the town hall, the minister of the dominant local church, the Dutch Reformed Church, sent out a pamphlet to the residents of the town, warning them against the lectures and propagating lies and misconceptions about the beliefs of the Adventists. Uncle Frenchie personally visited the minister to correct him in his allegations, showing him in the Bible what it is that we believe. The man was at a loss for words and agreed to correct and retract his misinformation the following Sunday in church. Although undoubtedly some damage was done, most people were not deterred and started streaming into the town hall, tentatively at first, but then more boldly as they heard messages they had never heard before.

Three to four times a week we were bundled into the car to drive the distance to Paarl. Our children had become accustomed to sleeping in lecture halls and in the car and keeping themselves busy. It was exhaustive work, working against constant opposition from uninformed main line church leaders whose members started asking them very uncomfortable questions. Most well-meaning Christians had been following their ministers blindly, believing that their churches were founded on the Bible alone, or out of fear for their church's frightful Rome-inspired doctrine of hell. Now they were learning that their so-called Protestant churches were no longer protesting against Catholicism but were propagating the same unbiblical doctrines without questioning them.

Round about this time I had a dream, which seemed to reflect clearly the work God had set aside for His church in this misguided world of endless deceptions. I dreamt we were moving into a new house, but as we opened the front door, my heart sank into my shoes. The floors of the whole house were covered in a thick layer of mud and dirt.

"We can't move into this house!" I exclaimed, almost in tears, "We'll never get this place clean."

For a moment Walter shook his head pensively. Then he said slowly, "We can try."

"There's no point, we'll never finish the job, it's too much work", I started sobbing, but then Walter handed me a shovel, taking one for himself also and started digging into the dirt. "Let's just do it and see how far we get", he said. I sighed, for his life motto, 'Just do it', has often landed us in hot water.

After hours of painstakingly slow labour, we could feel some hard surface below and we worked harder and faster to see what we had found. Through the muddy streaks we saw that we had dug down to the floor tiles. I fetched a rag and polished a patch clean and as we stood looking with amazement at the beautiful tiles, the sun cast its golden rays across the floor, causing the tiles to sparkle like precious gemstones. I was so excited, that the work no longer seemed hard and wearisome, but enjoyable as we continued to work together.

I woke up with a smile and told Walter what I had dreamt. “Hmm”, he commented cynically, “seems like the story of our life – always shovelling dirt.” But the more we thought about it, the more we realised that this had indeed become our work, especially for Walter with his insatiable, inquiring mind, to expose and discard error and uncover the beautiful hidden gems of Jesus and His eternal truth, so that everyone can see it.

It was a hot summery day when Uncle Frenchie went out to visit some of the interested attendees of the meetings. At one of the homes, the husband was very interested and asked for more information, but his wife refused to even bring the tea she had made for their visitor, into the lounge. With resentment she set the tray on the floor outside the door to the lounge and then shouted that they must fetch it themselves, since she wasn't willing to serve a member of 'that sect'. After a while her husband, in an effort to keep the peace, decided that it wasn't worth the pain and stopped attending the lectures.

However, when the health lectures were advertised in town, she went, not knowing that it was Walter, a member of the same 'sect', who was the presenter. She enjoyed the lectures so much, that she continued coming to the spiritual lectures and soon she was convinced that what she heard, was the truth. When she explained to her husband that he was right after all and that she was now ready to walk this road with him, he got very angry with her and threatened to throw her out if she joined this faith.

One night he wouldn't let her sleep with him in their bedroom and she had to sleep in the spare room. Feeling rejected and confused, she started doubting her decision and wondered if she had gone mad. She cried herself to sleep, but soon she woke up hearing someone call her name. She got up, and, thinking it was her husband who had second thoughts, she opened the door to the main bedroom, but he was fast asleep. She went back to her bed, and once more she heard a man's voice call her name.

Again she went to see if it was her husband who had called her, but he was sleeping. She checked the windows to see if it was perhaps her father or someone from outside, but there was nothing.

The third time she heard her name, she was about to get up, when she heard the words in her mind, “Keep the commandments of God” and she saw, as if in a dream, the two clay tablets with the Ten Commandments descend from above. In a moment

all the uncertainty and loneliness disappeared, and she felt strengthened and comforted, knowing that this was the truth after all.

She decided to get baptised, but her life was hell at home. Uncle Frenchie, however, with the wisdom and tact of Solomon, managed to involve her husband in transporting some people to another baptism. Without saying a word, the unwilling man sat moping in the back row of the church, but after everyone was outside and the pastor was busy locking the door, he said sadly, "I have just missed my own baptism."

Pastor Frenchie looked at the once hardened face of the man, now humbled by his conviction, and merely turned the key in the door once more and said calmly, "No, you haven't, the water is still in the baptismal font. Let's go back in." Those of us who were still there, went back in and many tears of relief flowed into the baptismal water as his resentment and resistance was washed away and he accepted a new life with the Saviour he had so long rejected.

But the enemy was determined to hinder the working of God's Spirit in the hearts of many earnest souls. While the people were at the point of making their decisions to follow the truth, the President of the Conference at that time, evidently dissatisfied with the strong messages that Walter was presenting, ordered Uncle Frenchie to terminate the lecture series and withdraw from the Paarl area. Due to the follow-up work he was engaged in, the pastor nevertheless continued, but became, without revealing the soreness of heart, severely discouraged under the onslaught.

To crown it all, the dedicated pastor with his unassuming frame suddenly developed severe backache and was unable to even walk. But willing to rather endure the pain than give up his mission, he insisted to continue his work and eventually had to be carried onto the stage of the lecture hall by two men, who sat him down in a chair behind the podium. He started his lecture by lifting himself up a few inches from the chair, his pained face barely visible above the podium, but as he spoke of the unsearchable goodness of God, his back grew straighter until he was able to stand without pain. After the lecture his condition deteriorated once again and the whole procedure was repeated for the next couple of weeks.

But there was still more to come. The church had planned a get-together and all our new friends from the meetings were there. One of them was a German lady, whose husband was furious that she had become involved with us and threatened to kill our meek little pastor. This wasn't the first threat he received, and we didn't take it too seriously, until the man arrived at our function. He was a strong man and at least a head taller than Uncle Frenchie.

As he got out of his car, one could almost smell the trouble. He stormed towards the unsuspecting pastor like a mad bull charging the matador, cursing and threatening him. The next minute, without warning, his powerful arm shot out towards the little man, his fist aimed right at his head, but before the punch reached its target, Walter lunged forward to protect Uncle Frenchie and the blow struck him on the shoulder.

It sent him staggering, but he managed to catch his balance and turned to face the irate man.

Although Walter wasn't angry or contemplating any form of retaliation, he was much larger than Uncle Frenchie and the surprised husband backed off without another word and returned to his car. We were thankful that Walter managed to protect his friend, although his shoulder was 'a little tender' after the altercation. The wife continued to come to church regularly, and, although he made no further threats, the hostile man often sabotaged her car, and she had to walk a fair distance to church or get a ride with some of her new church friends.

The battle for souls is a real one, for Satan will not easily give up those who once belonged to him. But Jesus died to set us free from the evil one's dominion over us, and He will never give up His lost sheep until the final awful decision has been made to reject the Saviour's deliverance and free grace.

"Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? . . . Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."(Isaiah 49:24, 25)

Unbeknown to anyone at that time, more than twenty years later that very same man, who hated those who loved God above all things, decided to follow in the same narrow road, against all opposition and ridicule from his sceptical family and friends!

One evening we received a phone call from a very distraught new member at the Paarl church.

"You'll never believe what just happened to me," he gasped, "I'm still shaking all over. I phoned Uncle Frenchie and some crazy woman answered and laughed in a horrible voice. She said, 'I have that pastor just where I want him. I have finished him off; he is totally destroyed'. Who can this person be?"

"Let me phone him and see what's going on. Maybe you had a crossed line. I'll phone you back," Walter offered to try and calm the man down.

He dialled the pastor's number and a strange woman's voice said, "I've got him just where I want him. Ha, ha, ha! I've got him down on the ground", and she laughed so loudly with her blood-curdling voice that I was able to hear her clearly some ten metres away.

Walter put the phone down quickly and phoned the same number again. This time Auntie Emma answered and when he asked her if the phone had just rung before, she said no, that was the first time it rang. She continued to tell Walter that her husband was very discouraged and was sitting on the floor in his study. The opposition and criticism he encountered had depressed him so that he had no strength to continue any further. Then we knew that it wasn't just a crossed line, but

that Satan himself was gloating over the fact that he managed to discourage and burden God's servant so. We immediately drove the fifty kilometres to his house to pray with him and to encourage one another to persist and not to give up, recalling some of the precious promises from the Bible.

Shortly after these incidents, the oppressing evil presence was at times felt in our family as well. One late night, as we drove back to Somerset West after the meetings, our car suddenly went dead at a particular isolated spot in the countryside and rolled to a silent standstill. It was pitch dark and there were no farmhouses in the vicinity. Walter got out and peered aimlessly into the engine to see if he could find the fault, but without success. He fiddled with the battery and tried to start the car again, but it was totally dead.

"The only thing we can do is to pray," he said and then asked God to help us with our problem. The children were getting scared and cold as we sat huddled together, staring into the vast blackness around us, wondering how we were going to get back home.

A few minutes later, the car suddenly started up and the headlights came back on again. All sighed with relief and we continued our journey, the incident soon forgotten. The rest of the week I stayed home with the children, who had to get up early for school the next morning, but the same thing happened to Walter as he was on his way back from the following lectures. At exactly the same spot the car and the lights went dead and sometimes, as long as an hour later, the car would start up again, as if nothing had happened. At first we didn't think much of it, except that there must be some electrical fault, but after it occurred several times at the very same spot, we realised that this wasn't coincidence.

One evening we all were driving along the same road after the weekend lecture, in awkward anticipation of the notorious spot, when an even worse thing happened. We had slowed down to a snail's pace as we approached 'The Spot', when we noticed a black dog crossing the road at the exact place. Walter slowed down even more, thinking that the dog would run in front of us, but it stood still right in the middle of the lane of the oncoming traffic.

In anguish our children shouted as we noticed a four-wheel-drive pick-up approach from the other side, but instead of slowing down, it accelerated suddenly a hundred metres away from the non-suspecting animal and struck the dog with the bull bars at a breath-taking speed. The poor dog was flung high up into the air and landed in a mangled heap beside the road. I tried to get a glimpse of the driver but couldn't see anything at all through the tinted windows as the vehicle sped away. We turned around and followed the car but at the four-way crossing there was not a trace of any vehicle for miles. It had disappeared into thin air.

Our children were crying inconsolably and all the way back home I inwardly resented the way our joy and enthusiasm in doing God's work was being marred by the increasingly severe spiritual war raging about us. My heart felt like shrinking away

from the constant conflict, especially for my children's sake, but my mind kept telling me to persevere. We still needed to develop more trust and faith in the powerful deliverance and endless love of God, so that we would be prepared for still worse to come.

The Paarl church started growing rapidly as more and more people accepted the beautiful Advent message. But this brought some new challenges. With racial tension still rampant in the late eighties, especially in the smaller more conservative towns, white and black or 'coloured' churches were still separate, and each ethnic group did their evangelistic work amongst their own people. During this campaign, however, people from different racial groups attended and, because we had built up a friendship and trusting relationship with them, they preferred to worship at the little church where we did the Bible studies and had our Sabbath lunches together.

Among the new visitors were also some who were previously from a religious group called the 'Israelites'. They were adamant that we shouldn't allow coloured people in the church, because they could not be 'truly converted' and, having a 'limited education', wouldn't be able to speak our language, to sing our hymns or even dress, eat or act the way we do. No matter how many Bible texts Walter and Uncle Frenchie showed them, where God commissions that "the everlasting gospel" be preached "unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people", as in Revelation 14:6, they nevertheless refused to listen.

One Sabbath Walter had to preach at the little church in Paarl. The church was filling up with all the new members, both coloured and white, and all were very excited to hear the Word of the Lord. Only a few grumpy 'Israelites' were sitting in the corner furthest away from the others, casting occasional bitter looks across the congregation.

A few minutes after the service had started, a black lady entered the chapel and sat down just a few rows in front of the children and me. All eyes turned inquisitively towards the well-dressed stranger with her pleasant expression and refined demeanour. When the first hymn was announced, the members opened their hymnals, but the newcomer started singing every word of every verse in the Afrikaans language without the hymnal, her clear, strong voice ringing harmoniously above the voices of the congregation. Again and again a hymn was announced and every time she knew every song and every verse off by heart. A strange hush fell upon the people and then Walter continued with his sermon.

After the service, Walter took his place at the entrance of the church to greet the people as they came out, anxiously waiting for the stranger to appear so he could ask her where she came from. But no one saw her leave through the only entrance at the front of the church. We searched up and down the street and around the church, but she was nowhere to be found. Then it dawned upon us that God had once again taken charge of a difficult situation Himself. Those who were influenced by the 'Israelites', softened their hearts towards their coloured brethren and the troublemakers soon left the church all by themselves. The Paarl church and their

coloured folk became a strong bastion for the preaching of the message for many blessed years.

But the close friendship that Walter and Uncle Frenchie had, and the spiritual union they enjoyed in furthering the gospel in the Cape Province, soon came to an end. Uncle Frenchie and his wife had suddenly been transferred from the evangelistically fruitful ground, where the harvest was plentiful and the workers few, to a 'dry well' in a barren land about a thousand kilometres away. Walter, in his energetic, impulsive way, opposed the decision, but the Conference leadership refused to reconsider.

"Frenchie, I won't let them do this to you! There's still so much we have to do here together. Who will finish the work in the city?"

"It's fine. If my Conference sends me, I must go," the gentle pastor said.

"But they wanted to stop you from doing this campaign before; they just want to get rid of you. How can you let them do this to you?" Walter argued with his arms waving and his face revealing clearly his indignation.

"My high priest hasn't had me flogged yet," came the calm answer from the wise preacher, which gave Walter something to chew on for a while.

Suddenly we were on our own and Walter realised that he had to prepare more lectures than the few he had done together with his mentor. It turned out to indeed be God's plan to send our friend to what seemed like the end of the earth in order to guide Walter further in his unquenchable quest for truth. Within a few months he had taken more slides for new lectures and was ready for his overseas trips, which he could take only during his university vacations. Out of the blue he received articles and books in the post, or from people he had never seen before, and he gathered information for his varied topics daily until his mustard seed grew into a large tree.



At the university his work for God was also expanding rapidly. An agronomist from a large experimental farm at Stellenbosch approached him to help them solve the mystery of 'skew-leg syndrome' in sheep, and the astounding results of the research done by him and his students, revealed that the diet of the animals had a direct influence on

their growth and health in general, contrary to what anyone believed at that time. Soon Walter had his students working on different research projects, which to the

dismay of all, except himself, proved that it was the added animal products in the feed that caused and aggravated most of the major illnesses.

But, at the same time, Walter now had the opportunity and incentive to test scientifically every statement written on health by the 19th century pioneer E.G. White, and it proved to him that her health advice some hundred and fifty years earlier, was so far beyond her time, that it could only have been written through divine revelation. In His mercy God tried to protect His people against the ever-increasing diseases by revealing to them what was safe to eat and what not. The Israelites didn't believe Him on their way to Canaan almost one thousand five hundred years BC, so why should they believe Him in the twentieth century where man had become so sophisticated and educated? Besides, who today believes we're on our way to a heavenly Canaan anyway?

Luk 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

Luk 17:27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Luk 17:28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

Luk 17:29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Luk 17:30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.



Our Refuge and Strength

Chapter 9

Psa 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

It was during a hot December month that we met Sven. He had brought his family from freezing Germany to soak up the warm African sun and recuperate from the winter cold and stresses. He had heard about Walter and asked him to come and lecture in Germany the following year. This would be his second trip overseas and it was clear that God was preparing him to reach out to other communities as well.

About a week before Walter had to leave for Germany, we knew we were in a serious predicament. We had no money for him to take on his trip and even less for me to hold the fort back home. We couldn't borrow from the bank – we owed more than we could pay off in a lifetime. We dared not ask anyone, because our children were already being sponsored, so that they had the opportunity to attend the more expensive Adventist school. We knew it was important for Walter to go, but feared that we would have to cancel the trip.

One evening a lady phoned us from a small town some two hours' drive away. "Dr Veith, you don't know me, but I know you. Last night I had a dream that I had to give you some money. Tomorrow my son will..."

"Oh, no, I can't accept that!" Walter interrupted, "I can't take your money, you will undoubtedly need it yourself."

"I have set some money aside for the Lord's work. I really need to give it to you – the Lord showed me clearly that that's where the money must go. I will be sending it to you with my son tomorrow. Have a good evening and God bless", and before Walter could protest anything further, she hung up.

The following afternoon there was a knock at the front door. A friendly young man handed me an envelope and then left, wishing me a good day. When I opened it, there were two thousand five hundred rand in neat bundles - more than a month's salary at that time! We were stunned. Walter now had some money to travel with and enough for the children and me to keep going for the month that we will be alone at home. We thanked God for providing once again and for making it clear to us that Walter had to go on his first lecturing trip overseas. It was the start of a long and difficult road of separation and sacrifice for our family.

When we discovered the truth and came into the church, some people remarked that we seemed to have a very special close-knit relationship in our family and our marriage. Our children went everywhere with us, and we spent every possible

minute together. Now suddenly there was so little time for the family and life had become so serious and busy. Walter suffered greatly when he was separated from us, but he had the strong conviction that he had been called for a special purpose. Although he often came across as being too self-willed and harsh at times, he had the boldness and zeal, and the unflinching endurance necessary to fearlessly defend his misunderstood God and His misinterpreted Word. Having himself been caught up in deceptions most of his life, he felt compelled to warn others and reveal to them the fascinating, liberating beauty of the truth.

For our children and me life became increasingly more difficult as we battled along without the support of husband and father. We envied other Adventists who had been raised in the church and had parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins and friends in the faith. We felt isolated and missed the sweet friendship of our family, now lost for ever. But we learned over time that the true Christian walk was never to be easy, and though the battle was very real, we would never have to fight alone, as promised in John 16:33:

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

At the church school our children were often ostracised and mocked, especially our daughter, who was a frail little girl. Some of the boys repeatedly took her lunch box with home-baked bread and fruit from her school bag, tossed it around the classroom until everything inside was one big mess and then, opening it up for the others to see, shouted, “Look at Tanya’s lunch! Her mother gives her toxic waste to eat; that’s why she’s so thin. Ha, ha!” Then they would open their own lunch of white bread with jam or polony, and a pile of sweets and say, “Now this is lunch,” without a word of reproof from the teachers who were looking on. Tanya was obliged to hide her lunch and run to the bathroom during break time and sit on the toilet to eat her food. Even the girls shunned her and whispered and giggled when she walked past. The stress caused her to withdraw and lose even more weight; she felt she had no friend and that nobody really cared about her.

At church things were not much better. Every Sabbath our children, who inherited my ‘tall-and-thin’ genes, and I, had to endure comments from even adults, such as, “If you would eat meat, you wouldn’t be so thin”, or “You’re a bad example for Adventism.” Walter, who ate the exact same foods as the children and I did, was of the opposite build and constantly had to guard against gaining weight. He refused, as he put it, to look like a ‘puffed-up bullfrog’ and was forced to eat even less of the nuts and fattening creams than we ate. The treatment we received from those who were supposed to have been more experienced in the truth, was very painful and at times I doubted whether we were doing the right thing to send our children to the church school. I missed the times we spent with our previous friends and families, those days when we were still acceptable to them. Now we were even unacceptable to most of our own church members.

I hated seeing my children suffer. I wanted to take them away from this fearful world, but I knew that they needed valuable experiences with God to strengthen them for a time when they might have to deal with these trials on their own. I studied the promises of the Bible and we prayed for them daily and continued to try and strengthen their faith by reading to them passages from the wise counsel given to mankind so many years ago.

*If ever there was a time when the diet should be of the **most simple** kind, it is now. **Meat** should not be placed before our children. Its influence is to excite and strengthen the lower passions and has a tendency to deaden the moral powers. **Grains and fruits** prepared free from grease, and in as natural a condition as possible, should be the food for the tables of all who claim to be **preparing for translation to heaven**. The less feverish the diet, the more easily can the passions be controlled. Gratification of taste should not be consulted irrespective of physical, intellectual, or moral health. {CH 42.2}*
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, p. 352 (1869)

One night our daughter had a dream. She was only nine years old at the time. In her dream she and her school teacher were walking to find a park that everyone was talking about. When they reached the park, they were unable to see inside because the park was surrounded by a high white wall. They kept walking until they came to a huge, heavy gate that was closed, and on either side were two guards. On the other side she saw the most beautiful garden, but when she wanted to go through the gate, the guards gave her and her teacher each a cup and said, "Before you can pass through here to the other side, you must first drink this cup."

She looked into the cup and saw a fluid in which a little lamb was swirling. She was shocked at the thought of drinking a dead lamb, but then she took a sip. It was so bitter that she wondered how she would ever manage to drink it all.

When she woke up, she was disturbed. Her young mind understood little of the concept of repentance and salvation and even less of the symbols involved. As the years went by, she kept reflecting on her dream, not knowing what was still in store for her. Fourteen years and many tears later, after she had gone through her own hardships, she understood as she read the following from the book 'Patriarchs and Prophets' by E.G. White:

'The [Passover] lamb was to be eaten with bitter herbs, as pointing back to the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt. So when we feed upon Christ, it should be with contrition of heart, because of our sins.' {PP 278.1}

God had shown her that he wants to save us from the bondage of sin, and if we want to reach heaven, we have to go through the only gate, which is Jesus our Saviour. We cannot enter into the Promised Land before we have eaten and drunk the Holy Lamb of God, and have gone through bitter trials and sincere repentance.

What a God we serve, who never ceases to amaze us with His wisdom, how He teaches us in love, how he 'bends but never breaks...'

Isaiah 44:3 *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*

It wasn't long after Walter had left for Germany, when I received a phone call from a teacher from school where Robert had just started grade two.

"Mrs. Veith, I was wondering if I could see you this afternoon. It is in connection with your son Robert."

I wondered whether our youngest had been naughty or wasn't coping with his schoolwork, seeing that he was almost a year younger than his peers and had been showing signs of attention span issues. When I arrived at school that afternoon, the teacher nervously showed me into her office. Some heavy burden was written all over her face.

"Well, I don't know how to say this, but..." she started, shifting uncomfortably in her chair.

"Is there a problem, did he do something bad?" I asked as I felt my heart pounding in my throat.

"Oh, no, nothing like that. I just noticed that he isn't very attentive during Bible class and the staff decided to pray for him, for his...um...problem."

I was still wondering what problem she meant; his lack of concentration, or his lack of interest in the Bible stories, when she continued, "Well, you see, knowing his history...um...with the problem you had before, you know, with the demons...I do believe it may be, uh, you know..."

Then I started to understand what she was saying. I felt helpless and wanted to explain to her that she had it all wrong, and that he doesn't have that 'um...problem' anymore! Were my children going to be stigmatized forever? Don't they know that, *"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."* (John 8:36)? And hadn't they noticed that he had the same difficulty to concentrate in some of the other subjects, as many other children do? Besides, other children were doing much worse things, like calling our children names and playing rugby with my daughter's lunch box!

But as usual I just thanked her and said nothing. I was hurt and upset and once again resented myself for being so timid and unable to stand up to people. I wished we had never told anyone our conversion story, I wished they knew nothing about us. Then they wouldn't be so suspicious of us. We even heard that some thought Walter was a Jesuit, who was sent to infiltrate the church. After all, he had a Catholic background. Only much later did church members realise that Walter, with his

insatiable hunger for the knowledge of truth concerning all facets of life, was always sprinting ahead of everyone else, and that what he preached wasn't even new, but merely old truths that had been hidden under a blanket of mire covering God's sleeping church. He boldly proclaimed his findings in halls, through television and radio all over the world, with seemingly little regard to the sometimes cold, unsympathetic and even openly hostile responses.



Walter speaking on KKLA radio in Los Angeles

And yet, by the grace of God, some in the church were beginning to appreciate and understand his approach. Never before had the Adventist message been presented in this way and at first his approach was viewed as 'not Christ-centred enough', but as time passed, more and more fruits were plucked from his unorthodox

efforts to reach the atheist, the agnostic and the disillusioned 'unchurched' Bible believer.



Walter speaking on CKNW radio in Vancouver

One day Walter received a phone call from a man from Zimbabwe. He was a black evangelist who worked among the poor and suffering people, the unfortunate victims of the well-planned and orchestrated destruction of their once productive and prosperous country. He asked Walter to come and speak to his people.

When Walter arrived in Harare, he was greeted by a man with a pearly white smile in a car that drove like a crab – sideways! The whole chassis was bent, but the little beaten up car was still faithfully taking his master to his destination. Only problem

was, there was a fuel shortage in Zimbabwe, and cars were lined up for hundreds of meters at the filling stations, sometimes waiting for days to get a few litres of fuel.

Walter glanced at the fuel level and asked diplomatically, “My brother, I think we are going to need fuel, your tank is almost empty. Let’s queue up and I will pay to fill the tank.”

“Oh Pastor Veith, I can’t let you do that, and besides, we will have to wait through the night, only doctors and government officials can get fuel now.”

“Let me speak to them, I will see what I can do,” Walter said as he got out of the car and approached the guards at the fuel pumps. After a while the evangelist saw them beckoning to him to bring his car to the pump, and to his great surprise they proceeded to fill up his tank.

“My pastor, how did you do that?” he whispered to Walter.

“I showed them my university business card and it says, Dr Walter Veith. They immediately agreed to give me fuel!”

“Praise God, He once again provided,” the evangelist sighed in gratitude as he flashed an exited smile at Walter.

Soon the crab-car drove off in a cloud of exhaust smoke and stopped at a small shack where the lady of the house had prepared them something to eat. Walter felt humbled by the hospitality of people who had nothing, and yet gave everything.



He was shown his sleeping quarters, which consisted of a small room with only a mattress, while the rest of the family were sleeping on a blanket on the bare floor.

They had sacrificed their only mattress for him. His heart went out to these kind people and he wished that God could make an end to the suffering on this earth. He felt anger well up within him because of the corrupt powers who don't care about the people they have exploited; all they care about is filling their own pockets with more money, their lives with more luxuries, and their minds with more sin and clandestine schemes, and he vowed to expose them even more.

After a simple breakfast of porridge, the evangelist fetched Walter for the Sabbath service. He was late, but didn't seem to be perturbed. Walter, however, with his German temperament, was already sweating. He hated being late and would rather be four hours early than one minute late.

Along the way his patience was tested even more. Whenever his brother saw someone he knew on the road, he would stop the car and get out to talk to the person. Ten minutes, twenty minutes, half an hour went by, and by now Walter was chewing his pen to pieces. Then, to his dismay, the evangelist saw an old lady with shopping bags walking laboriously across the road. The evangelist rushed to relieve her from her burden and while walking slowly with her all the way to her house, he asked her about her health, the health of her children, and her children's children...

Almost an hour had gone by when the man, still smiling broadly, returned to the car. They were now already more than half an hour late for the meetings and they were still a long way off from the meeting hall.

"I can see you are nervous, Pastor," he said, "and I understand how you feel."

He was driving as fast as his buckled vehicle was able to go as he started telling Walter his story.

"I am a white man in a black man's body and I have the same mindset as you European people, but I have had to learn that tolerance and kindness towards others are far more valuable than doing everything right and according to plan. You see, I was placed in a basket as a baby at the front door of a missionary family's house, and they raised me. I grew up thinking like them, but I realized that I have to accept and understand the mindset of the African people in order to reach them with the gospel. And here I am, two people in one body," he laughed as they stopped under a tree next to the church hall.

Walter looked around. The church and the surrounding area were empty.

"There's no-one here, they've all left!" he said with more than a hint of panic in his voice.

"Oh no, my Pastor," the evangelist laughed loudly, "they haven't arrived yet! The meetings will start when everyone is here. You see, the European mindset is time-orientated, while the African mindset is event-orientated. In the African culture it is

considered impolite not to take time to show and interest in one another along the way.”

Although they were already more than an hour late for Sabbath School, the first attendees only started arriving after eleven o'clock. They were streaming in from all directions, old and young, along dusty roads, through the bushes, on crutches, all in their best Sabbath clothes, and soon the hall was filled to the brim with eager friendly faces looking in exited anticipation at the pale-faced speaker.



He spent all day till dusk teaching, explaining and answering many questions, but unbeknown to his brethren, their lives and faith had taught Walter the more important lessons of life, lessons he would carry with him for the rest of his life.

When Walter arrived back in South Africa, it was back to the grindstone again. As the financial pressure became greater, I decided to try and contribute to our income, but it was difficult to get a job where I could still be with my children after school. The only option would be teaching, but my BA degree meant very little without the teaching diploma, so I decided to study one more year to be qualified for teaching. Not having the means to pay for my studies, I was obliged to study at Walter's University, which was quite a distance from home, where spouses or children of staff members received a healthy discount.

Having only one car, it also solved our problem with transport, but our children had to be dropped off at school at six thirty in the morning. It broke my heart to see them huddled in the only small dry spot at the school entrance on those cold and rainy Cape winter mornings, all alone in the dark. I spoke to the school about a possible solution to the problem, but nothing could be done, and we had to accept that there was no other way for us to reach the University through the morning traffic madness on time. Every morning we had a short prayer with our children, asking God to protect and strengthen them. I longed to shelter my little fish out of the water with their sensitive souls from this world where it is every fish for himself, and although I knew what they were going through, I was powerless to do anything about it.

At the university I discovered that I was the only white student on campus, the only 'pale face' in a group of more than a thousand Education students. But instead of treating me unkindly, they took me into their hearts and made me feel like one of them. In the beginning I struggled to understand the political paradigm of the Education course and I wondered what Marxism and Socialism had to do with schools, but I soon realised that universities across the world were mere soundboards for the ideologies of political systems. Susceptible young minds could be influenced to think the way the system needs them to think. As the young men and women of the Apartheid era had been educated to accept the ideology of that time, so the 'University of the Struggle' prepared the students for a new era. No wonder they had been rioting on and off for years. Fortunately, the year that I studied there, not one incident of violence or boycotting occurred - a small window of peace in the house of otherwise constant unrest.

One Sabbath Walter was asked to preach in the SDA church of the large black settlement, Khayelitsha, which consisted of a few buildings surrounded by thousands of shacks, also known as the Cape Flats 'squatter camps.' At that time it was extremely dangerous to enter these areas, even for the black people themselves. For a white person it was definite suicide.

"I don't know if we should go," Walter mused to himself after having spoken to the black brother who invited him. "But then again, no-one ministers to these neglected brethren. If God wants us to go, he will also protect us."

Early on that Sabbath morning we arrived at the entrance of the settlement, all dressed in our Sabbath clothes and equipped with our Bibles. At the stop street rebel guards were pacing up and down, AK 47 rifles in their hands and cruel eyes painstakingly patrolling every movement in or out of the territory. We had prayed before we left home that God would protect us, but now what? How will we get past them? If we stop at the stop street, we will surely be pulled from the car and set alight with a burning tyre around the neck, known as a 'necklace', or if we were lucky, be shot. And it was too late to turn back now.

Walter slowed down as we approached the crossroad. I was praying silently, and the children were dead quiet. There were armed men on either side of our car and as we looked at them, expecting the worst, we all noticed the strangest thing. The man closest to us turned and looked straight at us, lifted his rifle but then turned slightly to look at something that had attracted his attention on the other side of the road. The other man didn't seem to notice us at all.

