ASSIGNMENT

Love

Maureen Woods
Assignment Love

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Epilogue
Chapter 1

The Bedouin
(The Language Of Love)

Israel has tried, over the years, to settle the Bedouin and a few members of the younger generation have broken away from the strong family ties to reside in one place. However, as a people, the Bedouin do not really want to be settled. The Oxford English Dictionary's definition of Bedouin is: Arab of the desert, wandering people. As a rule, they move location three or four times a year, as they have done from the days of Abraham. They are a colourful, mysterious people who exist in the Middle East.

I was fascinated from the moment I saw my first Bedouin. They are so unlike any other group of people. They are well known for their hospitality, but at the same time keep very much to themselves. I prayed for a way to be made for me to meet some Bedouin people and then waited expectantly for the opportunity to present itself. It wasn't long before that day arrived.

I guess that I relate to the Bedouin in some strange way. I am somewhat of a nomad myself, flourishing wherever I find myself. I go around the world for the purpose of extending God's kingdom, whereas the Bedouin moves around the Middle East for the purpose of feeding his sheep. Perhaps the word sheep is the connection. We are both in the sheep business.

An Israeli man, who knew that I was interested in the Bedouin, and who speaks fluent Arabic, took me and a girlfriend along on a bright, sunny day to see for ourselves how the Bedouin live. He knew one of the Bedouin and wanted to discuss something with him, so off we went out of Jerusalem. We drove about ten miles along the Jericho road, on an unsurfaced track which was used mainly by the local herdsmen. There was very little grass growing on the hills which sloped in interesting shapes all around us, and for as far as the eye could see the desert stretched out in an endless landscape.

The Bedouin man owned a particularly large, collapsible tent, complete with television aerial. We commented on that, in sheer amusement! We had arrived uninvited, so my Israeli acquaintance went ahead of us to speak to his friend. After some time, he nodded to us in agreement as a gesture of acceptance and my girlfriend and I were welcomed in true Arabic style by the Sheik himself. The Sheik took our breath away by his stature. He was extremely good-looking, like someone out of Arabian Nights. He must have been in his early forties, dressed in a pure white robe-like garment, draped masterfully across and around his well-built body. Of course he was wearing the traditional Arab Kaffiyeh on his head. He was quite something to behold and there
I was standing in his tent!

I marvelled at the simplicity of the tent. It was a shelter from the elements, nothing more and nothing less. No need for tables and chairs or even a bed; just masses of brightly coloured cushions on the swept, dusty ground. That was how they lived. The things of value were represented in life itself: wives, children, sheep and goats, and not necessarily in that order! The tent was void of anything the western world would call material possessions except for the cooking utensils and the television set. The effect was stark and yet it made good sense. If you travel as much as they do, you learn that it is wise to carry as little as possible. Therefore the Bedouin are not into things.

Suddenly children came running from everywhere. A few women, whom I guessed rightly to be wives, appeared through the folds of the hanging canvas walls of the tent. In spite of a few polite words, my girlfriend and I were waved on by the Sheik in the direction of the women and children.

The most mature wife came and offered us coffee. The wives came in all shapes and sizes, but the one thing they had in common was the fact that they all looked careworn. At first they viewed us with suspicion, but the kids could not restrain themselves. Their faces showed that they were as fascinated by us as we were with them. There were so many and they were so cute, albeit ever so dirty. I guess that goes with the lifestyle. Fresh water is not one of the things that is readily available to them out there in the middle of nowhere. As young as they were, their skins were dry and weather-beaten and the wives, of whom we counted four, looked old and weary. They were probably not even a day over thirty. The rest of the family, I assumed, would be out in the desert, taking care of the flocks and herds.

The coffee came and we all sat on the ground in a circle, sipping what I knew to be called black mud, a marvellous Arabic coffee. We all smiled and giggled and communicated with our eyes, expressions that told their own story.

I had often wondered if people could talk to each other without the aid of speech. It was an experiment I had often wanted to try and it occurred to me that here was the perfect opportunity to find out if love could really be projected without the use of words.

Of all the children around us, one little girl, whom I guessed to be around eight years old, was the most interested and she pushed everything I was wearing, ending up with my face and hair. My hair was clearly of particular interest to her. I took my brush out of my bag and showed her, as she watched with wide-eyed wonder, what the brush could do for my hair. All the time we were smiling at each other and I was beginning to experience, with delight, the wonder of interacting with another human being, as I had longed to do, without words. I responded by touching her dress, her face and her hair, and in silence I pulled the little girl even closer to me and started to brush her hair. This, I might add, was no easy task. Clearly her hair had never seen a brush and what was entangled in the hair was unmentionable!