We started turning into the street that led to the church and then the silence was broken as all of us exclaimed simultaneously, "How is that possible? They didn't see us!"

One of the children whispered, "That big man looked straight at us, but he seemed to be looking through us to the other side of the road!"

We didn't dare to look back until we were a safe distance away, and there they were, still stopping cars that were entering the area, guns pointed at the passengers. A mixed feeling of apprehension and awesome gratitude rested gently on us as we continued along the road to the little church. We were surrounded by make-shift corrugated shacks covered with plastic bags to try and keep out the fierce Cape winter storms. Barefoot children with runny noses in oversized shabby jackets were playing in the dust, and as we drove past they stared apathetically at us.

"How will we get back home, Pup?" our daughter asked as she repeatedly glanced through the back window.

"Don't worry, God will take care of us. In Psalms 121 it says, '*The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*' Well, He helped us with our coming in, didn't He? So He will help us with our going out," Walter reassured the children.

At the church we were welcomed like the lost son. Smiling faces, beaming with gratitude, greeted us as we were embraced and escorted to our seats. We hummed along as they sang hymns in Xhosa and while Walter was preaching, the aroma of beans and samp being heated on the fire in the back room of the church drifted through the windows and made us forget the world of troubles and turmoil outside. By another miracle our trip back home was uneventful; the armed men had disappeared, and we were able to drive out of the unrest-stricken settlement, relieved but saddened by the empty eyes and gaunt faces of the innocent victims of political manipulation.

It was hard work for me to be back at the university and a huge sacrifice for all of us. But being more motivated and diligent than at seventeen when I first went to university, I did well and before I even finished the year, I had a job offer at a Catholic all-girls high school. The school was situated even further away in Cape Town, and I only got home very late in the afternoon.

One day, as we opened the front door, we saw some clothing and other items scattered across the lounge. I grumbled to myself as I picked up the items, wondering what on earth the kids had been up to. When we went into the study, we saw something much more disturbing. The thousands of slides that Walter had prepared and sorted for his lectures were all turned out of their holders and were lying in one big heap on the floor. Knowing that our children wouldn't dare to treat their father's work with such disrespect, we realised that someone else had been in the house.

We inspected all the doors and windows and found that the intruder had gained access to the house by prying open the bathroom window. According to our eyewitness neighbour two houses from us, she saw a man leave our house, loaded with bulging suitcases, which we later discovered, were filled with our electric equipment and all Martin's winter clothing, some ten minutes before the children arrived at home with the school bus.

I shuddered as I thought of the consequences if they had arrived while the thief was still in the house. We notified the police, who came to take our statement, but they told us that they had little hope of retrieving our stolen goods or apprehending the culprit. They had their hands full with the escalating crime and violence as the informal 'squatter' settlements around Cape Town grew rapidly, with no job opportunities for the cold and hungry families that migrated from the north.

That night as we sat contemplating our options, we remembered our faithful dog, Mayet, who had gone through thick and thin with us over the years but had died a few years previously. We all agreed that we needed another watchdog, but since there would be no one at home to take care of a puppy, we needed a fully-grown dog to be an immediate deterrent. Within a few days of asking around, we brought home a beautiful, but hyperactive six-month-old German Shepherd by the embarrassing name of Adolf. He had previously belonged to a doctor, whose wife couldn't handle the energetic animal. Admittedly, he was more than a handful, and he hated being left alone at home. Every time we left the house, he had a very effective way to punish us.

At first I thought I was losing my sanity when my washing on the line disappeared mysteriously every time I went out. No one would dare to venture into our garden to steal it with such a ferocious animal patrolling the territory. Then one day, as I was digging between the heads of lettuce in the vegetable patch, my garden fork came up with one of Walter's underpants! A little further a whole sheet and a towel lay carefully covered under the rich soil, the only tell-tale evidence of the culprit's handiwork being a minute piece of fabric sticking out of the ground, and Adolf lying flat on his belly, his eyes shifting guiltily from side to side.

Unfortunately, our newly acquired alarm system did not like women very much, especially a woman with a broom in her hand. One day, when I tried to handle him, he bit me in the hand, even though I was the one who fed and brushed him! Somehow that reminded me of the mole I rescued from the dog as a little girl, which resulted in a couple of bleeding gashes in my hand.

Having been taught by the experts that psychological problems are obviously caused by the parents, and in this case his previous 'mother' with the broom, I contemplated how I could use some of my acquired Psychology training and counselling skills to rid him of his broom-phobia. But my approach had no positive results. Walter had a much more effective therapy. He immediately, and in no uncertain terms, showed the dog his position in the pack and told him that he was definitely right at the bottom of the pecking order, even lower than the cat, the hamster and the parakeet, who had all been there first. And if he ever dared to touch his wife or children again, he would be out on the street.

Accepting his sorrowful fate, Adolf, with his typical one-man-dog qualities, soon adopted Martin as his soul mate and started to settle down in his new role as 'Defender of the Veiths'. If he could speak, we joked, he would surely make an

excellent 'Defender of the Faith' too. He never bit any of us again and received an honorary place as a loyal member in the family.

The salary I was earning wasn't much but helped to pull us through. Teaching the eager girls at the Catholic school the German language was very rewarding and I built up some good trusting relationships with them. Knowing that I was not Catholic, they often asked me questions about what I believed. What especially plagued them were the questions about hell, purgatory and sin, which I tried to answer as best I could, referring them to the Bible.

I was one amongst only a few non-Catholic staff members who were under constant close scrutiny from those few nuns from the convent assigned to run the school. I never saw any of them smile and I experienced a coldness that covered the school like an icy blanket. Discipline was enforced to the extreme and I often yearned to relieve the poor girls from the inhumane duties they had to perform to pay for minor transgressions.

The penalty for whispering in the passage or for not walking in line, for instance, would be the backbreaking duty of sweeping the entire foyer of the school with a small hand brush. One look from the headmistress with her ice-blue Irish eyes made even me shudder and I stayed well out of her way. Of course, she had her methods of keeping an eye, or rather an ear, on the activities of the staff. In every classroom there was an intercom through which she could eavesdrop. But I had an advantage being the German teacher. As soon as the girls heard that familiar clicking sound, which indicated that the headmistress was listening in, they would warn me with vigorous waving of the arms and then I would switch my conversation to German so that only they could understand.

Once a week we had to take the girls to the chapel for worship, which was attached to the convent. I often wondered if this was the convent where Father McAllen had taken the pottery vase I gave him after he did his 'exorcism' and said the mass in our house. This convent was in the exact same area which he had mentioned. Could the rest of the nuns at this convent be the ones that 'never see the outside world', as he told us, and therefore the ones who gave him messages from the 'spirit world'? During the entire time I taught at that school, I never saw any of the nuns, apart from the three who were at the school.

The inside of the chapel was awe-inspiring, and the voices of the precious girls sounded like angel choirs. It was difficult not to be swept away by the emotion-filled songs and music. I prayed that God would have mercy on these little ones, unknowingly trapped in a system of falsehood. I thought of the poor nuns who thought that they have to suffer and obey the system, to live a life of deprivation and misery in order to please a god of wrath and works to be saved. If only they knew the true character of the true God! If only they remembered how Luther, as he was crawling on his knees up the Sancta Scala, suddenly understood that man is not saved through his works, but by grace through the One who does not require suffering, but rather desires to put an end to it.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.

Psalm 51:16, 17 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give [it]: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God [are] a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

It was early autumn when we received a phone call from Uncle Frenchie. He enticed Walter into agreeing to visit the Bible lands with him during his winter vacation to gather information and take slides for their evangelistic lectures. I sighed. He had been away so often, and every bit of his university leave was spent overseas. He had little time for recuperation in his demanding academic and evangelistic schedule and I wondered when he would learn to say 'no' to someone and spend some time recovering.

But the trip proved to be a fruitful and God-inspired 'divine appointment'. On the tour of the seven cities in Turkey, representing the Seven Churches of Revelation, their Muslim tour guide, Malaika, became interested in this peculiar group of tourists that knew so much about the history of her country, and the Bible. Although Walter was feeling sick, which happened frequently when he travelled, he felt an urgency to explain to her the prophecies of the Bible. They spent hours questioning and answering while travelling on the bus, and the following Sabbath Uncle Frenchie invited her to visit the Seventh Day Adventist church with them in Istanbul.

After a Spirit-filled day and more discussions and Bible studies, she felt impressed that this was the answer to her search for meaning in life and she decided to come to South Africa to study theology at Helderberg College. This was a life-threatening decision; Muslims that convert to Christianity cannot safely return to their families or countries, and Malaika had to do some real fancy footwork to get permission to take her daughter with her to South Africa.

In the little town by the ruins of the ancient city of Philadelphia, Walter had an unforgettable experience, which caused him to do some much-needed soul-searching. The gift of teaching that he had received from God and the measure of success it brought about, inspired him to reach even higher goals. But while sincerely aspiring to 'do God's work', he became so focussed on his mission, that he unknowingly took very little time to notice others and their troubles.

As the bus stopped in Philadelphia, the city of 'Brotherly Love', the impatient, focussed-on-one-thing-only Walter couldn't wait to get out to take the perfect, prize-winning photograph of the little town that seemed like it was a setting in a movie about the Middle Ages. On the bus, together with all the Adventists, was an older non-Adventist lady, who had joined the group. Her habit of constantly smoking cigarillos caused the others to avoid sitting close to her and with time she felt excluded and lonely.

Unbeknown to the others, she started walking down the hill all by herself, feeling unloved and sad, when an old woman, seemingly bent over from years of toiling, came walking up the hill from the other side. Down in the valley a few people were transporting goods on donkey carts and doing business on the streets, like in the backdrop of a movie. When Walter noticed the perfect setting for the perfect picture for his lectures, he pushed through the small crowd and made his way down the hill. He tried to capture the scene, with the bent old woman coming up towards them, but the cigar-smoking lady with her westernised appearance was standing in the way. Getting more and more frustrated, he grumbled silently to himself, wishing he could somehow get her out of the way, when all of a sudden, the old woman crossed the road right opposite the lady from the tour group.



By this time Walter was inwardly fuming, his picture totally spoilt, but then she did something very unusual. The old woman went straight up to the Western lady and hugged her like a long-lost child, kissing her repeatedly on both cheeks and saying some words in Turkish. Then she continued up the road towards Walter and gave him a most solemn rebuking look. It felt to him as if her penetrating eyes had instantly laid bare his disagreeable attributes for everyone to see. He stood thinking about what had happened and about the fact that no Muslim would touch an 'unclean Westerner', let alone treat her with such affection.

The rebuking messenger in Philadelphia

Then it slowly dawned upon him that God used the city, ironically called 'Brotherly Love', to comfort one lonely person, and at the same time to teach the other a lesson that would serve him better in his future mission. He needed to learn that the gospel was not merely about knowledge and teaching. It is also about ministering to those in pain and darkness, as was the mission of our benevolent Saviour.

Isa 58:6 Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

For a few moments Walter stood frozen. He then turned to take another good look at the aged messenger of God, but she was nowhere to be found!

When he returned from Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Turkey, he was refreshed again and able to fight with his double-edged sword, not only letting the truth cut others, but allowing God to cut into his heart. Adding to the latest information on research done in the field of Health and Creation science, he now had astounding evidence in the archaeological field as well, verifying Bible authenticity and prophecy and giving even the most ardent higher critic or sceptic some food for thought. Although some agnostics argue that Christianity cripples the intellect and narrows the mind, it is in reality entirely the opposite. The study of the Bible is truly unfathomable, and the possibilities to explore and broaden the vision seem endless.

More and more dimensions relating to our existence, our origins and our destiny were opening before us as we were daily growing in His grace. Our only regret was that our families and friends from our old life were not willing to explore with us and embark on this exciting journey.



Saqqara



The ancient city of Tyre

Once he was back at home, we realised that it had become awkward for us with only the one vehicle, and we decided to look for another inexpensive car. We heard about a bank auction of repossessed cars and drove to Bellville, a suburb of Cape Town, to take a look. The cars were sold on a tender system where the bids are placed into a sealed box and sorted on a specific day. The person who placed the highest bid receives the vehicle at that price. We noticed an excellent pick-up truck in perfect condition, by far the best on the floor, but realised that we would not be able to afford such a luxury. It was probably worth more than thirty thousand rand and we were not able to borrow more than fifteen thousand from the bank. As we

turned away from the pick-up to view some of the other cars, a man came up to us and said, "The highest bid on this pick-up is fifteen thousand and five hundred rand," and then he walked off.

That's impossible, we thought, how could he know what the highest bid is? The box was sealed and would only be opened in a week's time and many people would still submit their offers before then! But, since our hearts were set on that vehicle and none of the other cars appealed to us, we decided to put in a bid for fifteen thousand and seven hundred rand, just to see what happens.

A week later Walter returned to the auctioneers to hear what the highest bid was. He couldn't believe his ears when they called out his name as the highest bid! With a puzzled look on his face, he asked, "Tell me, what was the second highest bid?"

The auctioneer rummaged through the stack of papers in his hand and said in a business-like fashion, "The second-highest bid on this vehicle is fifteen thousand and five hundred rand."

That was exactly the amount the stranger told us was the highest bid at the time! And there was no way that any person could have known that that would remain the highest offer, other than our bid of two hundred rand more. We were elated and thanked God for His wonderful gift. This was our first almost new car in years, and we felt guilty that we should be showered with such a blessing.

A few months later Malaika arrived from Turkey. She had a place to stay on campus but had no transport. We felt sorry for her with no means to do her shopping and other errands in a strange country without a decent transport system, so we decided to lend her our hand-built Audi until she was able to find another solution.

The day she came to fetch the car, she was so grateful, and although she had only driven automatic cars before, she was sure that she would get used to the manual gearshift system in no time. With grinding gears and the car bobbing up and down all the way up the street, she managed to speed through a couple of garbage cans on the sidewalk, barely missing the trees on the other side of the road, and then disappeared with screeching tyres around the corner.

"O, brother," Walter said as we looked at each other in shock, "I don't think I asked her whether she has a driver's license."

A few days later, she arrived at our house in tears. "Walter, O, Walter, you're going to be mad at me", she cried.

"What happened? I won't be angry, tell me."

"I boomed your car," she said in her pleasant Turkish accent as she pointed to the back of the car. And that wasn't the last time. Within a few months she had 'boomed' our car so many times, that it didn't even resemble an Audi anymore.

Every time she came to show us the damage, she would cry and hug and thank us that we were not angry and then continued to bob back up the street towards the College with gears still complaining bitterly.

One day she arrived at our home and handed Walter the key to our car. “Thank you for being so kind to me. I have made other arrangements for transport. And the good news - soon I will be continuing my studies in America. I will not forget your help ever.”

I giggled to myself as the thought crossed my mind that she would be much happier and safer in the States where no one knows how to drive a manual shift car anyway! She later finished her studies at Andrews University, where she eventually married an Adventist pastor. Soon thereafter they became two of the very first Adventists to be involved in mission work in her homeland. We sold our car that now looked like a Swiss cheese with a porcine snout, to some backstreet car dealer for a pittance, but this was a small price to pay for the blessing of being able to further God’s work!



Walter’s ministry grew and so also the demand on his time. His university career was stealthily becoming more and more stressful and at the same time he was asked to give several evangelistic series of lectures in the evenings and over the weekends. One of these series was to take place in the heart of the bustling city of Cape Town, which meant that Walter would have to lecture at the University till late, then rush home to grab a bite to eat and then drive back to the city some 60 km away to give the lecture and return home just before twelve in the evening. This continued for weeks; weekdays and over the weekends. There was very little time for anything else than working out lectures, either for the University, or for God’s work. But God’s grace and Walter’s enthusiasm kept him going. He had become a human bulldozer for the Lord, driven by an unseen but very real power and an urgency to warn mankind of the black cloud of deception hovering over the entire world.

After the birth of our last child, Robert, scar tissue and other complications were causing me a great deal of pain and health problems, and my family doctor suggested my greatest fear – a hysterectomy. Remembering how the doctors struggled to control the haemorrhaging during the births of all three our children, I asked the gynaecologist if I could donate my own blood, should something unforeseen happen. During those years, the early nineties, the dreaded AIDS virus had just started rearing its head, and blood tests to detect the virus in donated blood, were not very accurate at that time.

“Oh no, that would not be necessary,” the absentminded gynaecologist said as he started to search through his diary to cram another appointment into his already saturated surgery schedule. Without any further discussion, I received a card with the time and date for the operation and left with the uneasy feeling that something was amiss....

I had had a couple of operations over the years. I had ‘been there, watched the movie and bought the T-shirt’, as they say. But the moment I woke up after this operation, I knew I was in trouble. I anticipated the throbbing abdominal ache, but not the unusual life-crushing pain in my chest and across my one shoulder. I couldn’t breathe, nor move, nor eat, and two days later I started feeling feverish. The palms of my hands were turning a strange yellowish colour, whereas before they were a healthy pink. The nursing staff in the expensive private hospital seemed unperturbed over my condition and merely increased the painkilling drugs, but to no effect.

During this time, the lecture series in Cape Town was drawing a small but sincere crowd and Walter was steadily building up towards a crescendo in his presentations. One late afternoon, just before he had to drive the distance for the evening lecture, he came to see me. I was weak from not eating and the excruciating pain and could hardly speak.

“How can I leave you here in this state?” he said, his voice revealing more than just a hint of panic. “I will have to cancel the lectures, I can’t go...”

“Go,” I whispered, “God will take care of me.”

For a few moments I noticed the struggle in his mind, but then he bent over me, said a short prayer, kissed me and left.

Eventually, on the fourth day Walter was able to speak his concerns when the gynaecologist, who had been away for the weekend, arrived for the first time. He did not seem to think my condition was anything to worry about, but reluctantly proceeded to measure my haemoglobin levels with his little instrument, which, to his surprise, seemed to indicate a very low count.

“That’s strange, there must be something wrong with my instrument. Sister, please bring me yours.” Again, the impatient doctor measured the blood levels, with the same result. “I don’t think this measurement is correct,” he murmured as he started packing his things away. “She can go home today. Come and see me again in six weeks’ time.”

Walter was happy to take me home, thinking that I would recover more rapidly in the familiar surroundings, but that evening, as blood started oozing through my wounds, he did not hesitate but immediately phoned our house doctor. When she arrived, I detected even in my delirious state the panic in her voice.

“What on earth...? But there’s no drainage tube! Where’s your phone?” Without another word, the young lady doctor phoned the surgeon. “I don’t care if he is busy, this is an emergency,” she said with authority.

She then instructed Walter to rush me to the hospital for an emergency surgery, and as he was about to leave with me, our daughter started crying hysterically. She had been sitting in her bedroom when she heard tyres screech in the road outside her window, and then the frightening yowling of a cat. She ran outside and noticed her kitten scrambling out from under a car and running towards her. She picked the little cat up but seconds later it died in her arms.

Walter was torn between comforting his daughter and rushing his wife to the hospital. All he could do was to try and comfort her for a few minutes, promising to be back to help, but then he had to leave his little girl to grieve all by herself.

I must have been unconscious for quite a while, for the next thing I knew, I was being carried out of our car and wheeled into the hospital, where I was being prepared for surgery once again....

“Mrs Veith, Mrs Veith, wake up! Can you hear me? Wake up!” Voices were drifting in and out of my room, but I seemed unable to break through the misty world that surrounded me. Every time I tried to lift my head it felt like I was drawn into a big black hole at the foot end of the bed.

“We have found blood for her; it was brought in from Cape Town this morning. She had been bleeding internally quite profusely, they removed a blood clot the size of my hand. But everything is cleaned up now,” I heard a woman say.

“But why did no-one detect the problem earlier? Surely they should have inserted a drainage tube?” I heard my husband ask. No answer came from the sister, but she hastily excused herself to see to another patient.

Recovery from my nightmare surgery experience was slow. According to my nurse friend the smell of death was already upon me, but slowly, through the grace of God, its icy grip was loosened, and someone else’s life-giving blood was pumping through my veins to strengthen me. As I lay weak but grateful on the white sheets, my thoughts were drawn to that innocent Lamb, that willing Donor whose blood was drawn from His body to save me, and not only me but a whole dying world.

I suffered through six long weeks in bed and three years of severe abdominal cramps and intestinal discomfort, but I refused to see a doctor. Understandably I was ‘once bitten, twice shy’, but eventually, out of absolute despair, I decided to once again see another gynaecologist, who did a very successful ‘clean-up job’, as he himself called it. During the operation he discovered where the pain had come from. The

'Butcher', as he called my previous gynaecologist, had, in his haste to stop the haemorrhaging, managed to tear loose and destroy my one ovary, and if that wasn't enough, my other ovary became lodged between the intestines and the bladder and the whole lot fused together in one big mass of scar tissue. Or so he tried to explain it to me in lay terms. He, together with my house doctor, was of the opinion that I should press charges, but Walter and I were more than happy that I was still alive.

We were once again very aware of the fact that the enemy of God and man would resort to such unprecedented tactics to destroy the influence of His workers. It was later evident that through his attempt to harm me and ultimately our family, the enemy tried to prevent a young couple from hearing the message during those lectures that Walter presented with his heavy heart, not knowing if I would be dead or alive when he reached home. Sometime later they made their decision to be baptized and became involved in evangelism worldwide. Had we allowed Walter to be distracted and turn from his soul-saving work, our lack of faith would have resulted in loss of souls and would have disappointed our Saviour.

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

But our God is also a God of the small, seemingly insignificant things of our lives. It was during my recovery at home that the most amazing thing happened. I was too weak to take care of myself and could barely get to the bathroom by myself, but Walter had to return to the University and the children had to go to school.

At this time the whole family was under tremendous stress, the children having changed from the expensive Adventist school to the local government school and Walter being under constant academic and religious pressure at the University. We had no one to help at home and hardly anyone from the church visited us. I felt myself slipping into the Job-like state of questioning God and his ways. Why does He allow the devil to do this? Are we not His children, trying our very best to serve Him and do what is right? Does He really understand how much we suffer through trials? If only he could show me that He cares...

One morning I sat up in bed. Walter and the children had long been gone and the house was quiet. Our German Shepherd dog was lying in the dining room, giving an occasional long sigh as he sinks into a deeper sleep, and from my bed I could see our cat curled up in Walter's favourite chair in the lounge. The back door was open and the blinds rattled gently in the late autumn breeze.

I reached over to the plate with bread, fruit and avocado Walter had left me for lunch. I remembered how he sadly sat down on the bed, careful not to jolt me, and said, "I'm really sorry I have to leave you alone, but I know God will take care of you." He then gathered the children around the bed and prayed as usual for our safety and guidance for the day, and left.

As I started to butter my bread with the avocado, I heard a strange sound. It was very faint at first and then grew to a distinct pitter-patter. As I held my breath, I saw a little animal walking down the passage towards my bedroom. Initially I couldn't see clearly what it was, but as it came into the bright rays of sunlight streaming through the window into my bedroom, I recognized the bushy tail and the inquisitive twitching nose of a squirrel.

For a few seconds he hesitated, but then proceeded straight towards the bed, hopped on and came, tail flipping up and down, right up to my plate with food. Then he just sat there and looked at me.

"Are you hungry? Would you like something to eat?" I said softly, so I wouldn't scare him away. I placed a portion of my bread buttered with avocado and some fruit on his side of the plate.

The squirrel took the bread in his little human-like front paws and started eating. He tasted some of the fruit and after a while washed himself while I finished my meal. He then proceeded to stretch himself out on the couch at the window of our bedroom, leaving green avocado footprints on my bed cover – tangible evidence that he had been there. Here he basked in the warm autumn sun for a while, hopped off and made his way to the back door, once again passing by the dog and the cat unnoticed.

My furry friend continued to visit me every day for the following six weeks, sharing a mutual bite, a nap and a few endearing moments. At the end of this period of my recovery I started feeling strong enough to venture outside into the fresh morning air and to my amazement the little squirrel came running down from the oak tree straight towards me. He ran up my leg and onto my shoulders and then ran down the other leg and back up into the tree. And that was the last time I saw him. He had come to say goodbye.

These were some of the most exciting moments in my entire life – the knowledge that God cares so much for us that he would reach down and comfort us when we need it most, be it through humanity, in angel form, or through the presence of an innocent animal that was originally created to be man's companion in an unfallen world.



All kinds of Trials

Chapter 10

1 Peter 1:6 *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*

Another season had come and gone, and once again Walter was invited to deliver a series of lectures in Europe. No one was aware of our financial demise and our hearts sank when the organizers asked us to book the ticket from South Africa. There was no money to even get through the month and now we needed to pay for a ticket, buy some new warm clothing for the harsh European winter, and a suitcase.

“The only thing we have that’s worth anything, is our bakkie,” Walter said pensively. He was walking up and down, which he always does when he is stressed or contemplating a serious matter. ‘Bakkie’ is the word used in South Africa for a pick-up truck.

‘Oh, please not our bakkie,’ I murmured silently to myself, but I knew he was right - we had no other choice. With hearts heavy and minds racing to try and find another solution, we went ahead and placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, secretly hoping that no-one would respond.

Within minutes after the newspaper was released, a man phoned to inquire about the vehicle and that same day we had an empty garage, but some money in our bank. Now I was obliged to walk a couple of kilometres to the supermarket to do our shopping and the only transport for the children was the little school bus. But we were not discouraged; Walter was looking forward to his trip. He had a burden for the German nation and although he was born in South Africa, his parents were both from Germany and he still felt strong ties with ‘his people’.



Even though Walter’s German vocabulary seemed like that of a child compared to the highly technical language spoken in Germany, the people seemed to appreciate the message – a message they had not heard before, primarily due to the fact that very few of the Adventist books had been translated into German, or perhaps that church members had limited access to even the English books that were written by Ellen G. White and other pioneers. Very soon young and old were changing their lifestyles and tapes on health and the heated debate over Creation versus Evolution,

were circulated not only in the church, but also among the general public. People were testifying about the health benefits they were enjoying after following a healthier lifestyle; some were healed from stomach cancer, others found relief from arthritis even at the high age of eighty. Even asthma and sinusitis sufferers expressed their gratitude for having been informed about the allergenic effects of food additives and especially dairy products.

Besides the usual stressful trips through Germany, Walter was during this trip able to gather a lot of information from people who were involved in secret societies. On one occasion, while Walter was entering the building where the lectures would take place, he suddenly felt that someone grabbed him by the back of his suit and pulled him into a broom closet in the passage. It was pitch dark and all he could hear was the breathing behind him.

“Don’t turn around, Dr Veith,” someone said softly in German, “If you see me we will both be in serious trouble.”

Walter wondered whether he was being kidnapped, or something worse, but he didn’t say a word.

“I will be giving you some information about Catholicism and their connection to secret societies, but you may never let anyone know where you got it from. You have to promise me...Sometime this week I will find you again, and I will give you some very valuable books,” the man’s voice continued in the dark.

The next night Walter was walking slowly and apprehensively into the building, expecting the unseen hand to haul him into a dark cupboard, but nothing happened. However, when everyone had left the building after the lecture, suddenly he was pulled into a closet where a bag of books was unceremoniously shoved into Walter’s hands and the voice told him to leave without looking back.

Walter was sweating under the collar and was grateful to step out into the cool, fresh air outside. He never heard from the man again and started to study the secret books that provided him with deeper insight into the clandestine world of the agents of Satan on earth. The rest of the lecture series was uneventful, but unfortunately, he not only received gratitude for reviving the old message of our pioneers, but at the same time some prominent members and leaders in the church rose like mushrooms to oppose him.

It was an icy winter’s day when Walter arrived in Switzerland. He had been travelling across the spectacular mountains, covered in snow, and looked forward to speaking to the people of that beautiful country. The church had invited him to speak in Zurich to a large gathering of Adventists.

He settled down in the room they prepared for him, revised some of the lectures for a while, and then went to bed. It was 2 o’clock in the morning when the phone suddenly rang. The voice of a high official at that time in the Euro-African Division of

Seventh Adventists greeted him in cordial but icy tones, colder than the grey landscape beyond the little window of his room.

“Dr Veith, I would like to ask you not to speak on anything concerning the Pope...”

“I beg your pardon? What do you mean?”

“You may not say in any way that the Pope is the Antichrist.”

“But the Antichrist was identified and preached by the Spirit of Prophecy and our pioneers, why shouldn’t we identify him as well?” Walter asked indignantly.

“That might have been the paradigm in those days, but it no longer applies today.”

“You know,” Walter started slowly, “I left the Catholic Church and came into the Adventist Church on the grounds of the studies I made of the prophecies in Daniel, which identify the Antichrist very clearly. And according to the Bible, and also the Spirit of Prophecy, the Antichrist will remain the same till the end of time on this earth. When I was baptized I confirmed my acceptance of these Biblical facts and the Spirit of Prophecy in the baptismal vows. Didn’t you do that too?”

“These things no longer are valid, times have changed...,” the man persisted, unwilling to commit himself.

“Well, I’m sorry, then I don’t have to listen to you because you’re not an Adventist,” Walter said in his typical earlier fiery fashion when confronted. Like the impetuous Peter, his first reaction was often drawing his sword and lopping off the ear of the enemy to protect his Master. The rivers of time and experience had not yet shaped and softened his jagged edges. He wished the man a good night, and ended the conversation. When he climbed back into bed, he was unable to sleep. He sat upright in bed, mulling their conversation over and over, when once again the phone rang.

This time it was the president of the Conference. He spoke more kindly than the previous brother and tactfully tried to convince Walter that he should refrain from speaking on any topic other than science, his ‘speciality’. He was to leave theological subjects to the experts, the theologians. Walter replied that his lectures and the hundreds of slides were already prepared for the events and that he had too little time to prepare any other lectures.

Their conversation was short and sweet, but Walter was left with a bitter aftertaste as he went back to bed. Though he tried to ignore the uneasy feeling gnawing at the pit of his stomach, he couldn’t go back to sleep. He tossed and turned, feeling confused, hurt, angry and eventually even distrustful of self. He was convinced that the papacy hadn’t changed, but why did the Adventists change their position? Or was it possible that the message he brought to the people was too strong? Was he the one who should change his approach?

As always, when wrestling with some issue concerning his work for God, he reached for his Bible and the councils that were given to ministers and evangelists in the books 'Testimonies to Ministers' and 'Evangelism'. After a while he found the peace he was so desperately seeking. The more he read, the more he knew that he had to continue speaking about the truth that God has entrusted to him.

*In the very time in which we live the Lord has called His people and has given them a message to bear. He has called them to **expose the wickedness of the man of sin who has made the Sunday law a distinctive power**, who has thought to change times and laws, and to oppress the people of God who stand firmly to honor Him by keeping the only true Sabbath, the Sabbath of creation, as holy unto the Lord.--* Testimonies to Ministers, p. 118. (1903) {Evangelism, p. 233.2}

*Wickedness is reaching a height never before attained, and yet many ministers of the gospel are crying, "Peace and safety." But God's faithful messengers are to go steadily forward with their work. **Clothed with the panoply of heaven, they are to advance fearlessly and victoriously, never ceasing their warfare until every soul within their reach shall have received the message of truth for this time.**--*Acts of the Apostles, pp. 219, 220. (1911) {Evangelism, p. 705.4}

*When Sunday observance shall be enforced by law, and the world shall be enlightened concerning the obligation of the true Sabbath, then whoever shall transgress the command of God, to obey a precept which has no higher authority than that of Rome, **will thereby honor popery above God**. He is paying homage to Rome, and to the power which enforces the institution ordained by Rome. **He is worshipping the beast and his image.** The Great Controversy, p. 449. (1888) {Evangelism, p. 233.4}*

The winter sun crept feebly through the window onto his bed as he closed his books and started to get ready for the gruelling day that lay ahead of him. But in his heart the Son of Righteousness was rising steadily, warming his numb body and brightening the shadows that had been cast across his path. He was to take up his position in the ancient play depicting the great controversy between Jesus, the only Son of God, and his archenemy Lucifer, the stage being this once beautiful earth, and the battleground the mind of every living soul trapped in deception and sin. We know that it is soon to end, Jesus has emptied himself and died to give us eternal peace and victory over self and sin, but until then,

"Satan will seek to discourage the followers of Christ, so that they may not pray or study the Scriptures, and he will throw his hateful shadow athwart the path to hide Jesus from the view, to shut away the vision of His love, and the glories of the heavenly inheritance. It is his delight to cause the children of God to go shrinkingly, tremblingly, and painfully along, under continual doubt. He seeks to make the pathway as sorrowful as possible; but if you keep looking up, not down at your difficulties, you will not faint in the way, you will soon see Jesus reaching His hand to help you, and you will only have to give Him your hand in simple confidence, and let

Him lead you. As you become trustful, you will become hopeful.” {Messages to Young People, p. 63.2}

The huge hall in the centre of town seated a couple of thousand people and was steadily filling up with Adventists from all over. The lecture he had prepared was on Bible prophecy but half way through the lecture people started shouting insults from the audience and some even walked out of the meeting.

Discouraged and hurt Walter completed the lecture and walked to the back of the stage behind the curtains to seek guidance from God. Now he was doubtful that it was the right message for the people, and wondered if God really was leading him. While he was silently calling out to God, a group of pastors came through the curtains towards him.

‘Well, this is the end,’ he thought to himself, ‘they’re coming to throw me out and ship me back to Africa.’ Some people had indeed told him before to go back to Africa, “to the bush where he came from” and to his ‘second rate’ university.

But instead of attacking him, young and old pastors smiled and greeted him like a long-lost son. An old man wiped the tears from his cheeks and hugged him, looking straight at him with a gentle but strong deportment and eyes that can tell many a tale.

“Thank you so much, brother Veith. Thank you for preaching the old message to us again. Things have changed so much in the church, we can’t preach this message anymore,” he said sadly.

The next day the organizers came to fetch him to meet the minister of the large protestant evangelical church. They had rented the hall of the evangelical church for the evangelistic meetings and needed to confirm with them that everything was in place for the next evening’s opening lecture. On the way they continued to try and persuade Walter that he must not say anything in his lectures that might offend the other churches, after all, they concluded, we are all brothers belonging to one universal Christian church.

“No, we’re not,” Walter said boldly, “their doctrines used to be Bible based but not anymore. There are many honest people in those churches who are searching for truth, there are many that are dissatisfied with what is happening in their churches, and that is the reason I am doing these lectures. And if I don’t tell them what’s wrong in their church, they won’t be able to see why Revelation 14 verse 8 and Revelation 18 verse 2 say that Babylon is fallen, which, as you should know, is not only Rome, but fallen Protestantism also. They won’t see any reason to come out of their churches and their blood will be on our hands if we do not warn them.”

There was deathly silence as the car droned on to the hall. Occasionally only an embarrassed cough would break the silence, each one feeling the painful distance growing between brother and brother.

The evangelical minister seemed quite friendly. He greeted them one by one in at the door in typical German fashion and guided them to the hall. Walter couldn't but notice a series of plaques hanging in the foyer, depicting the creation of the world, but to his amazement it was not a Christian version, but a very New Age one with Brahma breathing everything into existence. The minister turned and asked them in a matter of fact way what the lectures were about.

All eyes were on Walter; none of the organizers of the Adventist church dared to say a word. He explained that he would discuss the debate on evolution versus creation from his perspective as a scientist.

"Hmm," the man said slowly, "and what view will you be taking on this issue?"

"Well, I will be giving scientific evidence for the authenticity of creation, in particular the Biblical flood model and...."

"In that case", the minister interrupted, "I'm afraid we cannot let you have our hall. You will have to cancel the lectures."

"I beg your pardon?"

"We cannot allow you to preach such archaic viewpoints in our hall; we do not accept the creation view in our church."

Walter watched his brothers closely. Some seemed dumbfounded, another reflected open shock in his face and yet another stared down at the floor, as if pretending to be unaware of what had transpired.

"But...but we can't cancel now," they seemed to say all at the same time, "we have already printed the pamphlets..."

"I have an idea," Walter said diplomatically, "if I announce that we have merely rented the venue and that the Evangelical Church has nothing to do with it, will you be happy then?"

In silence the minister considered the proposal for a while and then said emphatically, "You will have to announce before every lecture that the Evangelical Church distantiates itself entirely from the views that are propagated at these meetings."

"I will be very, very happy to do so," Walter said, smiling broadly. How amazing is our God! He not only provided more evidence for his lectures to show that the protestant churches have indeed become fallen Babylon by accepting unbiblical doctrines into their church, but He also showed the naïve brethren of the Adventist church how far the protestant churches have fallen. And that was only scratching

the surface of a cancer that was steadily growing worldwide, the tip of an iceberg that had to be met head-on, even in the slumbering Adventist Church.

During the forthcoming lecture series many sceptics opposed him openly but none so vehemently as during the lecture on the New Age movement, where he spoke about Benjamin Creme being the medium or channel for the spirit entity Maitreya, the 'One' who is preparing the world for his coming to bring all religions together in 'peace'. Walter explained that the fallen angel Lucifer is preparing to set up his kingdom, claiming this world as his and denying the atoning sacrifice of the true Saviour who bought back man from his slavery to the prince of this world.

"Absolute nonsense," some shouted as they got up and stormed out of the hall, "who has ever heard of this Maitreya?"

Discouraged at their reaction, but not willing to give Satan the victory, Walter continued his lecture. Then to his surprise, after only a few minutes they returned in a huff, white with shock, reporting excitingly that Walter was right; Benjamin Creme did not only exist, but was in the hotel next to the hall! As they had left the hall, they explained, a whole crowd came rushing out of the hotel, shouting, "Maitreya is here, Maitreya is here!" They had been to the meeting of Benjamin Creme in the hotel, when he was 'overshadowed' by the 'Maitreya' and started giving channelled messages to the people.

The group that had been to Walter's lectures got such a fright that they ran back into the hall to report this 'coincidence' to the rest of the audience. Once again God and his purposes came out victorious. He had planned long ago to have Walter's meetings in the hall next to the hotel. He knew long before the event that Benjamin Creme would be there and He even planned the lecture that had to be given on that particular evening, despite efforts to silence Walter and to prevent him from speaking at that venue. God tested his faith in the inner chambers of his soul; in the 'secret place of thunder' He counselled with him and gave him another character-building experience, which continued to strengthen him as he encountered even stronger opposition.

Ps.81:7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.

Even the unbelieving Thomas's in our church were now convinced of a dimension in the spiritual realm that they knew nothing of, and they started to understand that souls can be reached by revealing to them the deception they were trapped in and then pointing them to the truth and the only Author thereof. A valuable lesson was learnt - if you preach Jesus and His love only, you are preaching to the converted only because the atheist and the agnostic will find no reason to leave his position; if you preach the conflict of the ages, the great controversy between the innocent Lamb of God and His rebellious rival in its diverse forms, you are reaching everyone in every walk of life.

*In the cities of today, where there is so much to attract and please, the people can be interested by no ordinary efforts. Ministers of God's appointment will find it necessary to put forth extraordinary efforts in order to arrest the attention of the multitudes. And when they succeed in bringing together a large number of people, **they must bear messages of a character so out of the usual order that the people will be aroused and warned.** They must make use of every means that can possibly be devised for causing the truth to stand out clearly and distinctly.--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 109. (1909) {Evangelism, p. 122.3}*

When the sinner is made aware of the magnitude of sin and deception, scales fall from his eyes. He sees clearly the contrast between the character of the sin-loving, soul-destroying evil one and his plethora of lies, and the character of the humble, pure, sinless Son of God and His simple but profound truth. After the woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus, she was made aware of the cutting contrast between the satanic characters of her accusers and the character of Jesus, and she was instantly drawn to Him. At the same time she became aware of her own sin that had kept her trapped for so long. Jesus showed her kindness and forgiveness and then not only bid her to leave that world of sin, but also proceeded to make a call to others to come out of the darkness into the light.

Joh 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

*In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. **They have been given a work of the most solemn import,--the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance.** They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. {Evangelism, p. 119.3}*

After the series in the hall of the evangelical church had ended, Walter was taken to an alpine retreat quite a way into the mountains. The scenes were breathtaking, fir branches hung low under the weight of soft powdery snow and Walter breathed deeply the fresh aroma of pine forest and moss as he stepped out of the car. He was bracing himself for what he knew was to be another painful battle. Already he had been warned to say nothing 'offensive' because many prominent officials had been invited to the meetings to gain recognition for the Adventist church with the community.



The Adventist leadership probably felt it was necessary to eradicate the image of a 'sect' from the minds of the public and to show them that we are just another good Christian church doing good Christian works. Our embarrassing distinguishing features were not to be made prominent. But Walter's understanding of our mission was that of winning souls for God, calling them out of Babylon and warning them of the natural, health, economic, political, and spiritual disasters already there, and still to come. This might be the last opportunity for each soul to hear the message of hope and to turn to God, he argued.

*We are to give to the world a manifestation of the pure, noble, holy principles that are to distinguish the people of God from the world. **Instead of the people of God becoming less and less definitely distinguished from those who do not keep the seventh-day Sabbath, they are to make the observance of the Sabbath so prominent that the world cannot fail to recognize them as Seventh-day Adventist.***-- Manuscript 162, 1903. {Evangelism, p. 233.1}

One of the high-ranking guests that were invited to the meetings was an important member of the nobility of the family of Lichtenstein. During every lecture, as Walter proceeded to build up to a crescendo, he noticed the organizers shift uncomfortably in their chairs, and after each lecture they took him aside and rebuked him.

"You are going to chase all our guests away; you don't know how much damage you are doing! What will they think of the Adventists? You should only preach about the love of Christ, nothing else! You have not heard the end of this...," one of the organizers said angrily and stormed away in a huff.

Walter was silent, feeling the dagger driven deeply into his heart but continued to prepare his slides for the next lectures. He looked cold and drawn, exhausted by the constant conflict and he longed to be home with his family and friends. The Adventist people, the leadership and the public in South Africa at that time never reacted in such an uncouth manner towards him. Admittedly, the church found his approach very 'different', but many outsiders and many backslidden Adventists had already come into the church because of his unusual messages. South Africa was grateful for new fruits that were ready for the picking, people from different walks of life, and it took some extraordinary tact and heavenly wisdom, and certainly knowledge to deal with them. Some had been active in the occult or New Age world, others came from churches where Satan was displaying his false healings and other manifestations, and many came out of the Catholic and Muslim Faiths. But the church proved to be ill-equipped to know how to nurture these souls.

At the end of the last lecture one of the Adventist leaders reluctantly came forward, embarrassment written all over his face. He and his colleagues probably wished for the earth to swallow them up. Visibly being of two minds he proceeded to thank the speaker briefly, when a member of the nobility of Lichtenstein jumped up and started to thank Walter personally for the lectures, and for the courage he had to

present them in such a clear way. Although the information was sometimes overwhelming, he said, his eyes were opened, and he was grateful for the opportunity to have attended the seminars.

The crowd burst into spontaneous applause and suddenly the Adventist brethren were smiling from ear to ear. No more mention was further made of the lectures, and Walter was driven back to the airport, all secretly sighing a deep sigh of relief.

But Walter's ordeal was not over yet. He had a few hours to recover before the next bout in the boxing ring would take place. Some cold water in the face, some adrenalin in the cuts, a whiff from the smelling salts, and he was made ready for round number two.

Arriving in Germany, Sven was happy to see him and took him to his home. He had organized several speaking appointments in Germany, mostly to open audiences, and the turf was proving to be almost as tough as in Switzerland. Europe in general had become very secular and materialistic, and the battles protestants had fought in the not-so-distant past, lay buried under the false sense of security and prosperity they had achieved without God. Africa, on the other hand, experienced escalating revolutions, hardships and poverty, and Christians had not yet relinquished dependence on their Saviour, who had brought them out of persecution in Europe to a land of religious freedom.

Speaking on such momentous truths to the outside world was tiresome and Walter looked forward to his appointment to speak to the students at the Adventist College on the topic Evolution versus Creation, thinking that the students would appreciate hearing more evidence to substantiate their Bible-based faith. But even before Walter could start the lecture, one of the students confronted him from the audience, asking him what his viewpoint on this issue was. Well, being an Adventist Christian, Walter replied, his personal stance is obviously that of Creation. With that, the student, who seemed to be a leader of some kind, got up and summoned a large group of students to leave the hall, for they 'need not listen to such rubbish'.



Marienhöhe, Adventist school

Fortunately, having worked with students for many years, Walter had quite a few tactics up his sleeve. He continued to present his lecture to the rest of the audience as he noticed the rebellious group gather outside the window of the hall to discuss the matter further. Slowly, while he was speaking, he started making his way towards the window and when he was within hearing distance of the group, he said loudly,

“...And this has become a real problem in our society today – people have become cowards, they’re unwilling to stand up and ask what is truth; they are spoon-fed anything that tastes good without reading the label to see if it is real food. You know why? They are too afraid that they will discover something they don’t want to hear.”

Drastic circumstances require drastic measures, he reflected. He wasn’t quite sure if he had chosen the right approach for these young people; they were so different to South African youth, but he was hoping that his challenge would have the required reaction. He then started moving back towards the middle of the hall to continue his discussion. Sure enough, one by one some of the group started moving back into the hall until a few of the empty places were filled again. The next day the hall was packed, and at the end of the series the students thanked him for strengthening their faith and giving them the scientific ammunition to defend their position.

In a little town in Germany Walter was to present a short series on prophecy. As soon as he had settled into the room they provided for him, there was a knock on the door and the pastor of the church where the meetings were to be held, entered like an unruly gust of wind. He hardly greeted Walter and demanded to have Walter’s slides that he would be using in the lectures.

“Why do you want my slides?” Walter asked in a distrustful tone.

“I need to make the slides better,” was the answer from the pastor.

“Make them better? What do you mean?”

By now the pastor was getting agitated and he moved towards Walter’s bag containing his books and slides. “I just need to see your slides, I need to make them better.”

Before the pastor could reach out to pick up the bag, Walter pulled it towards himself and clung for dear life to his most precious belonging.

“No,” he said firmly, “I do not let anyone touch my slides. This is my life’s work, and no-one is going to make them better.”

The pastor seemed like he was about to throw a tantrum, but he turned around and walked out the door without saying another word.

That evening there was a commotion as the church members were getting everything ready for the opening night of the lecture series in their church. The pastor was also scurrying about and as he walked past Walter, he said in a matter-of-fact manner, "You refused to give me your slides, then see if you can give your lecture without a slide projector."

Walter's mind was racing. What was he to do now? The hall was packed, and after the initial greetings and announcements by the pastor, the church choir sang a few songs. Then it was Walter's turn. He walked up the steps onto the platform, greeted the audience, and said, "Our organizer forgot to bring the slide projector, and I'm sure you won't mind if the choir sings us a few more of their beautiful songs while he fetches the projector."

The pastor didn't expect that. He glanced at Walter as he got up reluctantly and walked out the door while the choir filed onto the stage to sing their songs.

In his last lecture Walter attempted to show his audience that the final true church was the one that John in Revelation prophesied about, that they would restore the faith in the commandments of God, as well as hold to Jesus the only Saviour, and would also preach the Three Angels' Messages as in Revelation 14 to all the world. He showed the audience that historically there was only one church that would come into existence after the great disappointment of 1844, which has all the criteria as described in the Bible, and that was the Seventh Day Adventist church.

Rev 14:12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

His words had hardly left his lips, when the pastor jumped up and rushed up onto the stage where he grabbed the microphone from Walter and proceeded to apologize profusely to the audience for what the speaker had just said, and that his church does not endorse the sentiments of the speaker.

The message that Walter had preached, had everyone sitting on the edges of their seats, for no-one had ever heard these things before, but now the moment was spoiled and a restless spirit settled on the people. It was later established why the pastor had reacted that way. He had invited his friends, the bishop and other high-placed officials in the Catholic church, to the meetings, since he himself often preached in their churches. No wonder he wanted to make Walter's slides 'better'!

Walter feared for these people and wondered how his beloved church would ever be able to stand when persecuted for their faith.

Jeremiah 12:5: If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?

The next stop was Poland. The landscape was bleak; skies were grey and snow covered the sidewalks up to a meter deep. The icy wind cut through the flimsy South African jacket he bought before he left home, and snow slurry crept into his African shoes through the seams. The man who brought him to his room was large and struggled to get out from behind the steering wheel. A multi-storey building towered in front of them. During communism the Adventist church buildings were confiscated and used by the government, and after communism fell, the government was obligated to restore some buildings to the church. One of the buildings they received was this huge office block in Warsaw, which housed pastors' apartments, offices and even the church and Sabbath School classrooms.

Walter's tiny room was right at the top of the building, the only window being a skylight covered with snow in the roof. It was freezing cold and the central heating didn't seem to reach the top end of the building.

"I'm sorry, I cannot take you to my home; you eat strange, and my wife can't cook for you," the pastor said in his Polish accent. "I will see you tomorrow, yes?"

He closed the door behind him and Walter heard his heavy footsteps disappear down the hall. He was tired and cold and had eaten very little all day but he sat down on his bed and started to prepare his lectures for the next few days.

The night was cold and long and he managed to sleep but a few hours. He washed and got dressed, but he was still cold. He decided to dress in layers and soon he was wearing two pairs of socks, long underwear, regular pants, a warm vest, shirt, two jerseys, his flimsy jacket, beanie, gloves and scarf, but his teeth still kept chattering. He then took the blanket from his bed and folded it around his shoulders and sat down to read his Bible.

An hour passed, then another, and soon it was already past lunch time, but still there was no sign of the pastor. Walter was starving and he wondered if there was some place where he could buy some bread. He went out into the hall to look through the window at the end of the long passage, but there was no shopping centre in sight, not even a little corner café was anywhere to be seen. There were very few cars in the street and even fewer pedestrians. He had no idea where he was and couldn't speak one word in Polish.

He had just returned to his room when there was a brief knock on the door and the pastor walked in with a small bowl of watery soup. He made some conversation and then started expressing his displeasure for the inconvenience Walter's vegetarian diet is causing. Walter was still contemplating how this man knew about his diet because he never pushed the issue with anyone he ever stayed with, when the pastor's hand disappeared into the pocket of his jacket and he placed a dry bread roll on the table. Still mumbling to himself he greeted and left.

The next day Walter waited again until half-way through the afternoon before the pastor returned. By this time he was feeling weak and colder than ever. He was

looking forward to a steaming plate of potatoes and 'Sauerkraut', or 'Kartoffelpuffer' and 'Kohlrouladen' with brown gravy and lentil patties and.....

The pastor entered with a side plate in his hand, which he placed on the table in front of Walter. Two dumplings stared at him like two blind eyes on a plate. Eagerly Walter waited for the pastor to produce something else from his rumpled jacket pocket, but the man merely mumbled a few words and left. In a few seconds he had gulped down the little balls almost without chewing. Then he knew that he needed to start making plans for survival. He grabbed his scarf, beanie and gloves, locked his room and left.

Outside he started walking down the snow-covered road in search of a store where he could buy something to eat. He had lost considerable weight and knew that if he did not find something soon he would get sick and he would not be able to give the lectures. He tried to ask some of the people in the street where he could find a grocery store but no-one understood him.

He kept on wandering up and down the little streets and just as he was about to give up and turn back, he noticed some smoke in the distance. He continued to struggle through the heavy snow towards the only sign of life, when he noticed some people disappear down muggy steps into the basement of a building, and eagerly he followed and found himself in a smelly dark store. All he could see were hams and dried sausages hanging from hooks in the ceiling and not a single piece of bread or anything he could eat.

He was about to leave, his heart heavy with disappointment, when he noticed a shelf in the back of the shop with some bottles. He rummaged through them and to his joy he found one small bottle of peanut butter. He paid for his precious item, placed it in his pocket and hastened back to his room, where he ate the whole bottle in one go with his finger, and felt a little better than before.

The next afternoon the pastor arrived with nothing in his hand and nothing in his pocket.

"I will have to take you to restaurant, yes? Here is nothing for you in kitchen. God knows how any man can live like you," he grumbled as he started walking towards his car.

They drove to an upper class area in town and stopped in front of what seemed like a very fancy restaurant. When Walter asked for something vegetarian, if possible, some potatoes, the pastor laughed out loud and translated to the waiter, with much gesticulation and shaking of his head. Then he ordered for himself, but Walter couldn't understand what he said.

Soon the food arrived on two large plates. The vegetable platter which the waiter placed before Walter consisted of a few sprigs of celery and thinly sliced carrots, one piece of steamed broccoli, two small florets of cauliflower and some parsley. He

glanced over to the plate of the pastor. The large plate was filled with a heaped bed of rice, covered with every kind of seafood imaginable; crab, crayfish, oysters, fish, prawns. Walter wondered if this pastor had ever read Leviticus 11 on the unclean foods!

In the three days he had been in Warsaw, he had eaten one white bread roll, a small bowl of watery soup, two dumplings and a small bottle of peanut butter. And now, to crown it all, he could stick everything on his plate onto one fork, chew it for a few seconds and it was gone. He longed for some potatoes; even the skins of the potatoes would have been good! As he sat waiting for the pastor to finish his meal, he found himself coveting every forkful of rice that disappeared down the hatch in the chubby face opposite him. But those rosy cheeks became white as ash when the bill came. By the look on his face Walter knew the meal cost more than what a pastor could afford, without a doubt a great deal more, and he probably blamed it on Walter!

That evening Walter gave a lecture on our health principles and decided to include clean and unclean foods as described in Leviticus 11 for the sake of the pastor, who was sitting in the front row of the audience. As he got to the portion on unclean foods, he noticed that the pastor was fast asleep. Mischievously he walked closer to where the pastor was sitting and spoke loudly into the microphone, waking the unsuspecting pastor momentarily. He quickly tried to introduce his topic, but to no avail, the pastor had fallen asleep again.

The next day he was taken to a venue where the leadership had organized an interdenominational meeting with leaders from other religions. Clergy dressed in impressive vestments arrived and took their places. Then the arrival of the Catholic Cardinal was announced and all rose as he entered in his splendid black and purple garment and sash, followed by a whole entourage of priests and nuns dressed in black. One of the faithful pastors of the Adventist church sat down beside Walter and nudged him with his elbow, and without exchanging a word each knew what the other one was thinking.

Proudly the Adventist spokesman opened the meeting and introduced the Cardinal, who admitted he was surprised that the Adventist Church was interested in engaging in ecumenical relations.

“Oh”, the spokesman said as he made what looked like a semi-curtsy before the Cardinal, “the Adventists would love to work together with all Christian denominations.”

He turned and looked towards the audience. “This we are doing internationally,” he continued, “and at this very point we have an international speaker here with us. Dr. Veith, would you like to give our honoured guest the Cardinal a message from Africa? Thank you, Dr. Veith, please come forward, yes?”

Again Walter's ally nudged him and smiled at him mischievously. He was totally unprepared for this, but got up and started walking slowly to the front, his mind racing to find something suitable to say. The message he would really like to bring the Cardinal, is the Third Angel's message of Revelation 14, 'Do not worship the Beast and accept his false Sabbath, which is the Mark of the Beast'. But that wouldn't go down well under the circumstances!

To the leaders of the other Christian churches he would like to give the Second Angel's message, which is, 'Babylon is fallen, fallen', with the additional plea to 'Come out of her', for she 'is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.' That would not be accepted well either! Walter smiled to himself as he imagined their reaction on such a message at an ecumenical meeting.

The only other message that remained was the First Angel's Message, so he proceeded to speak briefly about the everlasting gospel, the unchanged and unchangeable message of Him who created everything and will soon judge everything, a message that was handed down through the ages and is to be proclaimed to every nation, tribe, tongue and people. He then greeted the delegates on behalf of all who "loved the everlasting gospel" and returned to his seat. Whether they understood the implications of the everlasting gospel, he couldn't know, but all applauded and seemed quite happy.

The next day he was taken to the South of Poland, where he stayed with a very warm-hearted family that made up for all the kilograms he lost. Here he felt at home and ate like a king, and even his lectures were received with joy and appreciation. God has His faithful ones all over the world, brothers and sisters that follow the old paths, walk in the footsteps of their Master, and hold up the pillars of our faith, undaunted by pressures from within or without the church. True ministers of the gospel.

Mark 9:41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

The night before Walter had to leave, he felt homesick and discouraged. He had been away so long. How he missed having his family with him and he longed for peace from the incessant conflict that followed him wherever he went. He wished people could understand what he was going through, but many thought he was doing this for some form of private gain, be it financial or for some ego trip. He lay awake for some time thinking about the sacrifices the early Christians and those that followed them through the ages had made. His heart went out to Paul and the other apostles that were stoned, to the Waldenses that were smoked out of the caves where they hid, or smothered and burned and thrown off the cliffs of the Alps for copying the Received Text Scriptures, and the Reformers that stood up to the church of the Dark Ages and consequently were tortured and burned at the stake. None of them received any reward on this earth but their treasure was laid up in heaven, their hope was eternal life with Christ.

2Co 11:26 In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2Co 11:27 In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

2Co 11:28 Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Once again Walter returned to Germany after the lecture series in the South of Poland was over. He preached there for a short while in the church in the South of Germany where Sven attended and where the message was welcomed. Then came the long-awaited day that he would return home. Before they left for the airport, Sven handed Walter a sealed envelope, with the strict instruction not to open it before he reaches home. He thanked Sven, wondering for a brief moment what it was and then popped it into his moon bag and forgot about it.

Tired but with a satisfying sense of having achieved something meaningful for God and mankind, Walter stepped out of the car as they stopped at Frankfurt airport. He waved at Sven as he disappeared around the corner, picked up his luggage, and breathed a sigh of relief as he turned to leave the rain and cold behind. He was going home.



Vindicated

Chapter 11

Psa 34:7 The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.

Outside Cape Town airport Walter stopped for a while, took off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves. It was 35 degrees in the shade, but he turned his head up to the fierce African sun, enjoying every moment of the healing warmth on his grayish pale face. Though he was happy to be back in his beloved country it still was quite a culture shock driving past the thousands of shacks on both sides of the national road. Cows and goats were roaming dangerously alongside the road among the rubbish and dirt that was spread across the sandy dunes of the Cape Flats.

That evening we gathered the children to thank God for bringing us safely back together again and for having taken care of all our difficulties and needs. After the children had each received a small gift their father brought them from Europe, they went off to play or do their homework and Walter emptied the contents of his moon bag onto the bed. Then he remembered the envelope that Sven had handed him, and he eagerly opened it.

Inside there was a letter and a whole bundle of German Mark. We gasped at the large amount of money, more than we had ever seen before. The letter said that the members of the church in the South of Germany had collected money and they clearly instructed us to buy a new car only, so that we will not have to do the Lord's work struggling with an unreliable vehicle. They thanked him for all the good work he was doing for God and the churches and wished him and his family God's richest blessings.

We were dumbstruck for a few seconds. It took us a while to realize that God had used his kind-hearted people in Germany as instruments to help replace the vehicle we were willing to give up in order for Walter to go to Europe! Not only did they refund us for the ticket we bought, but we also received more than that which we had sacrificed. More and more we became aware of how God miraculously intervenes directly in our lives, even if we have faith smaller than a mustard seed.

Matt. 6:31-34 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

"For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need these things.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

“A new car?” I asked, “We have never had a new car before!” My thoughts went back to my 1966 model Volkswagen Beetle with its six-volt battery under the back seat, which Walter bought me some time before we discovered the truth. It looked awful, so we sprayed it a buttercup yellow and then it looked even worse, but I was so proud to have my own car. Every time I drove to town to do my shopping or to fetch the children, it wouldn’t start again, so I had to swallow my pride and ask some willing people in the car park to push start me. And then, when we decided to get baptized, it was smashed beyond repair in an accident.

“We won’t be able to afford a new car,” Walter said as he counted the money. “We will have to look for a good second-hand one again.”

“But the letter says it must be new...” I tried to mask my disappointment.

“Let’s drive to Parow tomorrow – there are many car dealers there – and see what we can find.” And with that his mind was made up. He placed the money back in the envelope and hid it in his cupboard.

The next morning we asked our friends from the church if we could keep their car for a few days longer. They had kindly lent us their second car so that I could fetch Walter at the airport. Walter still had a few days before he had to go back to the university for the new year, so we eagerly left early the next morning.

We drove for hours from one second-hand dealer to the next, but that which we could buy for the amount of money we had, was either too flimsy and too small for a family of five, too old and heavy on fuel, or with too high a mileage. We were about to get discouraged, when we decided, ‘just for fun’, to find out what a new medium-sized car cost.

Being German, and at that point believing that all good things are from German origin, the first place we went to, was the Volkswagen dealer. Mercedes and BMW were far beyond our reach. The car closest to our budget was the old shape Jetta. There wasn’t even one on the floor; the only one they had left was somewhere in storage. It had been marked down to a very good price because everyone was waiting for the new shape, but even with the discount we still didn’t have enough money.

As we turned away sadly and started to make our way to the car park, the salesman came running after us.

“We have one more option,” he gasped, “do you belong to some company? You will be entitled to fleet discount if you work for some company...”

“No, I don’t work for a company, I work for the university.”

“Just one second, let me check it for you.” The merciless January sun beat down on the stressed salesman as he hastened back to the comfort of his air-conditioned office. Shirt clinging to his body, he wiped away the perspiration from his brow with his handkerchief as he started making some phone calls.

After he had scribbled some figures on a note pad, he tore off the page and handed it to us.

“This is the best we can do for you. We will give you the regular discount plus the fleet discount. Better than this you will find nowhere.”

Walter looked at me and smiled. The amount the man had jotted down on the page was almost to the cent the amount we had received from our brethren in Germany! They had given us strict orders to buy only a new car, not knowing how expensive cars were in South Africa, and yet God had already prepared for us the only new car available that suited our needs at exactly that price. Impossible?

Jer. 32:17 ‘Ah, Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm and there is nothing too hard for thee.’

Matt. 19:26 “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

And to crown it all, for the next few years we drove almost a hundred and eighty thousand kilometers with the first set of tyres, much like the shoes of the Israelites that never wore out in the desert. Up to the day we traded the car in for a newer model, we hadn’t had a day’s trouble with our metallic blue gift from Heaven.

Soon it was back to work and back to school for all of us. A few weeks after the term had started, the unexpected happened. The Professor and Head of the Zoology Department, who was a heavy chain smoker, announced that he had cancer and that it was too late to do anything about it. The doctors gave him about six months to live, but he died suddenly only two weeks later. Soon thereafter one of the senior lecturers equally unexpectedly decided to go on early retirement for health reasons. At that stage Walter had a large number of postgraduate students working under him and doing research on animal husbandry and the effect thereof on the health of humans. His research had become so popular and timely, that students were clamoring to do their postgraduate studies under him as promoter.