Her brothers and sisters took a very keen interest in what was going on, making a circle around us as they chatted loudly and excitedly amongst each other.

I brushed and brushed and brushed some more, watching that tacky mass of stuff on her head untangle, shine and fall onto her shoulders in beauty. The young audience was fascinated as we kept our eyes on one another in affection.

"It works, hallelujah, it works!" I wanted to shout, but instead I kept quiet. The moment was too precious to spoil. This young Bedouin girl and I had shown our love for each other without one single word.

Whew! My wrist felt as if it was breaking from all that brushing. Still, the result was worth the effort. Suddenly her hair was beautiful. I proceeded to take another object out of my handbag: a tiny gold hand mirror, which I held up for my little friend to see how lovely she looked and she actually cried in wonderment. I put the brush and mirror in her dress pocket and she responded with a hug around my neck, almost pushing me over.

Then it was her turn to reciprocate and she did so very definitely. She pushed my wrist at an awkward angle into the ground and put an imaginary clamp over it. I understood perfectly that I was supposed to stay in exactly that position and not to move. She told her brothers and sisters to watch me, which she need not have done, as they were already doing just that. The next thing I knew she was gone. I watched her in amazement, running across that hot desert sand, barefoot and as fast as her little legs could carry her. I wondered at the reason for the urgency. More coffee, the wives decided, and when I attempted to get up, the children made a dive for me, indicating very definitely that I was to stay just where I was. It seemed like a long time just sitting there, but eventually in the distance, I saw the little girl. She came bouncing back into the tent, with her hair streaming around her smiling face and a hop, skip and jump in her step. She had something in her hand and my fears were realised as I knew by her expression that it was alive. My little friend reached for my handbag and took it from me. I understood that she had a gift for me, something she didn't have herself but had to go out and find. Obviously this gift was special, because her beaming face told me so.

With her eyes and hands, she gestured that the gift was given with love from her to me, and, in doing so, her little hand shook as she dropped this something into my handbag.

At that moment the Sheik and my escort arrived and announced that we would be leaving presently. Much later, I dared to look inside the handbag and found the most exquisite, live desert dragon fly. How she had caught it out there in the middle of nowhere, I shall never know. The fact is that love demanded a response and
somehow it had found a way to do so. She had received love and wanted to reciprocate in the language of love. Surely my little Bedouin friend and I will never forget that day when we found out that love breaks all barriers, ethnic and cultural too.

I learned in a practical way the lesson that love is the language of the spirit of man. Even though we were unable to communicate verbally, love reached the inner being of this little girl. Man, with his eternal spirit, can perceive love or rejection because he is an eternal being, made in God's image. How do we communicate with those around us? Do we use the powerful language of love, the language of our God, to draw others without a word? It is indeed our most powerful weapon. In its most silent state, love brings life to those around us. Many of us have prayed for a long time for our families. But there comes a time when the only thing that will prevail is God's love, spoken or unspoken. As believers, it is our responsibility to communicate this love unreservedly.

The most drastic barriers to receiving the salvation of Jesus' message must, and can only, come crashing down by the communication of this language of love.
Chapter 2

The Wind Bloweth Where It Wills

Though you hear its sound, yet you neither know where it comes from nor where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:8).

I was born into a beautiful world. My father is South African and my mother of Irish descent. I had everything I needed materially. We lived, as do my parents still, in a magnificent house set in an exquisite garden and staffed with many servants. Then, the country was called, Rhodesia. Now it is known as, Zimbabwe. It was a paradise. I was naive enough to believe that everybody lived as we did, and that there were many who thought as I did.

My parents were colonialists, very proud of their achievements and, sad to say, felt superior to all those around them. The colonialists had moved into Rhodesia and ruled that African territory. Rhodesia, as it was then called, attracted visitors from all over the world, mostly because of its idyllic weather all year round, but also because of its fascinating tourist attractions: the Victoria Falls, Kariba Dam, Inyanga, the Vumba Mountains, and the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, to mention but a few.

We assumed that this lovely land would go on under white rule forever, never stopping to think that Rhodesia, (named after Cecil John Rhodes), was the white man's idea, as were most of the colonies in Africa. The European peoples had moved in, bringing with them their many-faceted culture, their sophisticated ways and infrastructures. The majority of Africans in that land received only elementary education and were therefore easily intimidated. With the white man's pride, and the African's servant self image and different methods of living, it was easy for the more educated to rule in that country.