Following his research done on Skew Leg Syndrome in sheep, he was invited to do joint studies with the professor of the osteoporosis section at the university hospital on the effects of animal protein on bones and general health. The findings were so unexpected and amazing, and caused such an uproar, that the researchers at both institutions were reluctant to contribute to the publication, but Walter and his post-graduate students managed to publish their findings in reputable journals.

Knowledge of his research spread and soon he received the prestigious Royal Society research grant from England, one of only five grants for scientists in the entire country, to enable him to continue his work for the university. Members of the renowned Royal Society flew to South Africa and the grants were presented by Lord Sainsbury himself, minister of Science and Technology in the United Kingdom. Apart from gaining academic world recognition, the university was able to build new laboratories and the students now had funding to continue the work and better their education.

But unfortunately, it is so that every good action has a negative reaction in this fallen world, or as Uncle Frenchie always said, "Every good deed will be punished," and it so happened that some of his colleagues in the Science Faculty were becoming increasingly uneasy, if not outright enraged, by the fact that he seemed to have such a large following of students, despite his religious beliefs. It was Walter's policy to give the theory of evolution a fair chance, and instead of lecturing on the subject himself, he invited the curator of the museum at his previous university, an avid advocator of evolution and an equally avid despiser of the Biblical model, to present the lectures on evolution to his classes.

Students are more observant than they would have people think and although Walter never presented his view to his students, they soon started asking questions as to what he believed and why.

"What I believe is not in the University Curriculum," he said out of respect for his colleagues and the institute he worked for, "but if you arrange a meeting with those who are interested, but after hours, then I could possibly answer your questions."

Soon he was teaching most of his students after hours about the wonders of creation, giving them a scientific model for the Biblical flood that could any day stand its ground in the scientific world. Many Christians were grateful that they now had enough evidence to continue to believe God's Word and even his Moslem students came to see him in his office, curious to find out more about what the Bible teaches. After a while they realized that true Christianity was not what they thought. They had watched so-called Christians eat pork, smoke, and drink, and violate the health guidelines and often dress immodestly; they use their own God's name in vain and speak disrespectfully of Him; they had heard Christians profess that their faith was Bible-based and yet they disbelieved the creation account, the flood and many other instances recorded in their own Bible. But when they learned that this was not true Christianity, they were amazed and left with a different perspective and a new-found respect for the Bible and those who endeavor to live accordingly.

Professional jealousy and animosity because of Walter's religious position grew, even though he never entered into any discussion on his beliefs with the staff. His colleagues either gave him the cold shoulder and even stopped talking when he entered the staff room or made some snide remarks on his lifestyle changes. Two of his colleagues were old-time buddies from his student days and used to drink and raucous with him till the early hours of many a morning. They had mockingly spread

the story that he was 'struck by lightning and fell over' and from that day on he was 'converted'. Most of them were now elders and deacons, who faithfully gathered together in the Dutch Reformed Church on Sundays, their shiny, black, apparently unread Bible under the arm.

One morning Walter arrived at work and discovered that someone had broken into his office and searched through his drawers and files. He was astounded for he had nothing to hide and had nothing of great value other than his research documentation and wondered what the intruder had been looking for. A few days later it all became clear to him, and he started putting the pieces of a nightmare puzzle together.

He received an official summons to appear before the university investigative committee. It appeared that one of his colleagues in the Zoology department had presented a list of charges against him. When he asked them what he was being charged with, they refused to give him the details and merely informed him to be available for questioning on a specified day.

On that dreaded day our family got together for our usual morning prayer and prayed for wisdom and protection for Walter. He had no way to prepare for his defense, since he had no insight into the charges that were made. His accuser had no doubt gathered some students and staff members as witnesses, and who knows what 'evidence' his enemies found in his office. But Walter had no-one but the Word of God as his Witness, which, unfortunately, is not acceptable as acting for the defense on this earth, where the 'prince of this world' sits as judge. But his Heavenly Advocate had a plan up His sleeve, and He has never lost a case...

Soon after Walter arrived at his office, the committee started the investigation. Walter's accuser was called first to present his case. Walter listened anxiously at the approaching footsteps as he heard the man step out of his office a little way down the hall and walk boldly towards the conference room. When he reached the secretary's office, which was diagonally across Walter's office, he stopped abruptly, turned white as a sheet, and mumbled that he was not feeling well.

The next moment the man fell forward like a tall pine tree being chopped down, toppling over with earthshaking force to the ground.

There were a few moments of shocked silence. Then people started pouring out of their offices and rushed to the scene. The boastful accuser was awkwardly silent. Soon the ambulance arrived, and he was taken away.

When the committee heard what had happened, they called Walter in. Since all of them had a very busy schedule and the meeting could not be cancelled or postponed, they now had no other choice than to present the charges against Walter themselves. Together they started going through the list and it was evident that facts had been twisted and lies fabricated to discredit Walter, but he was able to explain what really had transpired and even asked that his students were brought in

to give their side of the story. Every student that was questioned supported Walter's report and denied the accusations on every point. The charges that Walter was influencing the students negatively were dismissed with indignant exclamations of how Walter's rival colleagues had wasted the time of the committee members. They then greeted him friendly and left.

Walter's colleague returned to his post the next day after being discharged from hospital without any explanation for his sudden mysterious loss of consciousness. We thanked God that Walter's reputation was restored and that he was able to continue his research, which seemed to be confirming more and more that the health message given to the Adventist Church more than a hundred and fifty years ago by a little lady with no more than three years' formal education, wasn't just an old wives' tale!

But the war was not over yet.

After the sudden death of the professor, a new professor of the Zoology department had to be appointed. Although the science faculty was in favour of appointing Walter because of his extensive research program, the post had to be advertised to the whole world. A few months later the selection committee had narrowed down the applicants to two possibilities. It was a close tossup between a Dr Burns from Cambridge University and Walter. The lady from Cambridge was informed that the university requested an interview with her, and she replied that she would like to see the facilities and research setup at the Zoology Department first and speak with Walter. She wrote that her mother, who lived in South Africa, would make an appointment with Dr Veith on her behalf.

Weeks went by and no-one phoned to make an appointment. Then came a letter addressed to the university, stating that Dr Burns no longer considered the post as professor, since she refused to work with that 'rude, untrustworthy' man, Dr Veith, who never showed up at the meeting she arranged through her mother. According to her mother she had personally spoken to Dr Veith and made the appointment for 10 am in his office on a specified day, but when Dr Burns arrived, he was not there. If she was not important enough for a meeting, she continued, then the post and the university were not important enough for her.

Walter felt his heart sink once again. What on earth happened this time? How much of this continued attack could he endure? He was trying so hard to stay out of trouble and just do his work faithfully for his university and for his God! Once again Walter was summoned to appear before another committee - the selection committee. They accused him of deliberately jeopardizing her possible appointment as professor to further his own interests. While Walter vehemently denied the accusations and repeatedly assured them that he received no call to make an appointment to meet with Dr Burns, one of the members of the committee, a doctor at the Botany department suddenly piped up.

“Coming to think of it, I received a phone call from a lady who made an appointment with me to see her daughter at 10 am on Thursday a week ago to see our laboratory facilities. I wondered what that was all about and made a note of the time and date in my diary, but when the day came, no-one arrived and I gave it no further thought...”

After further investigation it seemed that Dr Burns’s mother had phoned reception at the university, asking to speak to Dr Veith at Zoology, but they inadvertently put her through to Dr Weitz at Botany! A small mistake with large consequences, and even after the university apologized to her and asked her to reconsider her withdrawal as applicant, she refused. Walter was subsequently vindicated and released from all suspicion of having snubbed his rival for his own academic gain, and he was appointed to the honoured position. What a strange but true story of how Walter became the Professor and Head of Department against all expectations, and although his appointment kindled even more hatred from within his department, it gave him the needed academic platform and credibility for his public lectures, far beyond what he ever imagined. ‘Man’s extremities’ are indeed ‘God’s opportunities’. {2SM 297.8}

It was early one cool morning at the university, when Walter heard the strange sound. At first it was just a faint droning in the distance, but then it grew steadily into an eerie rumbling. Birds stopped their twittering in the trees outside the window for a few seconds and then took off in a confused flutter across the cloudy sky.

He ran down the hallway towards the lecture hall, pulled the door open, and glanced across the lecture hall at the petrified faces of the students. There was an awkward silence as they contemplated the gravity of the situation. The students had been urged by agitators to boycott classes and to join in the demonstration against the university over issues such as student fees, but some of the diligent students refused to riot and continued to attend classes. It turned out, however, that the instigators were not merely peacefully engaged in voicing their grievances, but were now en masse entering the buildings, smashing the classrooms and violently attacking the students that refused to join the boycotts. Male students’ kneecaps were crushed with clubs, and female students were dragged out of the buildings by their hair and beaten.

“What are we going to do?” one female student cried as she helplessly ran in circles to try and find a place to hide. “They’re going to kill us!” Panic took hold of the group as they listened at the fearful ‘toy-toyi’ stampede approaching.

“Stay where you are, and stay calm. I’m going outside to speak to them. Lock the door behind me.” Walter saw horror mixed with disbelief in the faces of the students. ‘Speak to them? No one speaks to these rebels without being killed or even worse, being set on fire alive. This man must be crazy’, he could almost hear them think.

As he stepped outside the double door of the lecture hall, he saw a large mob of more than a thousand aggressive people dancing and singing in rhythm as they approached the science building. On both sides of the lecture hall security police were standing silently like tin soldiers with rifles in their hands. The shouting and chanting died down to an ominous rustle as they came to a halt a few feet from Walter.

The leader of the group stepped forward. His eyes were dark and filled with animosity. He and most of those in the front line were surprisingly much older than the regular student. It seemed that the instigators were merely using the students for some political agenda.

“Get out of my way,” he barked.

“No, I won’t get out of your way. You have no business with our students; I am the one responsible for this class...”

“Get out of my way...” The aggressive leader of the pack took a step forward.

“I’m not getting out of your way; you’ll have to go through me first!” Walter glanced briefly at the security police, hoping that they would come to his aid, but they remained motionless.

“Then we’ll go through you,” the man hissed and lunged forward. Walter braced himself against the door of the hall as the whole group started pushing forward in an effort to break down the door. He felt himself being pinned against the door with such a force, that he struggled to breathe. The doors creaked and buckled behind him, but to his amazement they did not give way. After a few minutes, which seemed to him like an eternity, the mob drew back for a while, just long enough for Walter to catch his breath, but then, with renewed determination they stormed him again and again. When, after the third time, they had no success, they reached for the fire hydrant to blast him from the door, but by this time two of his colleagues had arrived and managed to keep them from grabbing the fire hose.

Seven times they crushed him against the door until he heard his ribs crack from under the tremendous pressure. But the doors, secured by only two pins, were mysteriously kept intact through the entire rampage!

Then suddenly, the leader stopped. For a few seconds he seemed bewildered, but then he waved his arm and cursed agitatedly at Walter as he turned and walked away, with the whole crowd following. They marched down the road and continued their mission of destruction in the next building, where they annihilated classrooms and injured several students.

His chest aching, but grateful that he was still alive, Walter turned as he heard the door open softly behind him. One by one the students came forward, their golden-brown faces now pale and drawn. He breathed a silent prayer to thank God for the

safety of his students and the staff and within hours the word had spread that Walter had bravely stood his ground to protect his students. During the attack he had little time to notice that the press was present, and great was our surprise to see his photograph in the newspaper the following morning, his hands raised protectively against the mob as he guarded the door.

The demonstrations continued for the rest of the week and classes were indefinitely suspended, but the university leadership called an emergency meeting in the senate building to discuss the issue. As professor, Walter was asked to join the discussions in the senate hall, but they had scarcely begun the talks, when they heard a commotion outside the building. A great multitude had once again gathered around the glass façade of the building and their militant leaders demanded to speak to the members of the senate. They started pounding rhythmically against the glass windows, while shouting and chanting in thunderous unison. Walter and some of the members of the senate went outside the meeting hall towards the glass façade and tried to calm them down, but within seconds the glass panels started swaying dangerously backwards and forwards. The next moment the tall glass wall came crashing down with devastating force from the vibration caused by the rhythmic beating of hundreds of hands against the glass.

For a few moments there was silence, even the demonstrators were stunned by the mass of glass that barely missed them as it came tumbling down onto the paving. Suddenly there was no wall of protection between the irate mob and the administrators inside the building and in a split second Walter realized that he had to try and diffuse the situation before the rioters decided to storm into the building and attack them.

“Please listen to me,” he shouted, “don’t be angry with the university. The rules were not made by us; these are government stipulations and apply to all universities...”

While he was talking, the rest of the senate decided to escape via the back door and within seconds Walter was once again left standing on his own before thousands of violent instigators. Yet again, he was not alone.

When the demonstrators saw the others running towards the rear exit, they all ran to the back of the building, leaving Walter standing alone. Fortunately they were too late, for his colleagues had already escaped unharmed. Relieved, he stepped gingerly over the broken glass and walked towards his office, once more realizing how finite man is, that we are but ‘dust’, dependant entirely on God for our existence and welfare.

Ps. 103:14 – 17 For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.

After the riots were over, life at the university returned to normal. A special bond developed between him and his students and the research program became well-

known in South Africa and abroad. One of his doctorate students received a prestigious post-doctorate position at Harvard University and the research done especially on the effect of dairy consumption on health, received much attention on radio, television and in the newspapers. After an interview with Walter on one of the well-known television programs, the cat was among the pigeons.

One day the director of the dairy board phoned and threatened to sue him and 'pull some strings' in order to put an end to his research. Walter tried to explain to him that his research was not rival propaganda, but genuine science and invited the board to visit him at the university to discuss the matter. The issue was so important that the whole board flew down from Johannesburg to Cape Town and after Walter had given them a two hour lecture on the research results, they sat speechless. After a while the director agreed that the evidence was overwhelming and some members of the board even asked for advice for their family members with dairy intolerance, asthma, or other allergic symptoms. They discussed some dietary alternatives and then, after enduring one bone shattering handshake after another from the large farmers, Walter thanked them for their understanding, and they parted peacefully.

However, opposition in the Zoology department increased and not long thereafter an independent commission of enquiry was appointed once again to investigate certain allegations made by yet another staff member against Walter and one of his students, at that time also his colleague. One of the issues mentioned by the accuser was that Walter had to be removed from his position on the grounds that *'one cannot be a scientist and at the same time believe in God'*, but the commission argued that to try and remove a person from his post on the basis of his faith in God was religious discrimination and that Walter had the right to even take legal action against them. He, however, had no intention to fight a battle that God had already won for him.

After days of lengthy questioning, all the other allegations were found to be false and Walter and his student were transferred on their own request to the Department of Physiology. Later this department was renamed the Department of Medical Bioscience, and here he was able to continue his valuable research without the constant harassment over the evolution question. His research helped the people of South Africa to return to the healthier lifestyle they had before, back to the time when fast foods and refined products were virtually unknown, and grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables were the staple diet of every African person.

As he was driving home to bring us the good news that he had been totally vindicated, Walter reflected upon how God had opened the way for him to witness to hundreds of people in the scientific sphere and at the same time protected him from both visible and invisible onslaughts. Amazingly, not only was he exonerated from the false charges against him, but the table was even turned. The accuser had become the accused and the defendant was honourably restored.

So will it be at the end of time when the evil accuser of God's people will contest their merit to inherit eternal life, but their Intercessor will open the books and not a single blot will be found to discredit His followers. Instead He will say, "My grace is sufficient for them, not through any merit of their own, but that they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb," and all that was written in the books will be placed upon the head of the accuser, the enemy of Jesus and His saints, and he will receive the penalty for every act of rebellion ever committed against God.

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one...

Thus God's people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. Nor is such assurance given without need. If God has granted to his children promise of grace and protection, it is because there are mighty agencies of evil to be met,—agencies numerous, determined, and untiring, of whose malignity and power none can safely be ignorant or unheeding. {GC88 513.1}



Let no-one deceive you...

Chapter 12

Luke 21:8 *And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.*

There was a faint knock at the back door and a young man stepped into the kitchen. He startled me and I just barely recognized him as one of the young people who had been attending Walter's evangelistic meetings in the town hall in Somerset West the past few weeks. He greeted me friendly and proceeded to hop onto the kitchen counter and started chatting as if he had known us for years.

I thought his behaviour rather strange and presumptuous, but even though I felt somewhat uncomfortable, I remembered what Paul had said in Hebrews 13:2,

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

I offered him something to eat and drink and he stayed till evening when the rest of the family arrived home. Clive told us that he was a recently baptized Adventist who had come out of one of the Pentecostal churches, and that he was studying theology and lived in the dormitory at the Adventist College. We chatted till the children went to bed and when Walter excused himself to do some computer work, I was left with the embarrassing task of coaxing Clive to leave. I offered to drive him back to the College, since it was quite a distance to walk and he accepted gladly.

On the way Clive was suddenly very quiet. I glanced at him but he kept staring in front of him.

"Are you okay? Are you tired?" I asked.

He didn't answer at first, but after a strange silence, he said, "I want to tell you something, but I'm scared you will reject me..."

"You can tell me, I won't reject you," I said carefully.

"Everyone always rejected me. My mother and father died in a motorbike accident when I was very small and my brothers and I were placed in a foster home, but after a short while, they didn't want me there any longer and I was passed on from one foster family to the next. I don't know why, maybe it's because of my epileptic fits. I've bashed my face and broken my front teeth so many times during some fits. Here at the College I have no-one to take care of me. Only the headmaster Mr. Cummins

has been very kind to me and often pops in to see how I am doing. Sometimes I wake up in the bathroom two days after having a fit and no-one took notice.”

“That’s terrible, how can people be so heartless!” I said indignantly as my motherly instincts took over.

He just sat quietly as we drove along.

When I stopped in front of his dormitory, he took my hand and squeezed it. “I hope you won’t reject me, but I know you won’t, because you’re such a caring person.” He then thanked me warmly and waved as he disappeared into the building.

On my way home I was struggling to understand what had just happened. On the one hand I had an awkward uneasy feeling at the pit of my stomach, but on the other hand I had compassion on the lonely soul who had no-one to take care of him. I wondered if God wanted to use me to help him, after all, he did seem to trust and appreciate me and I couldn’t disappoint him now. I resolved to try and help him find a home where he would be safe and be nourished spiritually, physically and emotionally. Isn’t this what Jesus would want us to do?

The following Sabbath Clive came to us for lunch after church and our friend Jane was there too. Clive was talking to our children and some of the other young people when Jane remarked what a nice young man he seems to be, so polite and spiritual, always quoting Scripture and reading his Bible. After I told her a little about his background, I asked her if she needed a boarder to help supplement her income. When she became an Adventist, her relationship with her husband deteriorated and soon thereafter he divorced her and left. She only had a small income from a part-time job and occasionally took students in to help her and her two boys get by. She needed the money and also thought he would benefit by her feeding his brain with healthy home-cooked food, and said she would think about it. The next day she phoned and agreed to take him in.

Because we were still burdened by the heavy yoke of debt from the farm, we decided to sell our little railway house, buy a plot and build a house. We would get a team to build the brick walls, fit the windows and put up the roof, but all the painting, tiling and dry walls we would do ourselves. Walter worked at the university during weekdays, and at night and on weekends he would work on the house. I did the painting and the tiling of the floors and bathrooms. It took us three years to finish the house and for many months our children used boxes to build their own bedroom walls on the top floor until Walter was able to erect the dry walls.

During this time Walter was expanding his lecture series and he had just started scratching the surface of Freemasonry and its connection with the occult, the Protestant churches and the Papacy, when there was a knock on our front door at midnight.

In a daze Walter stumbled to the door, wondering who on earth was up at this hour. He opened the door and saw a man standing in the shadows of the porch with a very large book in his hands.

“Dr. Veith, you don’t know me, I work at the paint shop in town, you might have seen me there. I am sorry to bother you but I have some important information for you.”

What can be so important to warrant a visit at midnight? Walter invited him in, but he refused. “I am going to give you till four o’clock in the morning to look at this book and then I will fetch it again. I am a member of the Freemason Lodge here and if they find out that I have given you this information, I will be in big trouble.”

Apprehensively Walter took the book and thanked the man, who disappeared quickly up the street. Four hours to study such a thick book? By now I was anxious to know what had happened, and I joined him in his study as he paged through the book filled with pictures and drawings. There displayed for only the initiated, were all the secret hand signals, the signs and symbols, the layout of the lodges, the names of the Grand Masters and well-known officials and politicians, the regalia that they wear and most intriguingly, the secret history and the connections that Masonry has with all walks of life.

“Wow! This is amazing information!” Walter said as he grabbed his camera and proceeded to take photographs of every interesting page. I returned to bed but he kept working until he heard the faint knock on the door again. The man retrieved his valuable possession and left in a hurry without a word.

Now Walter had a whole arsenal of ammunition to prove that Secret Societies are a breeding place for deception and all kinds of iniquities, and that they have infiltrated governments and rulers, as well as Christianity and other religions, under the garb of commendable humanitarian deeds. And behind it all sits the antichrist, dancing to the tune of Lucifer, the archenemy of God.

The Lord hates all deception, secrecy, and guile. This is Satan's work; the work of God is open and frank. TM 274.1

It was not safe for you to have any part with this secret order. Those who stand under the blood-stained banner of Prince Immanuel cannot be united with the Free Masons or with any secret organization. The seal of the living God will not be placed upon anyone who maintains such a connection after the light of truth has shone upon his pathway. Christ is not divided, and Christians cannot serve God and mammon. Letter 21, 1893. Ev 622.1

A few weeks later we heard the shocking news that the employee at the paint shop was arrested and sent to prison. No-one knows why, and we never saw him again.

We were devastated, and for the first time we realized the seriousness of the matter. Satan does not appreciate being exposed, and he will do his utmost to destroy those who do it. In our walk with God from this time on, we were in a full-on battle against the hosts of evil. The more the devil was being exposed through Walter's lectures, the greater was his ire towards him and our family. If it were not for the continuous protection of our God, we would not have survived.

The great deceiver fears that we shall become acquainted with his devices... It is because Satan can readily control the minds of those who are unconscious of his influence that the Word of God unveils before us his secret forces, thus placing us on guard. HF 318.3

Walter still travelled to Germany and Canada during his university vacations and then I was left with dealing with all the crises at the school and at home.

One cold winter's morning I herded the children down to the basement where our car was in the garage and to my dismay the whole basement was six inches under water. Since the children had to get to school, I had no time to deal with it, but when I returned, I discovered that the water was warm.

"Oh no, it's the geyser," I mumbled to myself. Walter had been away for a couple of weeks, so I was on my own again. I managed to find a plumber, who arrived soon afterwards, and as he searched for the leak at the geyser, he stopped, took off his well-used cap and scratched his head pensively.

"That's strange, there's no leak on the geyser. There must be a burst pipe somewhere."

He started searching through the floating objects and stumbled upon the source from where hot water was bubbling out into the basement. After he had drained out the water from the garage, he looked closely at the copper pipe. There were puncture holes in the pipe and just a few feet away lay a dead mole.

"I have never seen anything like this!" the plumber mused. "It seems a mole had burrowed through the concrete floor, and then chewed his way through the copper pipe! The boiling hot water must have killed him when it came spurting out. But how in the world could a mole chew through a concrete floor and then through a copper pipe?"

But I knew how...

A little while later, still struggling to make ends meet, I decided to take up the challenge to work for an Adventist man, who was notorious for his verbal abuse of his workers, as well as his poor wife. No-one was willing to work for him, but we desperately needed the money, and even though his wife warned me not to accept the job, I was determined.

I worked the long hours and endured the scolding and shouting, but often it became too much for me and I would take my lunch hour, rush home to have a good cry, eat a cookie or two, and then return to the 'detention barracks'.

On one such an occasion, as I got to our house, I saw water pouring out from under the front door. My heart sank, and as I opened the door, I noticed water seeping through the floor boards of the top story. Our lounge furniture and the whole kitchen were under water. I rushed to the top story and stood in dismay as I watched water squirting from the bathroom wall. A pipe had burst in the wall.

The plumber just shook his head as he once again came to my rescue. "Having some bad luck lately, eh?"

I wanted to say to him, "There's no such thing as good or bad luck." But I thought he wouldn't understand, so I just nodded. I knew that Satan was angry with the work Walter was doing more than sixteen thousand kilometres away, but I was determined not to despair or fret.

That night I prayed with the children and thanked Jesus that He was still watching over us, even though things go wrong. We still had dry beds to sleep in and food on our table, which is much more than many people had in their tin shacks amidst the bitter cold of Cape Town.

One Sunday morning a brother in the church who was a builder, came to build us a low retaining wall in order to prevent rain water from our driveway running down into our neighbour's property. He was working alone, whistling softly to himself, when there was a loud knock on our front door.

I was surprised when I saw two police officers standing outside, dressed in full police attire, complete with revolvers and batons in their holsters.

"We received a complaint from your neighbours that you are working on Sunday," one of them tried to explain.

"Excuse me?" I asked in unbelief.

"Well," the other officer said as he shifted uncomfortably from one leg to the other. "I don't see you disturbing the peace, but we will have to lodge the complaint with the magistrate and we will advise you when you have to appear in court. Just thought we would let you know. Good day."

I was devastated. Accused of working on Sunday? And we were not disturbing anyone, in fact, we were building the wall to benefit those very neighbours who lodged the case against us! For the first time fear gripped my heart. I was alone with my three children, how was I going to deal with this crisis on my own?

I slept very little that week and prayed that God would give me the strength to handle the situation. A few days later the same officers returned. I expected a summons, but they said that the magistrate threw out the case.

“He threw out the case? Why?” I asked.

“The strange thing is, the complaint was not actually that you were working on the Sunday, because there is no active law in this country that you may not work on Sundays. The complaint was that you do NOT work on Saturdays. Your neighbours want the court to somehow intervene and force you to work on Saturdays. Which of course is ridiculous and the very reason the magistrate threw out the case.”

With that brief explanation the officers greeted me politely and drove off while our other neighbours peeped inquisitively through their curtains. Puzzled but relieved I shut the door to the staring eyes across the street and thanked God for solving another one of my many problems.

In the meantime Walter was having a blessed, yet exhausting trip in Canada. The ministry that invited him to speak in Vancouver, had rented a hall, which strangely enough, seated one thousand two hundred and sixty people. Every night the hall filled up with visitors and church members, except for one seat that was always open right in front, just a few meters from where Walter was standing at the podium.

A few minutes into the lecture, the side door would open and a Down syndrome boy would walk in, unattended by any parent or guardian. The young lad would make his way straight to the only unoccupied seat, almost as if he knew that the seat was reserved for him, and there he would sit, singing softly to himself until the end of the lecture. Then he would disappear into the crowd. This ritual would repeat itself night after night.

One night, however, towards the end of the lecture series, some of the people in the audience came to the front after the lecture, crowded around Walter and aggressively argued with him about the Bible and the identification of the antichrist.

Then Walter noticed the Downs boy get up from his seat, walk towards the stage, and elbow his way through the crowd until he was standing right in front of him. He looked up into Walter's face, the tip of his tongue hanging from the side of his mouth, and then put his arms around Walter's waist while resting his head on his chest, all the while still singing softly to himself.

The shouting and arguing suddenly quieted down, the aggressors looked at the scene of the boy clinging to the speaker, and then turned around and walked away. Walter was grateful that he had a few moments of peace and failed to notice as the boy disappeared amongst the people in the foyer.

During the following few lectures Walter anxiously anticipated the quiet entry of his little supporter into the hall. He was relieved that his seat was vacant every night and

that at the end of the lecture he again made his way through the crowd to wrap his arms around the speaker. One by one the accusers had no more words to say, and left. When Walter asked the organizers if they knew who the parents or guardians of the boy were and where he came from, no-one had any idea.

The lectures in that large hall ended, but the meetings were to continue in the Adventist Church. Walter was sure that he would lose his Downs friend, who would have to travel many kilometres to the church on the other side of the city. A little sad he continued his presentations in the church, certain that he would never see the boy again. However, just as he had started his last lecture, his eye caught a familiar figure walking down the aisle, and to his surprise his stubby little friend walked straight to the seat in front of the pulpit.

“How on earth...How is this possible?” Walter thought as he watched the boy settle down, singing softly to himself. No parents? No friends? How did he get there?

After the lecture all the people went to the foyer for drinks and Walter stayed alone on the stage, packing up his slides. Suddenly the boy walked onto the stage and again put his arms around him with his head on his shoulder. Walter looked down into the face of the boy, took him gently by the shoulders and said:

“Now tell me the truth, who are you? Are you an angel?”

The boy suddenly stood up straight, turned his eyes upwards, lifted his arm up and pointed to heaven. Then, without saying a word, he turned and went down the steps and disappeared into the crowd. That was the last anyone had seen or heard of him.

Walter was encouraged and uplifted by this token from God, and even though he thought he was fighting the battle alone, God was always there. He never forgot ‘his Downs angel’ and often thinks of those sweet moments. He was also especially blessed by the acceptance of the message by many of the people who attended the meetings. The Lord had broken through the secularism and atheism of a nation who thought they had everything, and yet were poor. The messages spread through Canada as well as the USA and many seeds were sown for Christ.

Unfortunately, the three disciples who were on the Mount of Transfiguration with their beloved Jesus, had to come down back into the valley where the demon-possessed child was waiting for them...

After the Lord has bestowed on us the richest blessings, does not some sore trial come to us to darken our souls and cause us to doubt God's goodness? Let us, at such times, remember that Christ was tempted in all points like as we are tempted, and that in His strength we can overcome. Let us by prayer and fasting draw near to God.
{21MR 11.1}

Back at home, I was facing increasing challenges, which drained my physical and spiritual energy, and often discouraged me. At first I did not realize that the devil was

working to destroy our family. I was just trying to survive with all the work of housekeeping, working under difficult circumstances, and trying to help our children with their challenges at school. They had entered the dreaded teen-age stage without their father being there physically most of the time, and I naïvely thought that their attending the Adventist school would protect and guide them.

Sure, they were guided, but unfortunately right into the hands of rebellious and unconverted peers and teachers. They were mocked for everything we as their parents taught them and stood for, and were slowly influenced into thinking that we were fanatical. Adventists invited them to have a “braai”, or barbeque, where they grilled meat and told them that it was not necessary for them to be so narrow-minded. After all, they reasoned, Jesus wants us to be happy, He came to give us life “more abundantly”.

Besides our stand on the health message, the church was increasingly criticising the work that Walter was doing. We were not prepared for what lay ahead of us. For us this was the beginning of a very long controversy, a battle that started in heaven and will only end when our God himself will put an end to it. We were rudely awakened from our initial perception that all is safe and sound in the church. Even more astounding to us was the discovery that a large majority of those who had been longer in the church than us, born and bred Adventists, had not the slightest idea what they believe, and even less as to why they believe it. The age-old battle was raging even more fiercely inside our beloved church than outside in the world from which we had come. The Pearl of great price and His truth for which we had sacrificed everything – family, friends, money and lands – was being thrown before the swine.

We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world.... how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement! Selected Messages 1:122 (1887). LDE 156.2

“You should preach more about the love of Christ, not all this fear-mongering,” someone in the church once said to Walter after one of his lectures.

“Fear-mongering? It is love for Christ and the people that makes me want to warn them of what is coming. Haven’t you read the Great Controversy? Am I preaching anything other than what is in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy?” Walter answered.

“No, but you are scaring people away with your constant harping on the Three Angels’ Messages and the Papacy,” the man said in an irritated tone.

“If you think the Three Angels’ Messages are not a revelation of God’s love and care for humanity, then you shouldn’t call yourself an Adventist,” Walter said indignantly as he walked away.

As he was grumbling to himself, he became even more determined to present to the people more information on how cunningly Satan and his agents on earth have infiltrated governments and churches, families, schools and all walks of society. The Bible clearly warns of the despicable and mysterious works of 'Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth', and the antichrist, who persecuted God's people through the ages. How fitting that 'Babylon' means 'confusion', since one of the last things Jesus warned His disciples about was to "Take heed that ye be not deceived."

When Walter returned home, the onslaught on us became even more relentless. Not satisfied with their failed attempt to get us into trouble, our neighbours once again launched an attack.

One night, as we were trying to relax before bedtime, there was a frantic knock on our door. When Walter opened the door, our neighbour burst into our house, shouting, "What did you do with our cat!?"

"Your cat? What do you mean?"

"Yes my wife's cat. If you sacrificed him....if he is dead, just tell me where you buried him!"

Walter and I looked at each other in disbelief. I started saying that we haven't seen his cat, but he just kept on repeating that we sacrificed his cat and that he wants to know where the body is, and that his wife had a nervous breakdown because of us and had to go to her mother. When his tirade was over, he stormed out the door back to his house and slammed his front door so loudly that the sound echoed like a voodoo drum through the valley.

"Oh please, not again," I sighed. We were so tired of defending ourselves against the world and the church that we almost despaired. We called the children and prayed that God would help the neighbours to find their cat and then we went to bed with heavy hearts.

A few days later our youngest son noticed a cat crawling into a water drain. "It sure looks like the neighbour's cat," he said excitedly.

The municipality had been working on our road and the frightened cat must have crawled into the pipe for safety. I went down to the drain with some food and tried to coax the jittery animal out of the drain. He must have been very hungry because like a flash he dashed towards the food, but I was waiting for him. I scooped him up, held him close to me and ran back to our house where we kept him in a room and gave him food and water. I was torn apart by the petrified animal, blood was dripping everywhere, but I sighed a sigh of relief. It was worth it, now we could prove to our neighbour that we did not sacrifice his cat.

Walter went down to the neighbour's house and posted a note on his door, which said, 'We have found your cat in the storm drain, he is safe and sound with us. Please come and collect him when you get back from work.'

That evening the knock on the door was even louder and the man was even more irate. "Oh, so you think you are clever! But I'm not stupid, you have been hiding our cat in your house all this time to sacrifice him, and now you pretend that you found him in the storm drain! Ha! I'm not that stupid. You haven't heard the end of this!" he shouted as he grabbed the cat from my arms and stormed back to his house, slamming his door twice as hard as before.

We all just looked at one another, our children baffled at the rudeness of the man. We were trying to help him and then he treats us this way! Uncle Frenchie's words once again rang in our ears, "Every good deed will be punished," and that is very true, but it was a hard lesson for all of us to learn. We had done no harm to our neighbours, but they were annoyed by our going to church on Saturdays and not Sundays, and presumably, because they regarded us as a weird sect, they assumed that we sacrificed animals! They didn't even know why they hated us so much. They were unaware that Satan was bent on making our lives as hard as possible by using them as his agents to sap our strength and tempt us to doubt God and lose our faith.

But something worse was yet to come...

While Walter was exposing deceptions to the world, we were unaware that deception was breeding right under our noses. We had started Bible studies for the youth in our home on Friday nights and our children had invited their friends as well. Not all were Adventists and there were many who were very sceptical at first. Some of them who were attending the Adventist school, were, unbeknown to us, drug dealers, but after they discovered the truth, they gave up their life of sin and rebellion and decided to study theology. Today they are pastors in the Adventist Church.

Some seeds, however, fell on stony ground. They sprung up eagerly but soon it was evident that they were not rooted in Christ.

Among those who visited us regularly was Clive, the young theology student who had epilepsy. He had meals with us, went on trips with us, and even slept over on weekends. He had become part of the family, although his intensity became too much for us at times. We noticed that a strange spirit developed in our family, and often, when we would withdraw from him, he would have an epileptic fit. It was very disturbing to watch, and for days afterwards he would stay with us and sleep over until he recovered.

On one occasion Walter and I planned to go out alone with friends and since I was a little late, our friends were waiting downstairs for me. Clive was also waiting in the lounge with the rest, apparently reading his Bible as usual, but, as witnessed by our friends, as I came down the stairs, he started behaving strangely, pacing up and

down. The moment, however, when I came within sight, he fell down on the floor and started tossing violently from side to side. It was a full-blown epileptic fit. During this time his blue eyes would turn dark and his features became changed. We managed to get him to a bed, but our night out was ruined. We felt exceedingly uncomfortable as it dawned upon us that Clive was even able to bring an epileptic fit upon himself in order to manipulate a situation.

Soon Walter and I started arguing about everything, especially about how to deal with him. Walter wanted to tell him to leave, but I was convinced that God wanted us to help him. After all, didn't Jesus heal the sick and never turned anyone away?

One late night there was a knock at the door. It was dark and cloudy, and outside in the cold stood a young girl, perhaps in her twenties.

"Hello, can I help you?" asked Walter.

"Hello, I'm Elsa. I attended one of your Bible studies with the youth. I don't really know why I am here, but God told me that you have something to tell me about the Bible."

"That's interesting," Walter said, "Come inside." We walked towards the lounge to find out more about this girl. She told us that she was an asthma sufferer and lived with her mother and her uncle, but that she was being abused by her uncle.

"Please can you help me?" she pleaded helplessly.

Walter started to tell her about the origin of sin and why there is so much misery on this planet. He got up to fetch her a Bible so that she could follow when he quoted the texts. But the moment she had the Bible in her hands, she started getting an asthma attack. We then stopped the study and waited for her to catch her breath. Three times Walter tried to open the Scriptures to her, but each time she had an asthma attack.

We gave up trying to do the Bible study, and since it was very late and she was afraid to go back home, I made her a bed on the lounge floor. Now we found ourselves in a situation that had opened the door to even more stress on our family and for the next few weeks we not only had the problem of dealing with Clive and his epilepsy, but also with Elsa and her asthma, and to crown it all, they were constantly arguing with each other. They had virtually taken over our home and we were exhausted, and at our wit's end. I was aware of their emotional manipulation, but at that point we never realized that we were dealing with demonic presences in our home.

It became apparent that Clive was simultaneously misusing the kindness of other families and young ladies at the college, worming himself into their lives and destroying relationships, all under the garb of love for the truth and piety. His presence had wreaked havoc in our home and I decided it was time to confront him.

One day he came to visit me while I was alone at home, which he usually did when he wanted me to make him something to eat. But instead I told him that I wanted to talk to him. I sat him down and told him calmly that what he was doing was not right, and that he should stop manipulating people and destroying relationships. The courage to be so bold, could only have been from God since I had never confronted anyone like that before.

I had hardly finished the sentence, when he jumped up, rushed to the bathroom and splashed his face with cold water. His mouth had gone white and his eyes turned dark.

“Oh no,” I thought, “he is going to have another fit!”

But instead he came and stood in front of me, and pointed a shaking finger straight at me. His boyish face seemed to change into stone, and through his teeth his hissed at me:

“You are from the devil!”

With that he turned around, stormed out to his car and with tyres screeching and engine roaring he disappeared around the corner.

In silence I stood staring through the window, shocked at what had just happened. I fell on my knees, and asked God to help me. Even though I knew now that Satan had taken full control of him, I still struggled to let go. I prayed that if God wanted us to continue working with Clive, then He must let him make contact with us again before one week was over. If not, then I will have accepted that God himself would take care of the situation and it would no longer be our cross to carry. It was Friday late afternoon, when I got up from my knees and continued preparing for the Sabbath.

During the following week we heard nothing from Clive. But then, on the Friday evening, just after Sabbath had started, we received a phone call from a theology student who knew us and Clive very well.

“I’m so sorry to have to bring you this terrible news, but Clive drowned in the ocean this afternoon.”

There was silence on our side as we tried to come to grips with it.

“Drowned? You mean he’s dead?” I gasped.

“Yes,” the student replied. “I will be bringing his body to the college where he will be buried.”

Fear and guilt gripped my heart as I sank down onto the floor. “What have I done? I should never have confronted him.” I whispered.

Walter sat down beside me. "It's not your fault," he said. "God took care of the problem Himself. You had asked God for a sign and now he has given you the answer. He knew we were not able to deal with it any longer. We have been carrying this burden for almost seven years now. Satan deceived us, he tried to destroy our family and our work for God by sending that man to us, and now God Himself intervened. Trust God, He knows what we can endure."

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. 1 Cor 10:13

We had learnt a valuable but painful lesson and I pleaded with God to give me more discernment and to protect us from being deceived again. I thought of Eve who was confident that she had it all under control, while being completely unaware that she was speaking to the devil and being deceived by his hypnotic spell. How terrible she must have felt when too late she realized what had happened and that the sanctity of her peaceful home, Eden, had been violated.

It was not long after Clive's death that Elsa also suddenly disappeared off the scene and we never heard of her again. It felt like a huge weight had been lifted from our shoulders and peace once again returned to our home.



A new Era

Chapter 13

Phil 3:13,14 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but [this] one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Although we had new vigour and plans for the future, our debt on the farm and the money we owed to my employer, were pressing hard on us. I was trying to get as many hours of work done for him as I could, but still we were struggling to keep our heads above water. The first loan we had on our property, being used to pay off our second bond on the house, was slowly running dry. My employer had been making more and more demands on Walter, many times ordering him to "Get yourself up here to my house immediately, I need to speak to you!"

One night we were tired and despondent, and as we knelt together, Walter prayed:

"Lord, I know you said that we should avoid debt like the plague and You know that I have not brought this situation upon myself. I now ask you to please help me so that with these hands I will get my family out of debt. With these hands my wife and I have built this house and the only solution now is to sell it."

I opened one eye to see if Walter was serious. He was serious.

The very next day we put the house on the market and now I had the added burden of keeping everything tidy for people to view the house any time of the day, a house occupied by a scatterbrain professor, three teenagers, a German shepherd dog, cats and birds, not to mention our daughter's rat, and the scorpions, lizards and snakes our youngest son brought home.

Unfortunately the property market was dead at that time and hardly anyone came to view the house. We were disappointed and worried. After almost a year there still seemed to be no interest in buying the house.

During this time my health started to deteriorate. For months I had incessant stomach cramps which kept us awake many nights. I was taken to hospital for scans but nothing was found which could cause the pain and nausea.

However, when my fingers started to tingle and go numb and stiff, Walter knew something was seriously wrong. He had in the past read something about poisoning and phoned the poison department of the hospital, who confirmed that my symptoms probably pointed to arsenic poisoning. It then dawned upon us that at my

workplace I was working with specimens that had been kept in bottles containing arsenic! Every time I opened a bottle to work with the content I inhaled the fumes and handled the specimens with my bare hands.

Needless to say, Walter insisted that I quit my job. I was very grateful to be released from that yoke and started to help Walter with preparing his lectures for an outreach series. Walter had photographed his own material worldwide which he used in his lectures. A couple of times he spent the last money we had on buying rolls of film for photos, which he developed by himself in the dark room at his university. It was out of the question to have all those thousands of slides developed.

One night, as he came home after a lecture, he emptied his pockets and found an envelope. When he opened it, there was the same amount of money he had just spent on the film he bought! He hadn't told anyone what he had paid, but God knew. Someone must have slipped the envelope into his pocket at the meeting without him noticing. This happened three times during that lecture series and every time the gift covered the expense of the film he had bought. God had taken care of all our needs, a little at a time, and just enough to teach us to step out in faith.

Php 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

But now technology had become more advanced and the era of slides and slide projectors had come to an end. Walter was the first lecturer in South Africa to use 'PowerPoint' for his lectures, but for that he needed to scan his thousands of slides into the computer. We decided to take the house off the market and first finish the Lord's work, and then we would try again to sell the house after the campaign was over.

During the day I would sit and scan the slides for that evening's lecture into the computer, and in the evening Walter would put everything together, drive to the hall and give his presentation. It was extremely stressful for us, and everything depended on me getting it all done, while my housework was piling up.

A few weeks after we had taken the house off the market, while I was busy preparing for Walter's last lecture in the series, there was a knock at the door early in the morning. Walter and the children had left a while ago and I was sitting at the computer in my pyjamas busy scanning. Apprehensively I cracked the door open, only to find the estate agent standing there, smiling sheepishly.

"I am so sorry to bother you and I know you have taken your house off the market, but I have a client here who is very eager to see your house," she said.

A million things rushed through my mind. The dishes were piled up in the sink, the children's beds were not made, the washing was waiting for me in the laundry, I was in pyjamas, and to top it all, the dog had been chasing the cat in the house, mats were lying in crumpled heaps and dog hairs had settled on everything.

"I don't know," I stammered, "My house is in a state. Could you come later today?"

The agent nodded and just started walking down the steps, when I had the strong impression that I should call her back.

"Okay, you can bring your client, but please don't look at the mess."

For a painful few minutes that seemed like hours, the two ladies walked through the house and then left. "I'll never see them again," I sighed in shame.

But to my surprise, that afternoon the agent phoned me and made an appointment for the client to bring her whole family to view the house. By that time I had everything in order and that same day she signed the offer to purchase the house.

What a miracle! When we decided to put God's work first, He worked behind the scenes to answer our prayers. We now had the means to pay off all our debt and still have a little money to buy a small house - a very, very small house.

Mat 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

It was a sunny afternoon when the estate agent took us out to view some houses. After we had paid off all our debt, we had three hundred and forty thousand rand left, but there was not much to find in that price range. There were some dilapidated homes in bad areas, and we were determined not to take a loan and go down the dark alley of debt again.

We were beginning to lose hope, but then the agent decided to take us to view one more house.

"I know the price is higher than you want to spend, but I just thought you would like to see it. The owner is moving to a retirement complex. He had an offer of five hundred and fifty thousand rand, but he rejected it.

"Oh, that's far too much for us," Walter said.

As we walked into the small home, I immediately liked it. There was an atrium full of beautiful orchids and some water features. While Walter and the agent were talking, I walked in the garden with the old man admiring his lush garden. In one of the water ponds I saw a chameleon struggling to stay afloat, desperately trying to reach the side. It must have fallen from the tree into the water. I picked it up, gave it a gentle stroke and put it back up in the tree.

We greeted the owner and drove back with the agent to her office. We were rather despondent, but then Walter said, almost in a joke, "Make him an offer of three hundred and forty thousand rand."

“Oh no, that won’t work,” the agent said, “it will have to be more than five hundred and fifty.”

Just then another agent overheard our conversation and he said, “Just phone and ask Mr Brown. Never say never...”

When our agent reluctantly phoned the old man and told him what our offer was, he first emphatically said no, but then he asked a strange question.

“Who are the people? Is it the lady who saved the chameleon in my pond?”

The estate agent looked puzzled and even irritated when she asked me if I had picked up a chameleon from his pond. I nodded, and she responded that it was me.

“Well, in that case they can have the house,” the gentleman said with finality.

Walter and I glanced at each other in disbelief. The agent was even more baffled, but in silence she started preparing the papers for us to sign. That night we prayed and thanked God once again for doing the impossible for us to own a house without incurring any debt.

When we finally moved to the house, we asked our pastor and some elders to dedicate the house to God’s work and to protect us from evil influences in our home. I felt so grateful to God for all He had done for us, and, as I was reading the Bible, I came across some verses in Psalms 71 which brought great joy and encouragement to me and served to strengthen me for more trials that, unbeknown to us, were lurking in the future.

Psa 71:19 Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!

Psa 71:20 Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

Psa 71:21 Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

Psa 71:22 I will also praise thee with the psaltery, even thy truth, O my God: unto thee will I sing with the harp, O thou Holy One of Israel.

My thoughts went back to my childhood when I escaped from the evil world around me and found God by singing in a deserted little chapel all to myself. God had not forgotten our first encounter. I suddenly felt prompted to start writing my own songs and make my own music and I solemnly vowed that I would use the ability and the means He gives me for His work only. Soon I had a small studio in our house and many happy hours were spent writing, singing and recording my songs for God. I once again found peace in ‘dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding in the shadow of the Almighty’. It was here in the secret place of prayer that Jesus himself found divine strength while on earth.

“In a world of sin Jesus endured struggles and torture of soul. In communion with God He could unburden the sorrows that were crushing Him. Here He found comfort and joy.” {DA 362.4}

And here I shared my hardships and worries, but also my passion for the beauty of His creation and His music.

Psa 71:23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee; and my soul, which thou hast redeemed.

It was late afternoon when our youngest son, Robert, came stumbling into the house. “I don’t feel well,” he said faintly, “Don’t know what’s wrong, I feel like I’m dying...and I have pain in my left arm.”

Pain in the left arm, and he was only nineteen? We knew that something serious was wrong. We rushed him to hospital and while still in the car, he became unconscious. The doctor at emergency checked his heart rate and it was more than three hundred beats per minute! Thinking that he was having a heart attack, the doctor gave him adrenalin, which was the worst thing to do and caused him to have a seizure. His body was tossed from side to side, which ripped out the tubes to his lungs, and I saw blood oozing from his mouth. Then his heart stopped beating.

At this time the doctor asked me to leave the room and I was alone and confused outside in the dark corridor, wondering if he was dead. I longed to be there with him, but understandably the last thing a doctor in that position needs, is a hysterical mother.

But God had miraculously preserved his life. After they had shocked the heart, it started beating again and he gained consciousness, and soon he was talking to us as if nothing had happened. After extensive tests it was discovered that he must have been born with Wolf-Parkinson-White syndrome, which often only manifests around the age of nineteen. Since there were only two electrocardiologists in the country at that time, and both were at a congress overseas, we had to monitor Robert twenty-four hours a day. We made him a bed next to ours in our bedroom, where he remained for a week until the surgeon was able to eliminate the large offending nerve in his heart that caused all the trouble. For months afterwards we had to monitor him regularly until his heart had healed completely.

But we had scarcely recovered from one traumatic experience when the next wave of pressure was again upon us. Invitations for Walter to speak in different countries were overwhelming. Many people had watched his Total Onslaught series and were eager to meet the crazy German who gave a straight message to all, should it be the Queen of England, his own church, or even the Pope! We were inundated with

letters and messages and we knew it was impossible for him to answer God's call and at the same time be at the university. After discussing it with his colleagues and students, he decided to take a year's unpaid leave to travel the world and speak in all the different countries where he was invited. Our faith in God's financial provision and care, and His protection were once again to be tested.

At that time our oldest son and his wife had emigrated to Canada, our daughter was in England, and our youngest son was studying engineering. It was therefore possible for me to travel with Walter to support him for the many months that he would be away from home.

Our flights were long and we arrived tired and jet-lagged at every destination, but the Lord sustained us all the way. What made it more difficult, was the reception we received in the different places. Someone from the General Conference somehow got hold of our itinerary and wrote messages to all the churches before we would even arrive there, warning them against Walter and telling the pastor not to let him speak, because he was 'dangerous and not a member of the church in good and regular standing'.

Every time we arrived at a church, there would be tension initially, until the pastor realized that the rumours were untrue. Most of the time the conferences would not support the series and the president of the conference involved, would often refuse to meet Walter. Messages from the conferences would even be sent out to all the other churches warning them, and even forbidding the members to attend the meetings. What puzzled us was that even though his itinerary was not advertised, someone knew when and where he would be next. Was there a mole somewhere?

But once again we had nothing to fear. God had prepared the way in spite of the efforts of the enemy to stop the work He had planned. The members received us with open arms and the support was overwhelming. People from different Adventist churches, as well as atheists, many unchurched, and some from other protestant churches, flocked to the meetings and blessed us with their presence and their interesting life stories.

One of the several speaking appointments Walter had, was in the USA in the city Tulsa in Oklahoma. We had no idea that this was a predominantly freemason city. We watched in amazement as the freemason compass and square sign lit up on the brake lights every time cars in front of us stopped. And even more astounding was the same sign on many police stations. Excitedly Walter asked our driver to take us to one of the many mason lodges where he spent some hours taking photographs of pictures of famous people, many of them being 32 or 33 degree freemasons.

Having studied the secret books of Freemasonry, Walter knew that most of what they believed and did, was hidden and it was no surprise to us that we were not allowed into certain parts of the lodge. The tour guide kept a stern eye on us and would not let us leave the group, but Walter managed to slip away unnoticed while I was asking the man some questions.

This new information made Walter determined to warn the audience at the meetings about the dangers of masonry, but the organizers of the church were adamant that it would upset the guests and then they wouldn't come back to the meetings. Walter, however, continued with his series, as usual, undeterred by criticism, and the audience just grew larger every night.

At the end of the series many of the visitors, men and women, came forward and testified that they were freemasons and that they had decided to leave the order and never go back again. They thanked us for revealing the truth to them and brought us their mason regalia, their aprons, badges, head gear and books. The once sceptical Adventists were amazed and beamed with joy when these souls signed up for Bible studies. Although we didn't know what happened to them when we left, we continued to pray for their safety. A long hard road lay ahead for them and they needed the protective care of Jesus to fight the battles against families and leaders of their communities, and to follow their convictions.

We subsequently visited other cities where Walter took more pictures and gathered more information at Mason Lodges for his lectures. In Washington he found the 'shrine' of Albert Pike with all his masonic regalia and in many other lodges the pictures of the presidents of Amerika and the astronauts were proudly displayed, all with their own signatures and '33 degrees' behind their names. Soon our time in the United States was up and we were taken to the airport to fly to our next destination.

It was cold and wet when we arrived in Germany. The church was packed with interested brothers and sisters who had heard about the German-speaking South African throwing the proverbial cat amongst the pigeons. This time the cat was his recent research on the controversial health message. At that stage Germany had very little of the vast collection of Spirit of Prophecy books available, that had been translated into German. Much of what Walter was preaching they had never read or heard before and it elicited an aggressive reaction from some brothers in the medical field.

One doctor jumped up during Walter's lecture when he explained about prions and mad cow's disease, and started to shout into a microphone, which he had set up prior to the lecture. It was clear that he had come prepared for a war. There was silence in the hall and no-one dared to look at the man.

"You are a liar!" he shouted angrily, "There is no such thing as a prion! Whoever heard of prion disease?"

From the stage Walter calmly started to quote from the publications he had referred to. It was still fresh in his memory, since he had just recently finished writing his book '*Diet and Health, New Scientific Perspectives*'. Some of the others also started to join in the shouting match, but soon they had nothing to say against the evidence that Walter presented. The seed was planted, and some years later, when Walter was in Germany again, that very brother walked up to Walter, told him that what he

had preached was the truth, and asked for forgiveness. Walter was very happy to have another medical brother on board.

Though at the time it was traumatic for us to witness the resistance from our own people, we later understood that the Lord was teaching us to persist and not be afraid to speak the truth.

2Ch 15:7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

Our next appointment with the people of God was in the beautiful historical city, Prague, in the Czech Republic. A few days before we had to leave Germany, I got miserably sick with the flu and when we arrived at the border, I was so weak with fever, that I struggled to get out of the car. Coming from Africa we didn't have the right clothing or the knowledge to survive the European winters. Outside it was snowing and bitterly cold, and all around us were guards with their rifles pointed at us. They were barking some commands at us, but we understood nothing. I had heard many stories of innocent travellers who were detained in prisons of East Bloc countries for no valid reason and I started shaking even more. But fortunately Sven spoke Czech and eventually we got our papers and passports checked and we were free to go.

Arriving at the church, we met with another challenge. The pastor did not seem to want to be involved in the meetings and gave us the cold shoulder. Furthermore, the church had organized a translator, but half way into the lecture, the translator put down his microphone and walked off the stage. He was no longer willing to translate the messages that Walter was presenting. An uncomfortable silence fell over the audience, but then the Conference President bravely stood up and said he would continue to translate.

During the day we would explore the ancient city with its interesting architecture, its cobbled walkways and many cathedrals. Walter noticed a Jesuit Cathedral and wanted to go inside to take pictures, but when we entered, we were told that no



Martinicky Palace, Prague

photographs were allowed, and that we had to pay a fee to go beyond the foyer area. We decided that Walter would pay and I would wait in the foyer behind the chained barrier.

As I tried to take my camera from my neck to return it to the camera bag, I accidentally pushed the button and the flash went off. Immediately one of the Jesuit guards came storming towards me with angry gestures, shouting, "No photo, no photo!!"

I tried to explain that it was an accident, but he grabbed me by my arm and marched me out the door. The other guard joined him with a withering look and some incomprehensible, reprimanding words as I was pushed down the stairs into the street.

I felt humiliated and tried to make myself invisible to the hostile looks of the passers-by. It was cold outside and I wondered what kept Walter so long. My thoughts were drawn to our kind brothers and sisters in the faith back home and I shuddered to think what it must be like to have to live and survive in such an evil atmosphere. And to think that martyrs in the middle ages were locked up and tortured in the dungeons below these cathedrals for many years.

After a while Walter appeared in the door and came rushing down the stairs towards me. "I just got the most amazing pictures in there," he whispered as he took my arm and walked me quickly down the street.

"How did you do that? You're not allowed to take photos in there, they will lock you up!" I said anxiously.

"Well, when they threw you out, I quickly took a whole bunch of pictures." He was so thrilled with his achievement, that he didn't notice my indignant look.

"And it never crossed your mind to come to my rescue like any good husband would do?"

"No," he laughed, "I'm so glad I brought you along, I could not have done it without you," and with a teasing smile he turned into a narrow side street in search of more exciting findings.

"Oh well, it was worth being humiliated for the Lord's work," I thought, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."

One evening, after the last lecture, the sceptical pastor came to Walter, and to his surprise, he thanked him for his lectures.

"I now realize that these lectures are important and that this is the truth," he said.

"Oh, that's good to hear," Walter smiled, "What made you change your mind?"

“My grandmother who also attended the lectures said to me the other night, ‘Now I can die, because I know that the Advent truth is still alive.’”



Prague Adventist church

What a blessing to serve the Almighty God who cares for every soul and does everything possible to save us from our unbelief!

We were relieved to land in Valencia, Spain, where it was decidedly warmer than eastern Europe. Beautiful orange groves decorated the landscape and there was still some fruit hanging on the trees. As we were driving to a small town where we would be staying for the week, we noticed sad looking old people staring at us with empty eyes from the dark alleys, awkwardly bent over from years of hardships and labour. Some were kissing and bowing before statues of Mary and other Catholic saints on the streets, and unknowingly drawing the upside down cross on their head and chest. Our hearts went out to these souls in bondage, who believed that their salvation was through the church, the pope and the priests, and that they have to confess to a mere man and in fear of damnation do penance for their sins. They have been kept ignorant of their true Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the only way, the truth and the life.

Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

The home we were to stay in for the next few days, was a lovely rustic villa, some distance from a small town at the sea. It was still early in the morning, the owners were at work and we were alone. From our window we had the full view over the landscape and Walter, restless as always, wanted to explore the area.

“Let’s go for a walk,” he said and pulled me towards the door.

“I can’t go in these shoes,” I started to complain.

“You’ll be okay, it’s not that far.”

“What’s not that far?” I asked, suspecting he had something up his sleeve again.

Walter didn’t answer but merely redirected my thoughts to the lovely scenery around us. We walked and walked, but too late I realized that he wanted reach the small town at the ocean. Halfway there my sandals were chafing me already and by the time we reached the town I had blisters all over my feet. I wasn’t impressed, and the only solution was to buy me some socks and comfortable shoes, and lots of band aids.

But the torture wasn’t over. He dragged me up a hill that was protruding into the ocean from where one could have a panoramic 360 degree view of the whole region, and if that wasn’t enough, there was the painful walk back. We were told that the distance to the town was ten kilometres, which means I walked an agonizing twenty kilometres just to buy shoes and socks that I didn’t need, and to climb up a barren, dusty hill in the ocean! When I complained, he just said, “If you keep putting one foot in front of the other, eventually you will get there.” This became somewhat of a family motto when we encountered difficult situations in our lives.

The next day we were driven to the lecture hall where there was a small crowd of strange-looking people in strange outfits. As I hobbled towards the door, they greeted me in Spanish but all I could say was “No entiendo!” Fortunately there was a translator for the lectures.





After the lecture that Walter presented on the New Age Movement, about ten women came to the front and told him that they were practicing white witches. They said that they knew he was speaking the truth and were eager to learn more. We were overjoyed that the Holy Spirit had penetrated the darkness and enlightened their minds. The church members provided them with material and tapes and when we had to leave, they were hugging and kissing us and didn't want to let us go.

But we had to go. Our next appointment was Australia, but when we arrived at Valencia airport, another disaster was awaiting us. Evidently the devil was not happy with us meddling in his occult territory. Workers were striking and some flights were cancelled, which meant that waiting passengers were strewn all over on the floors of the airport. We were struggling to get our baggage through the mass of legs and sleeping bodies on the floor, and by the time we reached the check-in desk of our flight, it had already closed.

We were distraught because we had a connecting flight to Australia, which we couldn't miss. The young lady at the desk then said she would let us onto the plane, but she couldn't guarantee anything. We thanked her, and rushed down the boarding bridge and into the plane... only to see two people sitting on our seats!

By now I was so exhausted and anxious that I burst into tears in front of all the passengers. But the airhostess put a gentle arm around me and said she would try to find us a seat. By another miracle we got the last two seats on the plane, and even though we were separated by dozens of people, we were grateful that we were on our way. Once again our God had prepared the way for us amidst all the efforts of the enemy to stop Walter from reaching our destinations.

Australia was very much like the old South Africa we knew. Quaint British-looking houses reminded me of Durban where I grew up. Being an avid animal lover, I thoroughly enjoyed visiting the koala bears and the kangaroos, and feeding the beautiful wild parrots in the forests.



However, here we encountered once again more trouble from the conferences, who were not in favour of Walter speaking in their territory. Church members from different churches were told not to attend the meetings, and apparently even threatened with being disfellowshipped. Although we had by then learnt to accept whatever came our way, we are still human and we had some sleepless nights over how to handle the situation. And of course, jet lag didn't help much either.

What contributed to our restless nights even more, was the fact that the lady in whose home we stayed, was the only member of their family who had accepted the truth. Her husband and two children were not in the church and the first night we

arrived at their home, her husband was sitting in the lounge and refused to get up or even greet us.

“Don’t think you are going to convert me or my children to this sectarian religion,” he said. “And while you are in my house there will be no praying at the dinner table.”

We didn’t answer and our sister merely turned to show us to our room. On the way there her daughter came storming into the house and gave us a scowling look with eyes flashing that would melt steel in the middle of the North Pole. She disappeared into her room and closed the door.

“Oh dear,” the mother said, “I should have warned you, but I was hoping you could speak to my husband and children about the truth. I’m so sorry that they are being so rude.”

She then told us in a lowered voice that her daughter had been acting strangely some three days before we arrived and locked herself into her bedroom until the day before. When she had left, the mother ventured into her room and saw the taro cards lying spread out on the bed with the ominous ‘Death’ card in the middle.

“You see, my daughter calls herself a white witch,” she almost whispered.

I wanted to shout, “Greetings from Spain!” but fortunately I kept my mouth shut.

That night we had an eery feeling crawling up our spines and we prayed earnestly once more for the Lord’s protection over us and our children back home and abroad. We knew that when we were away for the Lord’s work, our children would often suffer under the attacks of evil forces. I longed to be with them, to try and save them from the onslaughts that their young minds often did not understand, but I could merely claim the promises that God would take care of them. We also prayed for the family and especially for the young lady, that God would show her the danger of dabbling with the devil and his agents.

Isa 49:25 But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

We remained calm and respectful towards the father and his children and by the end of the lecture series we were able to sneak in a hug or two with his daughter, which produced a shy smile from her pretty face. The spell was broken and once again our Lord, through the power of prayer, had dispelled the evil forces.

During the series Walter was invited to speak at the Adventist College in Australia, but first he was to meet with the scientists in their department, where he presented a summary of all his findings regarding the creation account. To his surprise, most of the lecturers did not agree with Walter on the literal Biblical view, and they were adamant not to let Walter speak to the students. His appointment to speak at the

opening ceremony of the College was duly cancelled, and after a short tour of the campus, we were taken back to our room, where we wondered what God's purpose was in our visit to the college.

In the afternoon we ventured to the historical home of Ellen White, which was situated a short distance from the campus. Here we met the curator of the museum, an old, kind gentleman, who showed us around. He let me sit at her desk and at the dining room table, which was set with the original crockery and cutlery used by God's messenger while she was living in Australia. Some of her clothing was hanging on the closet door in her bedroom and I was amazed to see some colourful dresses, and not the expected black and white sombre clothing portrayed in some of the pictures.



I mentioned to the curator that all her little personal items seemed to reflect the sunny atmosphere of the home, and the kind, thoughtful personality of the owner, and therefore it was appropriate that the home was called Sunnyside. Then, the next minute the old man burst into tears.

"I am so happy that you came to visit this home, all the way from Africa. You know, there is hardly anyone who visits here anymore; no-one is interested in the beautiful history of our church and the divine leading of God in those days. Nowadays they are embarrassed to speak about her; they removed the plaque with her name on the outside of one of the buildings on campus. They also planted some shrubs around her memorial stone so that no-one can see her name. It is so sad," the man said as he wiped his tears with a handkerchief.



Sitting at the desk where Mrs White wrote her letters

We spoke a few words to encourage the old man, then greeted him and walked back to our room.

That evening Walter received a phone call from the organizer who invited him to speak at the college, who told him that the rector, who was to do the opening speech the next morning, suddenly had a death in the family and would not be able to be at the event. When the man asked Walter if he would still be available to stand in for the rector, Walter answered that it would be a pleasure to speak to the students.

The next morning when Walter arrived at the hall, the scientists were notably shocked that he was to take the service. They stood huddled in a corner, and after a few minutes one of them approached Walter and told him that an important event was to take place, and that the forty minutes assigned to his sermon were now reduced to only ten minutes.

“Only ten minutes?” Walter thought, but he accepted the challenge and proceeded to rearrange his speech in his head.

It turned out that the important event that would take the place of the remaining thirty minutes of the sermon, was a rock concert with drums on the stage, while the audience was cheering loudly amidst the bedlam of noise! Coming from a conservative South Africa with its conservative churches, this was a shock to us. In the world we came from, we enjoyed that kind of music, but when we discovered the truth, we realized more and more that such sounds were not in harmony with the sweet, harmonious strains of the heavenly choirs.

Music forms a part of God's worship in the courts above, and we should endeavor in our songs of praise to approach as nearly as possible to the harmony of the heavenly choirs.... Singing, as a part of religious service, is as much an act of worship as is prayer.—Patriarchs and Prophets, 594 (1890). LDE 86.4

Then, as the commanding angels strike the note, every hand sweeps the harp strings with skillful touch, awaking sweet music in rich, melodious strains. Rapture unutterable thrills every heart, and each voice is raised in grateful praise... [Revelation 1:5, 6.] GC88 645.3

When his ten minutes arrived, Walter stood up and told them how he changed from evolutionist to creationist and that his conversion was based on facts. He continued to make a powerful appeal to the students to not let anyone confuse them with worldly theories contrary to the Bible, and that the Biblical creation account could be amply supported with the scientific data available. His appeal led to a standing ovation by the students, but probably created feelings of animosity with some of the others present.

After the meeting an old pastor came up to us, and hugged Walter with tears in his eyes, thanking him for preaching the old truth. He told us that he spent his retiring days to encourage the students not to be misled by liberal ideologies, and to stick to the ancient paths. We felt encouraged that God had a purpose after all with us visiting Australia.



Speaking at Avondale

A few days before the last lecture of the series, Walter received a phone call from someone in the General Conference. He was invited to attend the International Faith and Science meetings that were to be held in Ogden, Utah the following week. It was to be the first in a series, described as "...a dialogue on questions of science and theology that impact Adventist understanding of the biblical account of the origin of life."

We were excited to meet all the top scientists and leaders in the church and a few days later we arrived at Salt Lake City airport, and were taken by shuttle to the hotel in Ogden where the conference would take place. As we carted our baggage into the foyer, a man came storming towards us. Thinking that he came to greet us, we smiled and greeted him.

"Ich esse Fleisch!" he yelled angrily in German, which means, "I eat meat."

We looked at him in utter surprise. Without a word we checked in at the desk, but as we made our way to the elevator, the man followed us. The doors of the elevator started to close, when the insane man stuck his foot in the door so that it would not close, and again shouted at Walter in front of all the people in the elevator, most of them being tourists.

"Du und deine blöde Ellen White!"

You and your stupid Ellen White? And that in front of people not of our faith! We were shocked and embarrassed. It was evident that the man was an Adventist

representative from Germany and that he had a serious issue with the Spirit of Prophecy. And with Walter who defended it.

On Sabbath it was announced that we would visit “our brothers and sisters” at the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City. Walter and I looked at each other, and I smiled at the frown on his face that spelled out his indignation. But we said nothing.

When we arrived, we were not allowed into the temple, nor allowed to take pictures, but outside in the gardens the young lady who was our tour guide, started telling us about their choir, their outreach, family guidance, and their study programs.

When someone asked her what her favourite text in the Book of Mormon was, she said without hesitating, “Adam sinned so that man can have joy.”

“Adam sinned so that man can have joy? Did you hear that? This statement glorifies sin!” Walter said softly to the General Conference President who happened to be standing next to him.

The president glanced at him disgruntledly, and without a word he turned away and followed the crowd.

The next few days shocked us even more. There was a group of theologians and scientists, predominantly from the Euro-Africa (as it was known then) and South Pacific Divisions, who strived to make our fundamental belief on the creation account more in line with the theistic evolutionary model. Some of those were the very same scientists we met in Australia and who tried to prevent Walter from speaking to the students at the college. They were against a literal six day creation, and insisted that we accommodate longer ages. Surprisingly absent were the old stalwart defenders of our creation message, with whom Walter had spent many days in the field just a few years earlier.

When it seemed that the vote would be in favour of the liberals, my husband was asked to join a group who got together to pray earnestly that they would not succeed in their efforts, but that God’s solid Bible truth would have the victory.

The next day was the final vote. Delegates were chosen from each division to read to the whole delegation what their division’s vote was. Walter felt honoured when he was chosen to represent the Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division, and in a loud voice he announced that he was proud to present to the delegates that his division stood like a rock behind the interpretation that our world was created in six literal days. When all had presented their positions, voting commenced and to the glory of God, the vote was swung to the ‘six literal days’ side.

There was commotion on the one side of the conference hall. Suddenly the same man who confronted us in the foyer, jumped up and indignantly pronounced that he

did not agree with the vote and that he couldn't present this outcome to his leaders in Germany.

Unfortunately for him, he had no choice, God's faithful people had voted the final vote. Once again God protected His truth, just like He protected the Bible through all the ages.

The next day we greeted some of the people we got to know, and got into the shuttle which took us to the airport. Next to Walter sat the representative of *Adventist Today* magazine, who had given a presentation during the meetings in favour of evolution. He suddenly turned to Walter and asked him what made him, as a scientist, convert to Adventism.

"It was Daniel Chapter 7," he replied.

"Daniel Chapter 7? Why?" the man asked as if he had never heard of it before.

"Well, it convinced me that the Catholic church that I belonged to, is the little horn that arises out of the fourth beast, and it has all the attributes of the antichrist. When I realized that they changed the Sabbath to Sunday, I was convinced that this is the truth," Walter explained.

The man looked puzzled and was silent for a while.

"How did you become an Adventist?" Walter continued.

"I was born an Adventist, that's why I keep the Sabbath, but if I were born a Catholic, I would keep the Sunday, it's as simple as that," was the man's indifferent answer.

Now it was our turn to be puzzled and silent. Was this man serious? After a while I leaned forward and asked him what his view was on Ellen White's writings.

"Oh, she was a good old lady and she wrote some interesting things, but that's all."

I started to giggle, because at this point I thought he was pulling our leg, but the more we spoke, the more we realized that he was dead serious. To Walter's next question about his view on the state of the dead, he was very indecisive about where we go to when we die; whether we go straight to heaven, or sleep in the grave, seemed immaterial to him. Now we also understood why he was an advocate of the evolution theory; he didn't believe any Biblical truth! And he represented a theological Adventist magazine that was supposed to bring the truth to the world? We wondered what he believed about the Sanctuary doctrine, or the Three Angels' Messages, and the health message for our time, but we dared not ask. Our conversation ran dry and we sat in silence until we reached the airport.

From Salt Lake City we took a flight to Oslo, Norway, where Walter had been teaching Bible classes for a few consecutive years at the European Bible School. We

enjoyed the beautiful surroundings on the farm just outside a small town called Skotselv, and met the wonderful students from all over the world. Here I helped to prepare meals for more than fifty students and staff daily, and we learned how to grow vegetables without tilling the soil and without fertilizers. We visited museums where we could explore the Viking boats and their historical log cabins with whole gardens on the roof, and we walked for miles up the mountains from where we could see the impressive fjords, the multicoloured autumn forests and the vast open spaces with hardly anyone in sight.

The first snow started falling, and it was time for us to go home. We were tired but inspired by all the amazing experiences we had visiting the churches and institutions in the different countries. As I sank down into my seat on the plane, I sighed and said, "I'm glad to go home."

Walter opened one eye, and nodded. "But you know what I've been thinking?"

"What?"

"I think we should get out of the city," he said thoughtfully.

"That's weird, because I have been having the same idea that we should sell our house and move to the country! We should be growing our own food.."

"...And get good clean water, it will have to be somewhere in the mountains," Walter added.

He took my hand and with those thoughts we fell asleep with the plane droning monotonously across the vast ocean towards the southern tip of Africa.



The Desert Shall Rejoice

Chapter 14

Isa 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Back in South Africa we could feel the heightened pressure from all sides. At work Walter had to take the brunt of everything that went wrong during the time that he was away doing his work for God. Envious colleagues sabotaged his post-graduate students' work by switching off the refrigerators where they kept their samples for analysis, and a whole year's work was destroyed. University policies were changing and lecturers were now required to give supplementary tuition to students on Saturdays, and the highway to work had become increasingly dangerous with riots, stone throwing and rivalry shootings on the roads between bus companies and taxis. In addition to all those challenges, the ministry he had been working with in Canada and the US was demanding more and more of his time, since he had become the main speaker on their satellite channel.

The time had come for Walter to leave the world behind and work full-time in God's vineyard, doing that which he loved and was inspired to do. He was grateful that the university had provided the opportunities to do the scientific research which supported our health message, but it was time to move on. It was a big decision, but once again the Lord had provided, and the Cape Conference offered Walter permanent employment, despite the outcries from some quarters.



Our Conference president at that time supported the work that he did, and at the next Camp Meeting he initiated and performed the ordination of Walter as pastor in the Seventh Day Adventist church.



What an honour and blessing the Lord bestowed on him; he was now a recognized and ordained pastor and evangelist in this great end-time movement world-wide.

After the ceremony a German man approached us. He had flown all the way from Germany to speak to Walter and to take pictures of the

event. Henry Stober was a professional photographer and filmmaker and this divine appointment was the beginning of a number of recordings and series produced by him in Europe, Africa and Iceland together with Walter. Their teamwork in the creation outreach in Germany, which screened Henry's movie *"The Creation – The Earth is a Witness"*, drew thousands of enthusiastic viewers in a secular and often atheistic Germany, in spite of sometimes immense opposition. Not only did Henry present his beautiful and heart-warming work for God to the world, but this was also the beginning of a long friendship between the two Germans, even though they were oceans apart on two different continents.



Walter and Henry in Wittenberg

But we hadn't forgotten God's voice speaking to us and reminding us of our decision to move to the country. Soon we found a large farm in the Small Karoo with its characteristic thorn trees, rhinoceros bushes and tumbleweeds, some three hundred kilometres from Cape Town. For the second time since we became Adventists, we ventured into the unknown and we hoped that this time would be more blessed than the first. We immediately put our house on the market and to our surprise the market value of property hit a record high that season. Within a month we sold our

little house, previously valued at around six hundred thousand Rand, for more than double that amount! This was far beyond what we had expected or prayed for.

However, it was still not enough to buy the farm. The four thousand hectare farm was situated up against the mountains and had a beautiful waterfall and drinking water from a couple of springs, as well as semi-desert plains and valleys, where buck and many species of wild animals roamed, but the house was dilapidated and the arable land needed to be cultivated.

Then a friend introduced us to a young Adventist couple who were also looking for land in that area, and we decided to buy the farm together, with the understanding that when we were away on evangelistic trips, they would keep an eye on the farm. They built their house on a separate piece of land, and we renovated our old farm house.



Into the wilderness...

Our farm was situated more than fifty kilometres from the nearest town and more than half of the way was dirt road, which was often badly damaged by floods from the mountain. It was a challenge to drive that distance almost daily to buy supplies and building material in faithful Suzi, our old Isuzu pickup truck. For three months we lived in a tent while we were building, with no bathroom or cooking facilities! I learned quickly to dig pits and cook vegetarian food on the fire, and after months of exercising my survival skills, we eventually settled down and started growing and preserving our own food.





Soon the invitations to African as well as overseas countries started rolling in again. In Europe Walter met interesting people, whom the Lord had called into his fold, and at the same time he was disappointed at the direction our church was taking.

He was invited to speak in a small town on the former East German side of Germany. The man who fetched him at the airport, told him the story of how the little church was established, and why they invited Walter to speak to them. Before the Iron Curtain fell, Igor was an East German border officer who was trained to prevent people from escaping from East Germany across the border to West Germany. After

the cold war was over and the borders were opened again, West Germany's policies were introduced into the East side and life started changing for him in many ways.

One day he received his pay check, and on it he noticed that the government had subtracted a monthly amount for church tax, as it is the policy in West Germany. The unhappy Igor went to the clerk and told him that he was not religious, he didn't believe in God, and therefore they should stop subtracting money from him.

"The only way you can stop it is by resigning from your church," the clerk said.

"But I don't have a church, I told you. Ok then, I resign from the church," Igor said in desperation.

The clerk started filling out a form. "What church are you resigning from?" he asked.

"I don't know, what church is the main church around here?" Igor asked impatiently.

"The Lutheran church..."

"Okay, I resign from the Lutheran church." The clerk looked at him, shook his head and continued to fill out the form.

That weekend Igor visited his family and told his parents about the ridiculous policies of the West and that he had to resign from the Lutheran church.

“But Igor, we are not Lutheran, we are Catholic!” his mother said with fear in her voice. Having lived under communist rule for so long, religious people were still afraid to put a foot wrong.

“Oh,” Igor said, “I will have to fix that.”

The following day he went back to the office. “I have resigned from the wrong church, I have to resign from the Catholic church, not the Lutheran church.”

His colleagues looked at him as if he had lost his mind, but without a word the clerk tore up the previous document and started to fill out a new form.

During the next few months Igor met a man who seemed to know a lot about what goes on in the world, and he learnt that the man was a Seventh Day Adventist. But they lost contact, and since he had a lot more free time than when he was patrolling the border, he decided one day to find an Adventist Church. He phoned the number in the telephone directory and the pastor answered.

“Hello, hello? Is this the manager of the organisation? I would like to join your club,” he said.

The pastor then told him that he will have to go through some studies before he can join the ‘club’ and they agreed to study the Bible together. He started attending church services, but after a while he got bored and went to speak to the pastor.

“I’ve been coming to the meetings every Saturday, but there’s not much happening. What is it that you do in this club, don’t you do something other than meet once a week? At the book club you read books, at the card club you play cards, what is it that you do?” Igor asked with frustration in his voice.

The pastor wanted to explain to the man that this is how a church functions, but then he thought he could keep him busy as he remembered that after the cold war the government returned material that was confiscated from churches, and that there were loads of boxes in storage that needed to be sorted. Igor was excited to have something to do and faithfully proceeded to sort out what the church wanted to keep, and what needed to be destroyed.

One day he came across a box of old-looking books and when he asked the pastor what he should do with them, the pastor took one look and then said, “Burn them.”

“Burn them? Are these not Adventist books?” he asked.

“Yes, they are Adventist books, but they are not relevant any more, we can’t use them, just burn them,” the pastor replied.

Igor decided not to burn the books and took them home to see what was ‘not relevant’ about them, and for the first time after reading through some of the books,

he understood the gospel and he knew that this was the truth. Excitedly he continued to devour all the books written by Ellen G White, but he had a problem – he was now convinced that he was the only true Adventist left! Then he decided to set out on a mission to find others in the Adventist churches who believe that these books contain the eternal Bible truth.

“And that, Pastor Veith, is how I found a handful of true fellow believers who believe in the relevance of the Spirit of Prophecy for our time. They were spread all over East Germany and then we got together and started a church, and this is the church where you will be preaching,” Igor said with a smile as he turned into the church grounds.

At the opening night there was great excitement. The organizers had invited the mayor of the town, complete in his official regalia, as well as the oompah band to entertain the audience and attend the lectures. There was a low buzz of happy anticipation, but just before the first lecture was to start, a man walked up to Walter.

“Are you going to preach about the Three Angels’ Messages?” he asked.

Thinking that he was a church member, Walter answered, “Yes, I will be speaking about it later in the series.”

The next minute the man turned towards the audience and started yelling, “Get out, get out! This man is from the devil, he is going to preach the Three Angels’ Messages.”

There was a deathly silence in the hall. Walter prayed silently that God would remove the man and the next minute he started walking down the aisle towards the door, still screaming like a madman, until he was gone. But the devil was not done yet.

Walter had just started his lecture, when a woman in the audience screamed and fell off her chair, unconscious. Again consternation filled the hall as people were trying to find a doctor in the audience. Eventually the woman was taken to a back room and where she was stabilized and, although unnerved for a few minutes, Walter was able to continue with his lecture.

Two of his lectures were on the Bible Translations and the Received Text, the latter being the text that God saw fit to give to the Reformers to translate, since both Luther and Tyndale used the Received Text for the German and English translations. In the audience Walter noticed a large number of young people and after the lectures they approached him. What he discovered confirmed once again that God has a purpose and will do everything to give his people every chance possible to hear the truth.

The young people were students at Friedensau Adventist University, which to Walter’s amazement, was just a short distance from the little conservative church.

They told him that they were forbidden to attend the lectures and showed him a text book from the theology department where it stated that 'the Received Text was the very worst Greek Text'. They were also told by the rector of the university that "We cannot be dictated to by a woman with only three years of education," referring to Ellen White who was injured and was unable to attend public school as a young child.

Walter's answer to that statement was, "If God chose to speak to you through a donkey, and you refuse to listen, let alone a woman with three years of education, you better pay attention, or you could have a confrontation with the Angel of the Lord!"

The students were confused and the next day they confronted their lecturers at Friendensau. The result was catastrophic. News spread to the leaders in the Conferences and the Division and subsequently Walter was banned from speaking at any church meeting in future in Germany. The Division President at that time did everything in his power to malign Walter, and when he finally agreed to meet with Walter to discuss the situation, he never arrived at the agreed and confirmed place and time.

The students, however, paid little attention to the tirades of their lecturers. They hired a bus and followed Walter to all the subsequent venues where he was to speak in Germany. They had many fruitful discussions and when they returned to their university, they were hopefully fortified to fight the good fight to uphold the truth.

1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

Walter was relieved when he stepped onto the waiting aircraft at Frankfurt airport. He was exhausted and cherished the few hours of rest before he would arrive in Wales for the camp meeting where he was to be a speaker.

Arriving at the camp, he was shown to his room, and he had just settled down, when a bedlam of noise sounded from the hall close by. It sounded like a rock concert, and he decided to see what it was. The ear piercing sounds came from the youth meetings, with drums and electric guitars beating out a rhythm that would make the Rolling Stones proud. Young men and women were dancing on tables and clapping their hands to the beat of the songs.

Walter then noticed one young man standing just outside the door of the hall, while looking inside. He walked over to him and, raising his voice to compete with the noise, he asked him what he was doing there outside the hall.

"I am waiting for my friends," he answered.

"But why are you not in there with them?" Walter asked.

“I’m not in there because my Jesus is not in there,” he answered plainly.

Walter gave him a pat on the shoulder and started to walk away, when the young man asked if he could talk to Walter. They found a place where it was not so noisy and started discussing many aspects of our faith. When Walter had to leave, the man asked if he could bring a few friends the next day to continue the discussions during the youth meetings.

The next day there were about twenty young people waiting for him in the foyer. “My friends also don’t like to worship that way, we don’t think it is right,” the young man explained. The next hour Walter answered many questions, and as the news spread, interest grew in the discussions. Soon there were more than a hundred of the youth who preferred to discuss the Bible rather than to hop around and make a noise.

One afternoon Walter decided to explore the nearby town. He enjoyed listening to the strange Welsh language and was deep in thought, when he passed by a building site where a barrier had been erected to separate the site from the street and to protect the pedestrians. Too late he noticed that the crane that had lifted a large concrete bucket, suddenly got out of control and before he knew it, the heavy bucket came crashing through the barrier just as he was walking by. The bucket hit him on his hip and he went flying across the street, where he lay in a daze for a while, unable to move.

All around him people were passing him by, some even stepping over him, but not one person asked if they could help him. If he had been a drunk in tattered clothes, that would have been understandable, but he was well-dressed and had obviously been injured. It was very strange that no-one noticed or even heard the crash of the bucket breaking through the barrier, or Walter being hit by it. Not even the crane operator noticed that he injured a pedestrian. Or even more strange, no-one seemed to notice him lying on the ground. Was Satan able to blind a whole street full of people?

After a while he managed to get up from the road and limped back to the camp. His hip was aching, but fortunately nothing was broken. A few days later he arrived in South Africa tired, battered and blue, but he was satisfied with what he was able to achieve together with the Lord. He had again exposed the evil works of the prince of darkness, and even though he was banned by his own people and struck by a concrete demon, he was grateful that many people were enlightened by his preaching. And that was all worth it.

On the farm we worked hard amidst floods and drought, heatwave and bitter cold and managed to grow enough food for us and the poorer community in a little town some distance away. When the call came, we would travel to different churches in the country to preach, or give an outreach series for the public, and on one of these trips to Bloemfontein in the Free State, our partner on the farm phoned us and complained that he was no longer willing to take care of our side of the farm. This

made it more difficult for me to accompany Walter on longer trips, and I mostly stayed on the farm and took care of it all by myself.

One day we received an unexpected email message from our partners. It was a text from the Bible which said that the Israelites had to get rid of the Amalekites off their land. Saul had disobeyed God when He ordered him to completely destroy the Amalekites and their animals, but Saul chose to spare the life of the king and took some of the livestock back to Israel. This caused the Lord's blessing to be withdrawn from Saul forever.

We were still wondering what they were trying to say to us, when a little girl in the church in town also received a message from one of the daughters of our partners. The message said that the daughter was no longer able to come to church or play with the girls in the church, because "we no longer serve your pagan Jesus."

Shortly after that, we were asked to meet with our partners at their house and they informed us that they had become part of the Israelite movement that was growing rapidly in South Africa, and that their new friends in that faith wanted to buy us out and take over our part of the farm.

We were stunned. We suddenly realized what the email meant that they had sent us earlier. They saw us as Amalekites and we had to get off their land, or else there would be no blessing on them! Their land? When we reminded them that we owned and bought the land together, they said that the previous owner greeted them first on the day that the transaction was made, and therefore God wanted them to have the land. We were just the vehicle to help them acquire it at that stage.

We couldn't believe what was happening to us – for the second time. We had just finished our lovely country home with its lush garden in the shade of a large oak tree, we had planted fruit trees and vegetables and had fresh water, fresh air and lots of exercise, and now we had to leave it all behind?

That night we tossed and turned and had very little sleep.



“What are we going to do?” I asked, “where can we go?”

Walter thought for a while, and then he said decidedly, “We’re not leaving.”

“Not leaving? If we stay they will make our lives unbearable. Already they have been giving us the cold shoulder and...” I started complaining.

“We will sell them our house and the larger part of the farm, but we will take the land up in the mountain where no-one wants to be and we will start over again.”

“Start over again? On the rocky barren mountain?” I said in a whimpering voice.

“Yes, we can do it, we just put..”

“...one foot in front of the other,” I finished our motto sentence with a sigh.

The day came when we moved out of our beautiful rustic farm house with its thatch roof, and as we were leaving, the new owners came walking in and shouted, “Praise Yahweh, He has given us all of this, praise Yahweh!”

We got into our Suzi and drove up the mountain where a lonely old caravan was standing in a vast empty space scattered with grey rhinoceros bushes. This was to be our new home for the next three months. No house, no running water, no fruit trees, in fact, no trees! Just a small thorn tree to hide behind when we went to the bathroom. And a couple of puff adders and cobras lurking in the bushes.

But my industrious husband started building with a team of often inebriated men, and after a gruelling few months we were able to move into our new home. We planted trees and set up a netted green house for vegetables and soon we had a lovely home again with a stunning view over the valleys.

We knew that God sent us into the country not for ourselves only, but to make a way for our friends to move out too. There were smaller pieces of land that were part of our section of the farm and soon we had some of our Adventist friends moving onto the land. The small community of fellow believers was growing, but at the same time our ex-partners were experiencing the opposite. Their new friends who bought us out, got annoyed with them and left, and they had so much strife amongst themselves that the couple eventually got divorced and sold their farm. It seemed that getting rid of the Amalekites didn’t bring them the blessings they had hoped for.

One Friday our daughter Tanya arrived to visit us for the weekend. She had been going through a rough patch in her life and was doubting God’s goodness and his care for us. We were trying to explain to her that life as a Christian is not a bed of roses, and after we all watched the video Pilgrim’s Progress, based on John Bunyan’s classic story, she was comforted and for the first time she understood why God allows hardships in our lives. Clinging to Christ and walking in faith we should stay on the path and never give up until we reach the celestial city.

On the Monday morning Tanya was leaving early to get back to work. It was six o' clock when we greeted her and Walter left in a hurry to fix a burst water pipe on the farm. As she walked towards her car, I remembered that we hadn't prayed with her and I ran out to stop her before she left. As I came running at a speed around the corner, my foot caught a pile of poles that I had left on the paving the previous day and I went flying through the air. I didn't just topple over and fall; it felt like an unseen wind had lifted me high into the air and I came crashing down on my side with such force that I literally heard the flesh on my arm tear as I ploughed into the rough paving bricks.

I screamed like a piglet about to be slaughtered and Tanya came running to see what had happened. It was only when I tried to get up that I noticed that something was wrong with my leg. Blood was pouring from my elbow and the bones had protruded from the wound. When Walter arrived, he managed to get me up, bandaged the elbow as well as he could, and drove the bumpy dirt road with me lying on the back seat to the local hospital.

Arriving at the hospital, the doctor took X-rays and immediately called the orthopaedic surgeon at the hospital in Mossel Bay, which was about a hundred kilometres away. When he sent for the ambulance, they refused to take me because I was on medical aid, and was obliged to make use of non-government ambulances, which were not available in that town. This meant that I had to be crammed into the back of the car again and rushed at Walter's highest speed to the hospital.

I was under sedation for two days while they operated on both my hip and arm. The surgeon explained that he thought that only my femur was broken, but when he opened it up, he saw that the hip socket was shattered and the pelvis was cracked as well. He now had to build new bone for the new socket to be screwed onto, but thinking that I must have had osteoporosis, he had put the ball of the femur into formalin for later analysis! Now he couldn't use my own bone as an implant and needed artificial bone. But the orthopaedic section of the hospital had no bone, which was very unusual, and he had to phone the nearest hospital in Knysna, which again was more than a hundred kilometres away, to bring him the artificial bone.

But, the ordeal was not over yet. There was a road block on the highway between Mossel Bay and Knysna, and the courier with the bone was stuck there for hours. Eventually the surgeon got the police to find the courier, but he had been traveling in a civilian car and there was no way the police could recognise him! I had been on the operating table with an open wound for almost twelve hours, when the artificial bone eventually arrived.

When I woke up it was dark in the ICU section where I was lying. A nursing sister was removing an empty blood transfusion bag and replacing it with another. Just before she was done, a young nurse passed by the opening in the curtain and said to the sister, "Sister, that's the wrong blood!" and then she continued to walk to the door.

The nursing sister frowned and looked at the bag with the blood, then went to the cooler bag in which the third bag was kept on ice, and then back to the one she had just hooked on the stand. "Oh no, this IS the wrong blood," she said with panic in her voice, "how did this happen...?"

As I lay there, I was wondering how the nurse who just passed by and never saw what was written on the bags, could know that that one bag contained the wrong blood. Before I drifted to sleep again, I thanked God for what he had done to save me once again from sure disaster.

I later learned that the surgeon asked Walter where he had been when the accident occurred, because the injuries were so unusual and of such a nature that it seemed like I had been assaulted with a pole. Fortunately for Walter there had been enough witnesses to corroborate his story!

When the surgeon visited me the next morning, I was told that I may not place any weight on the leg for six months, because there was nothing to hold the implants and screws until my own bone had grown into the artificial bone. Also, he had received the results of the bone analyses and to his surprise there was no indication of osteoporosis.

Six months is a long, long time and it seemed that the bone just wasn't knitting. I was told that if the hip could not heal and be functional, I could even lose my leg. We then decided to take a break and drove up north to our old friend, Uncle Frenchie and his wife Auntie Emma. I was still on crutches and sitting on a pile of cushions in the car, but we enjoyed visiting with them and driving through the Kruger National Park with its 'Big Five' and other wild animals.

We were about to leave to drive back home, when Uncle Frenchie said, "Come with me to Botswana. I have to preach there and the people will appreciate it very much if you speak to them too."

"I can't, Frenchie, I have to get back to the farm..."

"But it's only for the weekend," Uncle Frenchie tried again.

"Nope, I am going home, we're leaving tomorrow morning," Walter said with finality.

The next morning we left with Uncle Frenchie and Auntie Emma following behind us to the place where our paths would separate and we would turn towards Cape Town, and they would continue to Botswana. A few kilometres before we reached Lydenburg, there was an old rickety pick-up truck in front of us, driving at a snail's pace. A huge truck was approaching from the front and as it passed the pick-up truck in front of us, a strong gust of wind shook the car. Parts of the body fell off into the road, its bonnet flew up, and not being able to see the road, the driver suddenly slammed on his brakes.

There was no way that we could avoid him and we smashed into the back of his truck with such a force that our car was a total right-off. The police arrived and our car was towed to the workshop, and there we were, out on the street without a car.

“Remember the story of Jonah?” Uncle Frenchie said with a broad smile, “He was told to go to Botswana, but he wouldn’t go. Then he had an collision with a fish. Bring your luggage, we’ll make space in our car.”

Walter sighed heavily as he said goodbye to his crumpled Toyota, silently grumbling to himself as Jonah did, and we left in Uncle Frenchie’s car for Botswana. But God once again had a purpose. As a result of the lectures they presented there, they were both invited to speak to a large church in Loma Linda, California, a few months later.

Once back home, I decided to go shopping for some clothes. I hated shopping for clothes, and especially now with my disability. The nagging thought that I might lose my leg and that I will be struggling along on crutches for the rest of my life, caused me to feel lonely and despondent. I limped from one shop to the next, standing at the door and glancing in to see if there were any ‘sale’ signs. As I stood at the entrance of one of the shops, I felt a strong impression to go inside. I resisted the feeling because I thought to myself that there was no sale at that shop, but then I obeyed the inaudible voice the second time and I stepped inside.

Seconds after I had taken a step forward, a huge notice board came crashing down behind me. The guard, who was standing inside the door was startled and said loudly, “Madam, you could have been killed!” People came rushing to the entrance, but I slipped away and for the first time I felt again that God was still with me, and that he would get me through the trial that I was going through.

Camp meeting was coming up, and Walter had been asked to speak there. We were concerned because I hadn’t healed sufficiently yet and straight after Camp meeting we were both scheduled to fly with Uncle Frenchie on a tour to the Middle East, and from there to Loma Linda in the USA. I was still on pain medication and struggled to sleep without sleeping tablets. My whole body had suffered, and I was at times depressed from the pain and uncertainty. I felt embarrassed about walking with a severe limp and on crutches and I cringed when I saw the farm children mock me and waddle like ducks behind my back.

Then one day I received a phone call from my friend Estie, who was a trained medical missionary worker and teacher. “I would like to tell you something,” she said seriously. “As I was praying this morning, I got the distinct impression that I should come to you and help you.”

That was strange. I hadn’t told anyone of my dilemma and my true state. I brushed the thought aside and said, “There’s no need, thank you, I am doing fine. And besides, we are preparing for camp meeting and the trip overseas next week.”

She hung up, but the next day she phoned again. "I prayed again today and I feel strongly that you need my help. I need to do some treatments on you."

"Thank you, my friend, but I am okay," I lied, "There won't be time for treatments."

The following day she phoned me again, and this time she sounded even more serious. "I really have the strong impression that you need me, so I am leaving this morning and will see you in a few hours," she said adamantly, and ended the conversation before I could protest.

During the next week before camp meeting my friend did intense hydrotherapy, massages and fomentations on me and also treated me with lots of herbal teas and supplements. Within three days I was no longer on pain or sleeping medications and the heaviness of mind and body had lifted. I was grateful that she had listened to the voice of the Holy Spirit and not to me, and that she wouldn't give up until she achieved what she set out to do.

Walter realized that we needed to ask for help from the church, according to the Biblical principal in the book of James, and he organized a few pastors and elders to anoint me at camp meeting.

Jas 5:14 Is any sick among you? 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:

At the camp meeting I was taken into the vestry and as I entered, one of the pastors made the remark that it was a such pity that this happened to me, because now I was "no longer a good example for the health message." It was just what I didn't need to hear! I was going to tell him that I didn't have osteoporosis, and that it was a satanic attack on us to try and stop Walter's work, but I knew he wouldn't believe me. I remembered the text in Proverbs: "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise." Therefore, not wanting to be a fool, I held my peace.

As they had finished praying for me and anointing me, I prayed, and poured out my heart in tears, "Dear Lord, if it is your will to heal me, please do it not for my sake, but for Your sake. All I want to do is help my husband in his ministry; I know it is hard for him to do Your work and take care of me..."

When camp meeting was over, we had a few days before we took the flight out to Egypt, and from there to all the other Biblical countries. The others on the tour said to themselves that this woman would never make it with all the walking we had to do, but I made it, by God's grace. On my crutch I walked up Tells and down into valleys, across desert plains and through cities, but at night my hip was throbbing, and I struggled to sleep.



Tel Gezer

When our trip to the Middle East was over, we flew for more than twenty-four hours to Loma Linda in California, where Pastor Frenchie and Walter were to speak to a crowd of hundreds of people. By now I was struggling to walk, and the pain was so bad that I was sweating profusely, but I refused to let anyone notice my dilemma and remained mostly in my seat.

On Sabbath a young lady approached me and said, “I saw you sitting here, and I just got the impression that I should come and talk to you. Are you okay?”

“Yes, I’m fine, thank you,” I said as I smiled my bravest smile.

“Are you sure? Is there anything we can do for you? I heard you had a nasty accident. My husband is an orthopedic surgeon and if you need anything, please let us know,” she said kindly, and was just about to walk away, when I realized that it was God who had sent her to help me. And how can I say no to God’s help?

“Well, thank you so much for offering, I would really be grateful if your husband can have a look at my hip,” I said, “I have a stabbing, burning pain where the socket is...”

That same evening she and her husband came to us armed with a small bag of medical supplies. It turned out that he was a specialist, who developed a new technique in injecting anti-inflammatory medication right into the bursa of the hip. After the treatment, they prayed with me and left, and I went to bed wondering if this was going to make any difference.

The next morning when I woke up, the pain was gone, and I was able to walk onto the stage without my crutch! From that moment on I was recovering rapidly and by the time we were back in South Africa I no longer needed the crutch. It suddenly dawned upon me that God used a whole sequence of events to answer our prayers.

First, my friend Estie gave me a detoxification treatment to clear my mind and get me off medications that could prevent God’s intervention. Next, God’s people anointed me, and I came to understand the significance and importance of praying to God for healing, asking for not my will but His will, not for my sake, but for the

sake of His ministry. And thirdly, He sent me to the only person who was able to give me the required treatment on the other side of the world. And then God Himself did His part in creating the miracle. When I went for a check-up, the doctor was amazed that the bone had grown together and that everything was soundly in place!

One day, while we were still in Loma Linda, Walter was summoned by a prominent Theology Professor, and with him was a representative of Interreligious Relations at the General Conference. Excitedly Uncle Frenchie accompanied Walter. He was going to meet the well-known theologian he looked up to and whose books he had studied.

When they arrived at his office, they noticed in the ice-cold countenances that this was not a meeting to thank Walter for bringing his messages to the people of Loma Linda.

“Dr Veith, we need to speak to you. Let me get straight to the point. You should stop saying the things you are saying, you are damaging the image of the church,” the professor said in a commanding tone of voice.

“What am I saying that is damaging the image of the church?” Walter asked.

“You are preaching that the followers of Islam do not worship the true God of the Bible. But you are wrong. Their God is the same God as ours, they have Abraham as their ancestor, they don’t eat pork, they believe in the Creation account. We simply differ on the Sabbath and a few other issues,” the man said. He also mentioned that Walter was not to preach that the Papacy was the antichrist, as this, according to him, was not part of our fundamental beliefs.

Uncle Frenchie looked like he had seen an apparition straight from the abyss. His face was pale with concern and disbelief for what was happening before his own eyes. “But my brother, Walter’s lectures have brought many people into the church and...”

He was unable to finish his sentence when both the opposing brethren sat up as if a swarm of hornets had just entered the room. “We don’t want that kind of people in the church, it just causes confusion and strife!” the professor said indignantly.

“Well,” Walter said after a short period of silence, “I am merely preaching what the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy say and it is abundantly clear that in the Islamic faith their god does not have a son, and the Bible says that no man comes to the Father except through the Son. There is no other name whereby all people from all nationalities are saved. We are urged by the Spirit of Prophecy to overthrow that error.”

Mohammedanism has its converts in many lands, and its advocates deny the divinity of Christ. Shall this faith be propagated, and the advocates of truth fail to manifest intense zeal to overthrow the error, and teach men of the pre-existence of the only

***Saviour of the world?** O how we need men who will search and believe the word of God, who will present Jesus to the world in his divine and human nature, declaring with power and in demonstration of the Spirit, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* {HM, September 1, 1892 par. 4 – emphasis added}

It was evident that the two men were involved in ecumenical relations with other faiths and there was no point in any further discussion. But as Walter and Uncle Frenchie left the building, they were greeted by a young man who came running towards them.

"Are you Dr Veith?" he asked excitedly.

When Walter said yes, the young man hugged him and said, "I was a New Ager, and now I am an Adventist because of your lectures. Thank you very much, I really appreciate what you have done for me!"

How thoughtful of God to encourage the two who were so unsettled after the attack at the professor's office. In fact, the event was so traumatic for the sensitive Pastor Frenchie, that he started getting sick later that day with a high fever, and Walter had to take his lectures for the next few evenings.

At the next venue where they were invited to a meeting, two more brethren came forward to thank him. The one was a geologist and the other a neurosurgeon, who both became convinced of the truth through Walter's videos. Are these leaders in our institutions really serious that they don't want these prominent people in our church? What excuse would they have if Jesus asked them that question, we wondered.

The meetings turned out to be a great encouragement to us, and after meeting so many interesting new friends, we were sad to go, but we greeted them and left for the airport. I was silently praising God for all the wonders he performed on that trip. We were armed with new energy and fervor with the knowledge that no matter how daunting a task seemed, our Lord always had us safely in His hand, teaching us to trust Him more and more.

"What do you say now, Jonah?" Uncle Frenchie asked jokingly as we finally settled down in our seats on the plane, "If you hadn't had the accident, you and I would not have been together in Botswana, and if we hadn't been there, we would not have been invited to Loma Linda. Just think of all the blessings we would have missed if the fish of providence hadn't spat you out on those shores."



The Home Stretch

Chapter 15

The night of trial is nearly spent. Satan is bringing in his masterly power because he knoweth that his time is short. The chastisement of God is upon the world, to call all who know the truth to hide in the cleft of the Rock, and view the glory of God. The truth must not be muffled now. Plain statements must be made. Unvarnished truth must be spoken, in leaflets and pamphlets, and these must be scattered like the leaves of autumn.--Testimonies, vol. 9, p. 231. {ChS 147.3}

Work on the farm had become too demanding for me to continue to travel with Walter. Surviving in a semi-desert meant you had to water every day in the scorching summer heat. We were inundated with requests for him to speak at different churches, and he was spreading himself very thin to try and accommodate everyone.

He had accepted an invitation to do an outreach series in the Johannesburg area and he was flown up to the church where the lectures would take place. Many interesting conversations took place during his visit, which confirmed to him that the messages had reached even the secret chambers of high officials, and he was humbled and grateful that God's protective hand was always over him along the treacherous paths he was walking.

After his first lecture, he noticed a man waiting patiently for the people to leave before he asked Walter if he could talk to him alone. They sat down in the church pews and the man started giving him startling information. He said he was in the secret service of South Africa and was on his way to meet with the state president at that time. He continued to warn Walter that the government was aware of him and were watching him, but encouraged Walter that he should continue with what he was doing because many in high places were listening and taking note of what he was preaching.

Later during that outreach series a lady approached him and told him that she was on a foreign ambassadorial staff. From time to time she was asked to accompany the ambassador, and in her studies and preparation for meetings, she came across a lengthy file on Walter. But she reassured him that he should not be discouraged and should continue preaching, because everything he says is the truth.

One hot highveld afternoon Walter received a phone call from an internist at one of the large hospitals. She had been watching some of Walter's DVD's and knew that he had knowledge of the workings and beliefs of Freemasonry, and because one of her patients, the Grand Master of the Masonic lodge, was in a serious condition in hospital, she was concerned for his soul and hoped that Walter could speak to him.

When he arrived at the private ward where the man was lying, he noticed a woman standing beside the man's bed, as well as the internist and a nursing sister. As he was entering the room, the woman became decidedly agitated.

"You will not come in here with that book! Get out!" she said angrily.

Walter realized that she was referring to the Bible he had in his hand. "Madam, I am here at the invitation of this gentleman, and I will not leave unless he tells me to."

The woman was beside herself with anger and asked the man, who turned out to be her husband, whether he really intended to talk to Walter. He confirmed that he wanted him to stay, and with that she stormed out of the room.

"I apologize for my wife," the man said with a weak voice. For the next hour Walter was able to show the Grand Master that he had inside information of the secrets of Freemasonry, which was entrusted only to those with the highest degrees in the organization. As Walter opened the Scriptures to him, the man acknowledged that they indeed worship Lucifer and not Christ, but when Walter explained the plan of salvation and that he needed to 'come out' and leave Freemasonry, the Grand Master became sad.

"I can't leave," he said softly, "I can't follow Christ, I can never be saved."

Walter noticed a small chink in his armour. "Why can't you? If you agree that what I told you is the truth, then what is holding you back?"

"It's too late, I have too much blood on my hands..."

"It's never too late, God will not turn you away, the grace of God is greater than your sin," Walter said reassuringly. The man was too tired to continue the conversation and, thanking Walter for coming, he asked him if he would be willing to speak at his lodge, should he recover from his illness. Walter said it would be a pleasure, then greeted him and the internist, and returned to the church where he had to get ready for the evening lecture.

He never heard from the Grand Master again, but a few months later the internist was baptised into the Seventh Day Adventist church! She had been taking everything in while Walter spoke to her patient and decided that what she heard was the truth. Perhaps the divine appointment she had made, was for herself!

That evening a young Adventist girl came to Walter after his lecture and asked him if he would speak to her friend. She was going to break off their relationship because he was involved in secret societies. Walter could see that the young man was in a serious predicament. He explained that he loved the girl because she was so different from all the girls he had known, but that he was an assassin trained by the military. He was desperate not to lose the girl, but he knew that it was almost impossible to break free from such organizations.

Walter prayed silently for God to help him with the right advice. He told the young man to repent before God and to break all ties with the organization. Then he should follow God in all His ways and leave the consequences to Him. Failing to do this, he would have to leave the girl and never see her again. As they left, Walter knew that the young man would be agonizing over what decision to make, and he never heard from the couple again. Like the story of the rich young ruler, who was not willing to sell all he had and follow Jesus, Walter feared that it was too hard for the young man to sever ties with that which bound him to this world.

Mat 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

I was grateful when Walter returned to the farm. It was hard to cope on my own with all the challenges, and working in the hot sun caused me to get feverish with chills in the evenings, which I realized later was probably sunstroke. I had also hurt my right shoulder and had to do everything with my left arm, which again put strain on my weak leg. But by God's grace, everything was still running smoothly when Walter returned.

He had hardly started to rest his tired mind from the constant mental stress, when, due to pressure on the German leadership from church members, Walter was again summoned to meet with one of the Division presidents in Europe. Now it was back to packing and preparing for the flight to Europe where he flew to Switzerland to meet with the European division leaders.

From the outset the president launched his verbal assault, accusing him, amongst other things, of being sensationalistic in his presentations.

"Why do you continue to give these lectures after we have told you to stop doing it? You must be doing it for the money," he said cynically.

To accuse Walter of doing God's work for money, was like waving a red flag in the face of an African buffalo. "Yes, I fly to the ends of the earth, for weeks and months away from my family, I sleep on the floor, or don't sleep at all, get eaten alive by mosquitos and fleas, get sick with food poisoning, thrombosis and pneumonia, get criticized and threatened by my own people...so yes, I do that all for the money," was Walter's sarcastic reply.

The president ignored Walter's indignant words and proceeded to tell him once again that he should refrain from speaking about all his 'conspiracy theories'. Again he tried to explain to the president that what he preaches is supported by the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, but it seemed that the president was not going to be convinced. As he left the president's office he was greeted by much friendlier brothers and sisters who lifted his downtrodden spirits and gave him hope again that the apple wasn't rotten to the core as he had thought.

After his banning, following his preaching on the Bible Translations in Germany some years earlier, the ban had been lifted and he was again invited to speak in Germany. Little did he know that this trip would lead to one of the most traumatic experiences of his life. In his lectures with regard to the end-time Israel of God, he mentioned that most of the Jews in Israel today were no longer the descendants of the Biblical Judeans, since they were exiled and scattered among the nations. He explained that most of the modern Jews were, according to recent research, the descendants of the Khazars, so that neither by lineage, nor by their religion, can they be the Israel of God, because the 'Israel of God' according to Paul were those that were in Christ. Thus only those, who are in Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are the heirs of salvation and the spiritual Israel of God.

Gal 3:29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Individuals among the Jews will be converted; but as a nation they are forever forsaken of God. 1SG 107.1

This was the opportunity his enemies had waited for. It wasn't long before a man from a liberal German Adventist magazine made a case against Walter for alleged 'anti-Semitism.' For Germans this was a serious hate crime and police were deployed to confiscate Walter's videos from the church, and an investigation was conducted, which lasted almost a year. Walter was told not to leave his home for long periods of time and to be ready to fly back to Germany, should he be summoned to appear in court. Our supportive Adventist brethren offered to appoint a lawyer to represent Walter in Germany, but he said he would wait and trust in God.

Shortly after the debacle, a prominent German magazine published an article which confirmed everything Walter had referred to regarding the heritage of the Jews, but still the accusers refused to withdraw the case. We were anxiously waiting for the outcome and were expecting the worst. But then the person in charge of the investigation sent the videos to a Jewish commission for evaluation, and the report indicated that, although they did not agree on everything Walter said, there were no anti-Semitic sentiments advocated in the lectures.

The case was then thrown out of court, but lo and behold, Walter was banned by the German church leaders for a second time from speaking in Germany! Liberal Adventist magazines climbed on the bandwagon and articles were sent into the world, spreading vindictive misinformation about Walter and his ministry. To one of these articles, I wrote a response, which was summarily removed from their webpage. His accuser was later appointed by the German Adventist leadership as a pastor and also became the vicechair of an European ecumenical council in Europe. He also acknowledged that he regularly attended Jesuit retreats and was seen bowing to the altar in an ecumenical gathering. We then understood why he tried to get rid of Walter.

Mark 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them...

Mark 13:13 And ye shall be hated of all [men] for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

We were relieved that he was vindicated, and that by the world! Even though he was banned by the church, the police, the investigative team, as well as the Jewish commission all had the opportunity to hear and watch the truth. God has mysterious but nerve-wracking ways to reach people!

However, the battle was not over yet. Appeals from leadership in Germany were sent to the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference and attempts were made to have Walter deposed of his pastoral credentials. The charges against him were handed down to our Division and he was summoned to speak with the president in his office. Every complaint against him was discussed, and each time Walter was able to defend his position from the Bible and the writings of Ellen White.

Eventually, the president had nothing more to say and he asked Walter to write a report as an answer to the allegations, explaining why he preaches what he does, which the president himself would forward to the General Conference. (See **Addendum for the letter**) With that, he washed his proverbial hands, and that was the last we heard of him.

Whether his letter ever reached the General Conference leadership, we don't know, but in his letter Walter appealed to his brethren of the church he loved and respected, not to give up the faith in the eternal truth and to heed the councils for our time from the pen of inspiration. He longed for his church to understand where he comes from and he wished that he could work in harmony together with his fellow believers all over the world as it was in the time of the early Christians.

But he received no response to his letter, not even an acknowledgment that anyone received it. As we reflected on our ministry, we saw a lonely road scattered with thorns, but fortunately also with precious flowers. I was again reminded of the words of the messenger of the Lord:

Do not listen to Satan's lies, but recount God's promises. Gather the roses and the lilies and the pinks. Talk of the promises of God. Talk faith. Trust in God, for He is your only hope. He is my only hope. I have tremendous battles with Satan's temptations to discouragements, but I will not yield an inch. I will not give Satan an advantage over my body or my mind. DG 146.2

We decided to gather the flowers in God's garden, not to 'yield and inch', and to continue with our mission.

Our ten years of living on the farm came to a sudden end. Walter was asked by the conference to evangelize the northern parts of South Africa, but in order to be able to do that, we would have to move there. On Sabbath at our local church Walter mentioned to a brother, who was also farming in that area, that he couldn't leave me running the farm on my own for a year or more, and if we both moved there, what was going to happen to the farm?

The brother said he had a plan, and that he would visit us the next day to discuss the matter. We were expecting him to say he would appoint someone to run the farm for us, but to our surprise he had a very different idea.

"I will buy your farm, what do you want for it?" He was not someone who beat around the bush.

Walter and I looked at each other. Give up our farm that was our safe haven, far away from the vindictive words and actions of our enemies, our farm that we had built up from nothing, with fruit trees bearing delicious fruit, wheat crops on the land, organic vegetables, and abundant sweet water that turned the desert into a lush oasis? We're not ready to leave all this behind!

But then, in the back of my mind I could hear God say, "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

"I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away," I could hear Walter thinking.

"Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him," the Lord answered.

God kept to His promise and our faith in spiritual Israel was restored as He opened the way for us to work with the churches in the northern parts of South Africa, where we discovered the seven thousand precious gems in the vineyard of the Lord.

We agreed to sell our brother the farm, and as he got into his pick-up truck, he said, "Oh, and by the way, you must leave everything. You may only take your personal belongings but leave every plate and cup, every piece of linen, every little picture on the walls, everything on the farm."

"Lord," I thought in dismay, "really everything? I may not even take the antique lamps we collected over the years from little country stores? Not even the authentic African paintings? All my linen and the forty-eight-piece pottery dinner set that I made myself years ago?"

As I turned to the Bible for answers, I understood what God's will was. "Yes, everything," was God's answer, "You can't go into battle if you're not focussed on

your task. Even Uriah wouldn't return to his wife when King David tried to coax him. He went straight back to join his fellow warriors in the battle, leaving everything behind. And remember what happened to Lot's wife when she looked back..."

I didn't want to turn into a pillar of salt. I closed the Bible; I had found the answer. We packed up our few belongings, greeted our friends on the neighbouring farms and left for the unknown, where God had something exceedingly more valuable in store for us.

After frantically searching for a suitable place to make our new home, we settled in a small town in the bushveld close to the Kruger National Park. We were intrigued by the many private game farms and thatched roof lodges, with wild animals roaming free on large portions of indigenous bushveld, and the hot summer rainfall climate with its characteristic thunderstorms. In January temperatures could rise to more than forty degrees Celsius, with hardly a winter to speak of, and thousands of hectares of land in the area covered with mango, banana, avocado, macadamia, and citrus trees.

The only problem was, we were about six hours' drive away from Johannesburg, or Pretoria, where most of our evangelistic work would take place, but at the time it seemed like a small price to pay to be able to live far away from the crime and the hustle and bustle of two of the largest cities in the country. For three years we virtually worked one week in the city, and the next week we went home just to do our laundry and pack our bags, and then back to the city again. The work was exhausting, but we were often reminded of the words of God's messenger:

The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, "Shall not the cities be warned? Yes, not by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth."—Letter 182, 1902. Ev 77.4

At the same time, we also accepted invitations to overseas campaigns as well as to other parts of the country. During one of our trips to Canada, we experienced the wrath of the devil himself. At the ministry we worked with we experienced many trials and conflicts, and it seemed to us that the problems were insurmountable. We were discouraged and felt it was almost impossible to continue with the work under those circumstances. One late afternoon as Walter was working on a lecture in a depressed state, something happened that would strengthen our faith and give us the courage to continue.

We were both sitting on the bed in the little house provided for the speakers of the ministry. I was reading and Walter was working on a his lecture called *Path of Obedience*, when suddenly he gasped loudly beside me and rolled off the bed, clutching his side in agony.

“What’s wrong?” I asked anxiously and rushed over to where he was lying on the floor. He was unable to answer me and just kept on groaning. Thinking that he was having a heart attack, I ran to the kitchen and fetched some cayenne pepper mixed with water and helped him to drink it.

But the pain would not subside and he was struggling to breathe. I knelt down beside him and started praying for him, and after a while he was able to catch his breath again. I helped him onto the bed, where he remained in a foetus position. I phoned some of the members of the ministry and told them what had happened, and within a few minutes they arrived. We all knelt around the bed and prayed, and then slowly the pain in his side started to ease. When he was able to speak again he explained to us that it wasn’t his heart, but that it felt like someone had plunged a dagger into him.

We knew immediately that the attack was not physiological, but spiritual. Satan tried to discourage us, hoping that we would cancel the meetings and return home. We prayed together again and then they left. But then, a couple of minutes later, we received a phone call from one of them which gave me goose bumps.

“You will never believe what happened,” the young lady said, “We had just turned into the main road, when suddenly a rock fell from the sky right in front of the car! We couldn’t stop in time and ran over the rock and when we got out of the car we couldn’t see a rock anywhere! It was gone! But the car is badly damaged, the whole chassis is bent...”

“The rock is gone?” Walter asked.

“Nowhere to be found, we searched everywhere. But that’s not all. A woman came running out of one of the houses and she asked us if we were okay. We said yes, but then she said, ‘We heard the rock fall, but come inside, we were just speaking to the spirits...”

Walter and I looked at each other and instantly knew that God had allowed the attack to remind us again that we are not fighting against flesh and blood, and that Satan is going about like a roaring lion to destroy the work and discourage God’s servants.

God requires his servants to walk in the light, and not cover their eyes that they may not discern the working of Satan. They should be prepared to warn and reprove those who are in danger through his subtlety. Satan is working to obtain vantage ground on the right hand and on the left. He rests not. He is persevering. He is vigilant and crafty to take advantage of every circumstance and turn it to his account in his warfare against the truth and the interests of the kingdom of God. It is, I saw, a lamentable fact, that God's servants are not half awake, as they should be, to the wiles of Satan. And in the place of resisting the devil that he may flee from them, many are inclined to make a compromise with the powers of darkness. PH123 48.2

The demanding schedule started to take its toll on us and we often got sick while traveling. Walter, who had weak lungs from contracting tuberculosis as a child, battled with bronchitis and pneumonia on almost every trip. Besides that handicap, he also developed flight thrombosis on one long flight. A huge man on his flight was sitting next to him in the aisle seat, downing one vodka after the other until he fell asleep, snoring loud enough to scare a lion. Walter was stuck in the window seat for hours, unable to wake the man or climb over the colossal wale-like figure, and consequently he had to suffer in silence with the throbbing pain in his leg through all his lectures until he got home.

One day, as we were resting for a few days in our bush home, our thoughts went back to the man who, on request of the conference, followed Walter wherever he presented his lectures, and recorded and edited the videos for distribution.

“Why don’t we ask Fanie to start a video ministry here in our town? Then we can distribute to the African people at affordable prices. It’s too expensive for us to buy from the ministry in Canada,” I asked as I was packing our belongings for our next trip.

“That could work, but I don’t know if he will move here, it’s so far away from everything. And besides, we don’t have any money to fund such a project. But let’s phone him and hear what he has to say,” Walter answered, and with that he picked up his phone and phoned Fanie, who immediately said, if that is God’s will, then he will come, even though we had only five hundred Rand in the bank account created for the project! In a short while His wife quit her job and they moved to our town.

I mostly handled Walter’s correspondence with churches and individuals, who requested him to speak in their countries, and in one email to a brother in the USA I mentioned that we were starting a DVD ministry in South Africa. Within a few months the kind brother had collected funds from friends and they blessed us with a donation that enabled us to start the ministry.

In 2015 we were able to attend the sixtieth General Conference session in San Antonio. There was a buzz of anxious anticipation in the air in view of the issues to be discussed and voted on by the delegates from all Divisions of the church. Many opposing views were presented on the proposed updating of the Fundamental Beliefs of the church, and it was clear that delegates from the liberal Divisions and institutions were dissatisfied with the suggested addition of the words ‘literal’ and ‘recent’ to explain the church’s position on the six day creation more clearly. The apparent reason for their liberal arguments was to incorporate the evolutionary beliefs of not only the scientific world, but also to come more in line with the beliefs of the other protestant churches, as well as that of Pope Francis, who according to NBC News, said that the Big Bang theory and evolution in nature "do not contradict" the idea of creation, because God was not “a magician with a magic wand.”

The General Conference president supported the addition of the word “recent” as he said, *“Essentially this version of the Belief was brought to the floor at the 2005 GC*

Session. I personally endorse it. This wording will help us in our work. You can put a spin on any word, such as 'recent,' but it means 'not old.' There is no room for theistic evolution. I will tell you I personally believe, based on the Spirit of Prophecy, that the earth is approximately 6,000 years old."

If our brethren would have studied the words from the pen of Inspiration, which foretold that this shift away from the Bible towards 'science falsely so called' would take place, there would be no confusion and doubt in the Biblical record among God's people.

Infidel geologists claim that the world is very much older than the Bible record makes it. They reject the Bible record, because of those things which are to them evidences from the earth itself, that the world has existed tens of thousands of years. And many who profess to believe the Bible record are at a loss to account for wonderful things which are found in the earth, with the view that creation week was only seven literal days, and that the world is now only about six thousand years old. These, to free themselves of difficulties thrown in their way by infidel geologists, adopt the view that the six days of creation were six vast, indefinite periods, and the day of God's rest was another indefinite period; making senseless the fourth commandment of God's holy law. 3SG 91.2

The debate on women's ordination was equally heated, as was the change in the wording in the Fundamental Belief regarding the Spirit of Prophecy, from 'her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth' to 'her writings speak with prophetic authority', but, although here was a definite change in nuance, God still had the last word. Despite all the efforts to change our position as was also the case at the Faith and Science sessions, none of our longstanding biblical positions were compromised.

In July 2017 we once again flew to Canada for the annual recordings for the Canadian ministry. One of the events that was planned, was to travel to Europe to tour the Reformation countries. The upcoming event of celebrating the 'reconciliation' between Protestants and the Catholic church was scheduled to take place on the 31st of October, 2017, which was to indicate to the world that the five hundred yearlong separation was over, and Walter was eager to have the information available to the public before that time.

At all the important sites recordings were made of Walter recalling the historic events of the persecution of Bible-believing Christians during the Dark Ages, and amazing footage was filmed in the Vatican, the city of Trent, Worms, Wittenberg, Augsburg, the Wartburg, the Gutenberg Museum, Torre Pellice and the Piedmont Valley, Prague, and many more interesting historical sites.



Council of Trent



Trent Cathedral



Rome



The Vatican



Waldensian school



Waldensian church, Piedmont valley



Wartburg



Gutenberg press, 1436



Wittenberg church



Filming at Worms

However, towards the end of a stressful and increasingly demanding tour, I ended up in hospital when we arrived home. My heart started beating in absurd rhythms, and the electrocardiologist discovered that one of the main nerves in the heart was missing and that three other smaller ones had taken over the work, but now they

were competing with each other and causing havoc under stress. I wasn't able to sleep much for the following few months, and had to cope with recurring arrhythmic occurrences for the next few years, but I was only thankful that it hadn't happened while we were traveling.

The year 2019 was the beginning of an amazing new adventure. God had opened a way for us to secure land up against a mountain range where we could grow our own vegetables again, some thirty kilometres from the only small bushveld town. It was only about two acres, but big enough for us. Soon smaller pieces of land adjacent to ours became available and God impressed upon our minds to build a facility for our ministry, with a small studio in an old workers' cottage and some housing for the ministry workers. We felt an urgency to make accommodation available, as well as to plant vegetables and fruit trees, and to get it done as speedily as possible.



The ministry grew and soon there was a demand for more workers to help with the editing. Trusting in God to supply all our needs, we did not advertise any positions in the ministry, and faithful to His promises, the Lord Himself organized an unplanned meeting between Fanie and Martin Smith and his wife at a camp meeting. They were on their way to do mission work in Georgia, but felt impressed that God was changing their

direction and soon the couple joined us in the African vineyard of the Lord.

At that stage we were still visiting places where Walter was invited to give his evangelistic series. Amidst all the challenges, God lifted our spirits and showed us that He was still at the helm of our little ship. Our visits over the years to the different countries and the many churches, were witness to the loving care and miracles of God.

Through His divine guidance it was possible for Walter to speak at Walla Walla, where the Spiritual Formation theology had infiltrated our Adventist university, and

equally remarkable was his invitation to speak at our most liberal institute, La Sierra University, on Creation versus Evolution, despite the strongest efforts to prevent the meetings from taking place.

In Maine the conference president refused to let Walter speak at the church camp meeting, even though he was formally invited to be a speaker, but this did not deter the church members. A group of people then decided that they would have their own camp meeting, even though they had no venue, no tent, no chairs and little money to pay for everything, and to fly Walter to Maine. In a short while all these were provided through unbelievable miracles, and the camp meeting was a blessing to many people, including Walter.

Toronto was another divine appointment. We were at the airport after having attended the ASI meetings, when we heard that the event in Toronto, where Walter was to be the speaker, was cancelled. The group of pastors, who had invited him, were suddenly threatened with disciplinary action by the union president if they continued with the meetings. Once again the church members refused to cancel the event and proceeded to rent a large Moslem hall, five times the size of the hall that was previously available for the event. Two ladies sent out messages and soon the hall was filled to the brim. People were queuing to ask Walter questions and many non-Adventists attended. A hardened atheist and evolutionist even asked Walter to pray for him right there in the hall. The curse turned into a blessing, and many more people were reached than was possible under the initial arrangements.

Wherever we encountered opposition, the battle issues were the same. Those who had opposed Walter's messages over the years, were in one way or another simply opposed to the messages sent by God through the Spirit of Prophecy. They continue to disregard, in spite of more than ample evidence, her warnings and revelations pertaining to the health message, the creation account and the cosmic week, the antichrist as manifested in the Papacy, the Jesuit and secret society connections in the realm of ecumenism, entertainment and spirituality, and that these principles are all firmly rooted in the Bible, and not just the "ramblings of an uneducated, demented, epileptic woman" as some have suggested.

This unbelief is steadily growing like a cancer, and satanic tares of doubt regarding the character of the Son of God and God's prophetic gift for His church, have been sown among the wheat. The great controversy is real and will continue raging until the closing time on this earth, when Christ will bring an abrupt end to it all.

Our little mustard seed ministry began to grow rapidly. Walter and Martin started working together on presentations and early in 2020 the *What's Up Prof* series was born. It wasn't long thereafter that the greatest game-changer of modern times was launched into the world, and we suddenly realized why God had urged upon us to get the infrastructure for the ministry in place in a very short time. More than two years of Covid madness and confusion led to immeasurable mental and physical suffering, and death. Governments all over the world introduced lockdowns and

mandates and all organizations, including the religious bodies, were brought in harmony with this trend.

This led to untold hardships, loss of jobs, coercions, isolations and separation between people and groups, and bringing division in the church and families. It was claimed that the 'science was settled' and that any deviation from the prescribed course was contrary to the 'love your neighbour' principle. Such tactics had been used before and for thousands of years had caused division and pain, in fact, this principle was first employed in the courts of heaven when Lucifer introduced his 'divide and conquer' strategy. When he was eventually thrown out of heaven, having caused the ruin of billions of angels, he very successfully implemented the same modus operandi here on earth. Many winds of doctrine also entered the church during this time but we persevered in the ancient paths and would not let these distractions blow us off course.

Rom 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Due to travel restrictions we were no longer able to fly to Canada for recordings and meetings, and it was decided to start a separate ministry in South Africa. Our God of wisdom had planned everything ahead of time; our team had just settled into their homes and the first set was ready in the studio, when the lockdowns were implemented. Through God's providence we were able to continue with productions, when everything else had come to a halt, and our messages went out weekly on the media networks into homes, like the 'leaves of autumn', all around the world where people were confined for weeks and even months. Thousands of people, even hundreds of thousands, were reached through the internet whereas before we had to travel great distances to reach a few hundred.

However, as was to be expected, again some of the leadership in the worldwide church were unhappy with the programs and Walter was once again summoned to discuss some of the issues with a conference committee on zoom. Again liberal Adventist magazines and professors at our colleges climbed on the bandwagon and denounced Walter as a 'time-setter' for quoting the Spirit of Prophecy regarding the age of the earth, and that the determined six thousand years were "soon to close". Since the evolutionary thinking of the world had taken hold of their minds, they ignored the fact that the church and the pioneers had from the beginning believed the cosmic week principle and in a six thousand year period for life on the earth, followed by a thousand years of rest in heaven.

Christ, in the wilderness of temptation, stood in Adam's place to bear the test he failed to endure. Here Christ overcame in the sinner's behalf, four thousand years after Adam turned his back upon the light of his home. Con 32.1

On Jordan's banks the voice from heaven, attended by the manifestation from the excellent glory, proclaimed Christ to be the Son of the Eternal. Satan was to personally encounter the Head of the kingdom which he came to overthrow...For four

thousand years, ever since the declaration was made to Adam that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, he had been planning his manner of attack.
Con 78.2

In Walter's presentations it was made abundantly clear that God had not revealed to us exactly when the six thousand year period would end, or when Jesus would return, for no one knows "the day nor the hour", but the approximate time was to give God's church the incentive to get ready and to warn of His soon coming by sending the Three Angels' Messages to all the world, to "prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

Amidst trying to survive the spiritual onslaughts, we were also trying to survive the physical challenges. Living in a subtropical area, we have a constant battle with monkeys, and to a lesser degree, baboons, who feel it is their perfect right to break into our greenhouses and help themselves to our fresh vegetables and fruit, which we painstakingly cultivated amidst thunderstorms, fierce winds and heat waves. These reckless primates have no remorse when they manage to destroy your crops and then jump onto a branch high up in a tree where they mock you, knowing full well you can do nothing about it. And after having experienced the destructive force of a troop of baboons passing through my house, clearing out everything from my refrigerators and cupboards, smearing the tasty morsels all over the house and defecating on our beds, and as a bonus, leaving taps open in the kitchen to flood the house, I was paranoid about keeping them away from my house.

One afternoon I noticed a troop of Samango monkeys in our trees and as I ran outside to scare them away, we heard a loud thumping noise and assumed a monkey had jumped from a high branch onto the roof of our outbuilding. We grumbled about how to deal with the monkey issue and then forgot about it.

About a week later Walter started complaining about a strange odour in the water, but because my sense of smell has never been any good, I said I couldn't smell anything. Then our daughter started complaining, but we thought that, since the water level in the bore hole dropped in winter, it could be sulphurous algae emissions and planned to have the bore hole specialist look into it.

But when our gardener complained, I said to Walter, "You should go and look if there is anything in our water tanks; perhaps a lizard or a mouse got into the tank."

"There is no way that a mouse can get into the water tank, it can't be that," Walter said pensively as he walked up to the tanks beside the outbuilding. Within a few minutes he came rushing back to the kitchen.

"You will not believe what had happened!" he almost shouted, "there is a decomposed monkey in the water tank!"

"A what...?" I looked at the large batch of food I had just cooked for us for Sabbath, using the water straight from the tanks. I started feeling sick in my stomach as I

realized that I had been faithfully drinking my two litres of putrefied monkey water every day for more than a week! If only I had reacted on my instincts when I heard the strange thumping noise. The large Samango monkey evidently landed on the lid of the tank, his weight shattering the brittle plastic, and he fell through the opening into the water, where he drowned. A lizard or a mouse, indeed!

Our Sabbath lunch was dumped unceremoniously, and we were back to bread and avocado. After a heavy dose of charcoal, we showered under the hosepipe in the garden, which contained municipal water, and left the dilemma of how to clean out the water tanks for Sunday. It was clear that Satan had tried his very best to thwart every effort we made to live a healthy physical and spiritual life.

After the lifting of the covid mandates in South Africa, we were strongly impressed to expand our ministry to reach the many people who suffer from lifestyle diseases, as well as those who have been affected by covid, whether physically or mentally. We are advised by God to combine the health ministry with the Word of God in order to reach the people with the gospel, and as we as a team prayed and put our foot in the Jordan, not knowing how our mission was to be realized, God parted the sea of doubt and we embarked on an exciting new journey. He opened the way for us to start a health centre, as well as a training centre for evangelism, and great was our joy when people from our church started to come forward to help with the development of this important mission.

The minister and missionary worker are to minister alike to soul and body in their need, and thus the entire work is to become one united medical missionary evangelistic work. LLM 37.3

The principles of health reform are found in the Word of God. The gospel of health is to be firmly linked with the ministry of the Word. It is the Lord's design that the restoring influence of health reform shall be a part of the last great efforts to proclaim the gospel message.—Medical Ministry, 259. CME 8.2

However, almost three years of constant pressure, lack of rest and onslaughts from all sides, caused Walter to succumb to severe gastritis numerous times, and since there was no time to recuperate, we found ourselves in a whirlpool that was sucking us deeper into a vicious cycle. We were living according to the health principles as far as possible, and yet with all the stress, our bodies were struggling to cope. And unfortunately we were not getting younger either!

After giving the work our all, I also started feeling weak, with a nagging pain in my abdomen, but scans revealed nothing, except for a couple of blood tests that showed low iron levels. I tried to be brave and continued my work, but found that I wasn't able to get through even half of the day without feeling exhausted.

My health deteriorated by the day and I was losing weight fast. My doctor sent me for extensive tests and eventually it was found that I had a bleeding growth in my abdomen, which had to be removed surgically. From the many surgeries I had

before, it was no surprise that something like that had developed. It was a major operation and because I had become so weak from the apparent years of constant blood and iron loss, the surgeon wasn't sure if I would make it through the surgery. He gave me intravenous iron and blood transfusions in the hospital before he proceeded with the operation.

When I woke up I felt like I was dying. I was throwing up for days and nights from the anaesthetic and intravenous medication, which my body was not used to. For years since my hip fracture, I had never taken any medication and my liver reacted violently against it.

The second day in ICU I was wondering if these were my last moments on earth and I mentally prepared myself for the worst. But then I heard someone entering my room. I opened my eyes and saw a small frail-looking nursing sister move softly towards me. This was very unusual, since the nurses in that hospital were often rude and loud, and insensitive to the needs of the patients. Without saying a word, she moved silently to where my handbag and container with my toiletries were. I watched as her hand went straight to the pockets where I kept everything, as if she knew exactly where they were. She washed my face and gently brushed my hair without saying a word, carefully avoiding the tubes attached to my face, and then carefully turned me on my side, washed me and proceeded to apply body lotion to my back and arms, and rearranged my pillows. I closed my eyes in gratitude for this sweet spirit and unknown kindness, but as I opened my eyes again to thank her, she had already left as silently as she came...

The weight of responsibility and care upon Walter was heavy, and he struggled to continue to work out programs and record them for the ministry, and at the same time traveling a hundred and twenty five kilometres almost daily to the hospital where I was admitted.

During the nights while I was unable to sleep from pain and weakness, I would read from the little Spirit of Prophecy book I had taken with me. Many times I wondered if I was ready to die, if I had lived my life according to God's will, and I agonized over many failed opportunities and mistakes I had made, but the words of King David to his son comforted me and gave me a reason to continue fighting.

1Ch 28:20 ...for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD.

The surgeon was amazed at my speedy recovery and after ten days in hospital I was discharged. After a tiresome, painful journey, we arrived home, where Walter, with concern written all over his face, tucked my emaciated, fragile figure into bed. That night we prayed, thanking God that I was still alive.

"Did you know that I am like a cat?" I asked.

“A cat?”

“Yes, I had nine lives. Nine times I could have died, but each time God turned the near-disaster into a victory,” I said.

“I am grateful that you’re back again, it’s lonely when you’re not here,” he said as he squeezed my hand.

“I’m grateful too, I didn’t think I would make it this time.” I said.

“If you knew thirty-seven years ago that all these things would happen to you, would you still have said yes to God?” Walter asked as we lay on our backs in the dark.

“I probably wouldn’t have...because I didn’t know God then. Jesus tried to tell His disciples what would happen to them, that most of them would be killed, some beheaded, some stoned, and even crucified upside down, like Peter, but fortunately they didn’t understand.”

“And if you could go back in time, what would you change in your life?” he asked again.

“I would change nothing, except where I saw my children suffer needlessly in this cruel world. But for myself, I know now that God allowed me to suffer when I made mistakes, and He allowed me to suffer even when I didn’t make mistakes. It is all part of His plan to teach me to trust Him and to fit me for His kingdom. Without the trials I would not have seen myself as God sees me and I would have worn my own garment to the wedding. And if I should die before the Lord comes, I believe that I have run the race, I have fought the good fight, and His grace will be sufficient for me, as long as I continue to dwell in the secret place of God.”

2Co 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory...

As the little boat bumps against the jetty, I am jolted back to reality. The jumping fish returned to their murky homes in the lagoon after we had so rudely disturbed them with our piercing bright light. I cannot help but think of the millions of people who are hiding in their own dark waters, shut away from life above the surface, just wishing for an opportunity to lunge upwards towards the light and into the boat. And all we have to do is shine that Light.

I smile at Walter as he helps me out of the boat.

“That was a wonderful experience,” I say as I breathe a sigh of contentment. Having reflected on the last thirty-seven years of our life, I saw that it was good, very good.

“Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find,” says our Guide. “They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.....”
John 21:6

The End



Abbreviations

From the writings of Ellen G White

- CET – Christian Experience and Teaching
- CH – Councils on Health
- ChS – Christian Service
- Con – Confrontation
- DA – Desire of Ages
- DG – Daughters of God
- Ev – Evangelism
- GC – Great Controversy
- HF – From Here to Forever
- HM – The Home Ministry
- LDE – Last Day Events
- LLM – Loma Linda Messages
- MR – Manuscript Releases
- PH – Ellen G White Pamphlet
- PP – Patriarchs and Prophets
- SG – Spiritual Gifts
- SM – Selected Messages
- TM – Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers

Addendum

Appeal to the Brethren

This appeal is addressed to the leading brethren of the Seventh Day Adventist Church, in particular to our president Elder Ted Wilson, the leaders that constitute the GC, the BRI and leaders of the various Unions and Conferences.

I am well aware of the fact that my public ministry is the source of much controversy and even irritation in many sectors of my church and as a consequence I have been asked by leadership to write a document explaining my particular style of evangelism. This is not an easy task since it has a complicated history but it is my prayer that the brethren will bear with me and hear me out. I would also like to point out from the outset that my motive is not combative but stems from a deep concern for my church and I pray that it will be seen in this light.

I became a Seventh Day Adventist 27 years ago and those who know my conversion story will agree that it was an amazing turnaround from atheism, occultism and Catholicism. As scientist and professor of Zoology and Physiology I was a committed evolutionist and a despiser of all things religious. My hatred and contempt for biblical views and Christianity in particular stemmed from my childhood upbringing and the religious instruction I received as a child. Being brought up Catholic I was taught that my mother, who was Lutheran and dying of cancer, was to be consigned to hell for all eternity because of her faith and this turned me into the hardened atheist that I was. For those having been brought up in the Adventist faith it is hard to conceive that someone can hate God or even more horrendous, hate Jesus but this was the reality for me and for thousands like me.

How often I have been confronted by Adventists and criticized for my evangelistic style because they just cannot understand where I come from. They will say: “Why do you preach these things, why not preach the love of Jesus? All these occult connections and intrigues you preach only distract from the beauty of the gospel and emphasize evil; in Heaven’s name stop.” They will argue that we must be winsome by acts of kindness and show the people that God is love and then they will happily follow Jesus. This certainly works for some and I thank God that we have ministries and television stations that do just that, but as for persons such as I was it would breed nothing but contempt. At the risk of shocking some of my brethren let me quote from the greatest evolutionary scientist and acclaimed author of our time – Richard Dawkins – who received many accolades from the world press for his efforts. He writes in his book “The God Delusion”:

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in the whole of fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully. It is unfair to attack such an easy target. The God

Hypothesis should not stand or fall with its most unlovely instantiation, Yahweh, nor his insidiously opposite Christian face,' Gentle Jesus meek and mild" (The God Delusion, p51-52.)

Try the "Jesus loves you" approach with someone like this and see where it gets you. You get the same abuse my students suffered when they tried it with me. My colleagues and I used to welcome the creation scientists and 'religious freaks' that came to our campus from time to time to try and indoctrinate our students because it gave us an opportunity to expose their ludicrous views and make sport of their faith. If you read Dawkins' book, you realize where he comes from; his hatred for God does not stem from the Bible, but from its misrepresentation by the Christian world, from the Babylonian wine with which mankind has been infused. When he quotes his Biblical views he quotes Catholic doctrine in particular and its distortions by Protestants. He has nothing but the harshest views of these religious bodies heaping contempt upon them with a very vindictive pen. After quoting a Catholic lady who had been traumatized by the catholic teaching on hell he writes: "I was moved by her letter, and (suppressing a momentary and ignoble regret that there is no hell for those nuns to go to) replied that she should trust in her reason as a great gift which she – unlike less fortunate people – obviously possessed. (The God Delusion, p51-52.)

I can identify with him and thus know that the last work to be done is to set straight the record on the character of God. I can well remember how the hair on the back of my neck rose when my wife and I per chance bumped into the very nun that taught me the same doctrines many years before (is the poor nun to blame or the system that indoctrinated her?). What a pity that the 'reason' Dawkins relies on is the very 'reason' that was elevated by Catholic thinkers and Jesuits to empower the Papacy to rebel against the Law of God as it forms the basis of their 'natural law' ideology. Jesuits such as René Descartes and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin replaced God with rationalism, evolutionism and New Age occultism that keep thousands trapped in modern delusions no better than the doctrines of the Dark Ages. Furthermore, Dawkins has no kinder words for the protestant preachers of the day quoting most of the mega preachers with their 'Dominion Theology' who advocate a 'Reconstructionist' model openly advocating a Christian theocracy for America (P. 358 of his book). How perceptive; this is the very thing we Adventists should also be warning against. Unfortunately he does not know that this theology stems from the Catholic view of the Millennium and that the modern Protestant theology has its origin in the minds of Jesuits who were the first to advocate futurism and dispensationalism in order to change the eschatological perspectives of Protestants regarding the antichrist. Shall we leave Dawkins and others like him in ignorance or shall we enlighten them to give them at least a chance of making an informed choice? What is our calling as a church; is it to preach the 'Three Angels' Messages' to separate a people from the world or are we to seek union with the religious bodies of the world in order to exert our influence from the inside? If we choose the latter route, will we still be able to fulfill our mission as a church or will we have to defer that mission to some future time when world events will harmonize with our eschatological understanding of prophecy? If so, will not a whole generation (or more) be left without warning?

The two approaches outlined above (separation or union) are bound to come into conflict with each other and it is even possible for both sides in this confrontation to lay claim to the best of motives. The pioneer view of my church is obviously based on the first premise; that of preaching the Three Angels' Messages with the voice of the trumpet and the second premise is a new approach that some feel will produce greater long term results without the inherent confrontational consequences. When I joined our church 27 years ago the only evangelistic style I was exposed to was that of the first premise and that counts even for Europe and the other 'first world' countries I visited. Our message was presented carefully, approaching the world like a chameleon. We would start off with full halls and end with a handful of people, most having left before our main doctrines had even been preached. My use of Dawkins in this document is a metaphor for the world as I realized long ago that we cannot reach these people with our standard approach, using the Bible as the basis for our expositions.

A new approach seems warranted that exposed the hypocrisies, the lies and distortions that have brought the world to the place where it is now. Once the 'rubbish' has been removed from the Word then truth can shine and people can catch a glimpse of the beauty of God that has been enshrouded by the devilish distortions heaped upon Him in the course of the 'Great Controversy'. I found that this approach had a positive effect; the halls remained full and numbers even increased because wrong perception regarding our doctrines and faith were removed from the outset and counterarguments disarmed before they could take root. Unfortunately, this approach was bound to produce conflict with those within our ranks who had opted for the conciliatory ecumenical approach regarding our mission as a church. When I commenced my ministry, discussions with other churches within the ecumenical movement had already reached an advanced stage and I fear that many of those involved in this new approach could no longer perceive the footprints of the evil one in the corridors of the 'Christian' churches of the day, let alone in the corridors of the Vatican. The term 'Babylon' needed a new definition and the status of the 'Little Horn' needed redefining so as to give it a purely eschatological flavour rather than a 'here and now' status. After all, how else could one justify the new ecumenical approach? What the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy calls 'Confederacy' they would be forced to call 'Conspiracy'. We, as a church, hand out the Great Controversy but do we believe all it says?

The popery that Protestants are now so ready to honor is the same that ruled the world in the days of the Reformation, when men of God stood up, at the peril of their lives, to expose her iniquity. She possesses the same pride and arrogant assumption that lorded it over kings and princes, and claimed the prerogatives of God. Her spirit is no less cruel and despotic now than when she crushed out human liberty, and slew the saints of the Most High. {GC88 570.3}

How the Roman church can clear herself from the charge of idolatry we cannot see. . . . And this is the religion which Protestants are beginning to look upon with so much favor, and which will eventually be united with Protestantism. This union will not, however, be effected by a change in Catholicism, for Rome never changes. She claims infallibility. It is Protestantism that will change. The adoption of liberal ideas

on its part will bring it where it can clasp the hand of Catholicism.--RH June 1, 1886. {LDE 130.2}

In spite of what these statements say, I know that God loves Catholics (after all He called me out of darkness to His wonderful light) but He 'abhors Catholicism' and all attempts to form liaisons with Rome.

"For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. . . . To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to

this word, it is because there is no light in them." The world is not to be our criterion. Let the Lord work, let the Lord's voice be heard. {4MR 68.2} (Is. 8:12 quoted)

No Alliance With Unbelievers. Those employed in any department of the work whereby the world may be transformed, must not enter into alliance with those who know not the truth. The world know not the Father and the Son, and they have no spiritual discernment as to the character of our work, as to what we shall do or shall not do. We must obey the orders that come from above. We are not to hear the counsel or follow the plans suggested by unbelievers. Suggestions made by those who know not the work that God is doing for this time will be such as to weaken the power of the instrumentalities of God. By accepting such suggestions, the counsel of Christ is set at nought. . . . -69- {4MR 68.3}

Satan Uses Influences of Mind on Mind.--Cast out of heaven, Satan set up his kingdom in this world, and ever since he has been untiringly striving to seduce human beings from their allegiance to God. He uses the same power that he used in heaven--the influence of mind on mind. Men become tempters of their fellowmen. The strong, corrupting sentiments of Satan are cherished, and they exert a masterly, compelling power. Under the influence of these sentiments, men bind up with one another in confederacies, in trade unions, and in secret societies. There are at work in the world agencies that God will not much longer tolerate.--Lt 114, 1903. {1MCP 28.3} (Emphasis added)

We need men who will not be drawn into secret, underhand confederacy, but who will shun as a sin the least intriguing and underhand work--men who will call things by their right name, men who are barricaded by principle and braced for duty, be it pleasant or unpleasant, men whom neither flattery, pretense, cunning, nor art could induce to swerve one hair from principle or duty. {17MR 233.1}

In the light of these statements it is hard to deal with some of the sentiments which emanate from within our own ranks, not just hard for the lay people, but it must be hard for the leadership as well as they try to reconcile two opposite positions especially since even at this level there is division. How sad that some are even willing to call the church Babylon and to flee from its ranks in spite of the frequent warnings in the Spirit of Prophecy against such rash actions. No wonder we sit with so many independent movements and reform movements in our church of which

some are sighing and crying and others are openly militant and antagonistic toward the church. On the one hand we are called to “expose the wickedness of the man of sin” and on the other hand some of us are intent on rather confederating with him. Some have signed the Charta Oecumenica and our ecumenical representative in Europe has lamented the fact that we call the pope antichrist and that we as a church should hand out the ‘Great Controversy’.

Brethren, it is time we stated our positions openly. We can no longer hide behind the supposition that church members do not know what is going on or would not understand the motives involved. The world already knows what is going on, we are living in an era of cyber space and information can no longer be hidden as in the past. I am confronted daily by people from outside who refuse to join our church because they find the very things they are to flee from in our midst. The documents of our church’s involvement with the ecumenical councils of the world in general and in the first world countries in particular have been widely publicized. Also, the numerous letters that passed between our

leadership in Europe and Bishop Dr. Heinz Held, the then time chairman of the ACK, and other ecumenical leaders in Europe are readily available and it is known from the communications of the GC religious liberty leaders that the GC was kept in the loop regarding these events. There are letters by our leaders to the ecumenical councils in which they desperately try to distantiate themselves from our position on the antichrist giving it only eschatological relevance and thereby embracing futurism rather than historicism. Letters have been written lamenting the ‘nineteenth century’ mindset which led to our views on Catholicism and in which a more inclusive approach to our mission as a church is advocated. This is dangerous ground since it the dumps the Spirit of Prophecy into the same category as the other literature of that era. Reports have been written regarding the new directions of our universities and colleges particularly with regard to those in Europe but the findings in these reports, though true, were swept under the rug. It is therefore no surprise that many of our deans and theologians hide the identity of the ‘little horn’ and don’t consider it part of our fundamental beliefs, nor is it surprising that our official study Bibles no longer call a spade a spade and that in many sectors of our church there is a shift to the doctrine of universalism rather than the pioneer exclusivist position.

Obviously there will be polarization between the ‘old’ and the ‘new’. Articles have been written against my approach, to which I have responded, but this is not a clash of persons, but of ideologies. Moreover, I am not the only one experiencing this conflict of interests. Just last week another evangelist (a former Dutch Reform minister who converted to Adventism and is now in the full time employ of one of our conferences) lamented the fact that two highly educated persons from the New Apostolic Church showed him that we were no better than the other churches because we had given a gold medal to the pope. Please don’t misunderstand me, I don’t mean this in a confrontational sense but rather in an observational sense, however, we must admit that the two mindsets involved here carry within themselves the seeds of confrontation. The same gentlemen who handed the gold medal to the pope also lamented the fact, on Hope Channel, that ‘conspiracy

theories' should be tolerated within our ranks. What these people see as conspiracies others see as history fulfilling prophecy and is as far removed from conspiracy as the east is from the west. Allow me to quote the ASI Germany response to recent allegations made against me in Europe:

"To put this message even in the vicinity of conspiracy theories would mean to reject the message of Jesus Christ (e. g. in Mt. 24) and of his prophets, and to deny the identity of our Church." (Public Statement regarding the action taken by the joint German Unions (FiD) on Dec. 4, 2012 in regard to Prof. Dr Walter Veith's way of evangelizing in Germany)

Of all the thousands of attendees at these meetings none of the ASI members nor any of the guests saw conspiracy theories and many testimonies were given by people who had discovered the Advent message through these lectures. Exposing confederacies and showing the power of Rome make the Bible relevant for our time and lends credence to the 'Three Angels' Messages'. The secular mindset and the evangelical mindset can be swayed to see reason and 'come out of her my people'. This is what evangelism is; it is not enough to see Jesus but we must take our stand under His blood stained banner; mercy and justice must be seen to kiss each other not exclude each other. To couple current events unfolding on the stage of history to prophetic fulfilment is not conspiracy but our duty. We are speaking to the world out there not to Adventists who already know the truth but feel threatened by a straight testimony. Ellen White writes:

There is a study of history that is not to be condemned. Sacred history was one of the studies in the schools of the prophets. In the record of His dealings with the nations were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. So today we are to consider the dealings of God with the nations of the earth. We are to see in history the fulfilment of prophecy, to study the workings of Providence in the great reformatory movements, and to understand the progress of events in the marshalling of the nations for the final conflict of the great controversy. {8T 307.2} (Emphasis added)

This is about as perfect a definition as can be formulated of what the intent of my lectures is. The modern world will not and cannot see the power of the papacy, it is incomprehensible to them that all power will be given unto the beast and that no one can stand before him or make war with him. Show them the inner workings of this system, however, and they begin to understand that through its many arms it controls the powers that be. One cannot describe the power of nations without referring to their military might; neither can one describe the power of the papacy without referring to the Knights of Malta, Opus Dei, the Jesuits or the numerous secret echelons of their power. There is no need for conjecture here because the facts are plain and can be substantiated from reputable sources. The Spirit of Prophecy is also under no illusion regarding this point:

God's Word has given warning of the impending danger; let this be unheeded, and the Protestant world will learn what the purposes of Rome really are, only when it is too late to escape the snare. She is silently growing into power. Her doctrines are exerting their influence in legislative halls, in the churches, and in the hearts of men. She is piling up her lofty and massive structures, in the secret recesses of which her

former persecutions will be repeated. Stealthily and unsuspectedly she is strengthening her forces to further her own ends when the time shall come for her to strike. All that she desires is vantage-ground, and this is already being given her. We shall soon see and shall feel what the purpose of the Roman element is. Whoever shall believe and obey the Word of God will thereby incur reproach and persecution. {GC88 581.1}

This terrible picture, drawn by John to show how completely the powers of earth will give themselves over to evil, should show those who have received the truth how dangerous it is to link up with secret societies or to join themselves in any way with those who do not keep God's commandments. {14MR 152.2}

So the book of Revelation includes secret societies and warns against them? Is it not our duty to warn people of the impending danger? During a campaign in Oklahoma, numerous freemasons left their fraternity and joined themselves to the Adventist church, they brought their regalia including aprons and their Shriner hats and distanced themselves from these affiliations; are such to be excluded from the gospel? In South Africa I was called to the bedside of a terminally ill high ranking freemason by the specialist treating him (a non-Adventist). She had challenged him on his beliefs and had promised to find someone to talk to him. After a lengthy discussion in which he freely admitted to the issues raised in my lectures (including the worship of Lucifer), he even requested that, should opportunity arise, he would invite me to his lodge to speak to his fellow craft members. The specialist who listened to this conversation is today a baptized member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.

In a meeting with leaders at one of our universities I was told that people converted through these messages were not welcome in the church. On leaving the meeting, very discouraged, a young man met us outside and joyfully witnessed as to how he had found the Lord through these messages after having been steeped in occultism. Immediately thereafter we were introduced to two gentlemen, one a geologist who had been an atheist and evolutionist, and the other a neurosurgeon who had both embraced the truth through these messages. Do we really not want these people in the church or is the problem that they come into the church with the 'old' mindset (the pioneer mindset) that is so objectionable to those who have embraced the 'new'? I just had the privilege of speaking to between three and four hundred Dutch Reform Christians in one of our conferences and it is these messages that brought them to the meetings. In another town I have just been invited to speak to ninety such church members who have left their churches because of disillusionment and some having studied the DVD's want more clarity before making their decisions. All over the world people are embracing the Advent truth through the straight message, given not only by myself but also by many others.

Please don't misunderstand me; this is not boasting - this is humbling. I am not saying that my methodology, within the framework of the 'come out of her my people' approach could not have been gentler (we do mellow with age) but I can say that it was born out of an unquenchable desire to save souls that are in the same darkness out of which Christ saved me. I am not even saying that my method is

better than the traditional approaches, but it is different and reaches a class of people that others may not be able to reach. But I am aware that my approach is in juxtaposition to the ecumenical approach. To resolve this impasse will require a wisdom that only the Divine Helper can impart and my prayer and appeal is that the leadership will let God be the judge. I am a Seventh Day Adventist Christian, this church is "the apple of the Lord's eye and feeble and defective as it may be it is the only object on which He pours out His supreme regard". I honor the structure, am loyal to its tenets and I love the brethren because I know the Lord loves them and He understands how difficult it is to balance the ship in these hard times. For 25 years I have preached this message; it cannot be taken back – the dam wall has broken and the waters have covered the earth.

We must look to God for guidance and wisdom; we must plead with Him to teach us how to carry the work solidly. Let us recognize the Lord as our teacher and guide, and then we shall carry the work in correct lines. We need to stand as a united company who shall see eye to eye. Then we shall see the salvation of God revealed on the right hand and on the left. If we work in harmony, we give God a chance to work for us. {FE 531.3}

Your brother and fellow servant in Christ

Walter Veith 20 May 2013