Throughout history, there have been rises and falls of rulership. For a long period, the colonialists enjoyed a high standard of living and, although there were injustices as with everything. The African was employed and benefited from the infrastructure that was established there by the whites. But there comes a time when changes are brought about in every country and so it was in Rhodesia. We as a people, who lived through the changes from white to black rule, have been acutely aware of how quickly change can take place. Today Zimbabwe is ruled by black Africans and most of the white people who were unable to accept the change have left the country. There are some who have remained and they struggle to reconcile themselves to the fact that this country is no longer their country and, in most instances, they are no longer in the driver's seat. They still wrestle with comparisons of what life was like before.

My point is that man does not like change, but, like it or not, change comes and will continue to come. Change is not something to be feared. It is a good thing, as it causes people to take stock. It is as necessary as night and day. God is the Instigator of change. We either change with circumstances or we choose to stand against them. It is usually to our detriment when we resist.

I thank God that, right from the very beginning, from the creation of the world, He fashioned a magnificent plan. In love, He created mankind in his image. We are all created as highly esteemed people, no matter what colour we are, or even what nationality for that matter.

However, we are all different in our cultures and have to learn to cross these barriers, reaching out to each other in our weaknesses and strengths. It requires major understanding on our part. All of us are created in God's image, but so different in temperaments and roles. Hallelujah! A God of variety!

When He gave us the gift of free choice, He gave us the most incredible gift of all, so great was his love. God knows full well that if this gift is handled wrongly, it has the ability to destroy us. He was also aware that it would be abused, but still He gave it, knowing that this gift would determine those who are his and those who are not.
Chapter 3

Everything Is A Choice

TOP MODEL IN SERIOUS ACCIDENT

Fashion model, Maureen Woods, 22, was knocked down on the notoriously dangerous Louis Botha avenue today. This budding star of haute couture is in the Johannesburg General Hospital with severe injuries and multiple fractures. Doctors have serious doubts of her ever walking again.

A news report of the day could have read just like that. Reports of accidents can be easily dismissed, another statistic, but this was ME! One moment I had been standing on the pavement, thinking of my next assignment and then the car hit me. This trauma was enough to cause me to want to give up what little life I had left in me. The thought that my career was over just because of someone else's stupidity, and through no fault of my own, loomed over me. The prognosis was not very good: metal plates in my injured legs and many skin grafts. I was steadily going downhill by looking at the circumstances around me. Even if they succeeded in putting me back together again, I would never be as I was before. Such was the plight in which I found myself. There were many long hours in which to think back on my life and remember.

There I was, seven years old, with an upturned nose and chin, a head full of ideas of some day becoming famous and a strong will to succeed. Being taller than average and walking with a certain air, I did not have to be told that I was somebody. As young as I was, I knew that I was somebody. I can clearly remember my mother saying to me that my confidence was remarkable and that one day I would walk where angels feared to tread. I can also remember agreeing with that and liking it too!

I had been a very sickly child, so much so that the Rhodesian doctors cautioned my parents that I might not make old bones. My childhood afflictions had been so severe that my arches had dropped from sheer weakness, resulting in my having to wear callipers like a polio case. Then, when I turned seven, God healed me totally and from that moment I took on a whole new image. I was a child model and had made up my mind that I would be the best and that I was not going to be robbed anymore. I was tired of being known as Maureen, who is always sick. I went from strength to strength, growing taller all the time. I used to dream of what life would be like one day when I had finished school and would live in the big city of Johannesburg, where I would reach for the stars.
The day did eventually come and so did the opportunities, fast and furiously. I was climbing the ladder to stardom! Two years after the accident I did walk again and chose not to dwell on the deep trauma of the event, which helped me to regain faith in myself and the fact that I might even dare to live again. Once the decision was made to be well again, despite all the metal holding me together, I was soon running, let alone walking.

I was then going to promote the fashion business, since I was only 24 years old, and again I went all out with every fibre of my being. Success was my goal.

Nine years later, I had a confrontation with God and from that moment to this I have never been the same. Success, I have come to learn, is a person and his name is Jesus Christ. He is the one who calls us and not the other way around. His world consists of love, joy, peace, patience and all the things that this world cannot give us. Is it any wonder that I left everything behind me to follow the One who makes all things new and is the Author and Giver of Life?

Having spent many years hurtling through life with vain ambitions, it is not surprising that I had never paused to take stock of the choices with which God confronts us all. It is also not surprising that the simplicity of these choices and the truth of the Good News never touched me. I was far too worldly. Revelation is God's gift to those who sincerely desire to know and see the truth, and I believe that it is only given to those who are diligent seekers. None are so blind as those who refuse to see. That was surely true of me. I was oblivious to anything else but my own busy world. I had never pondered the deeper issues of life. The subject of death positively freaked me out. I was scared of death because, deep down, I knew that there would come a day of reckoning and I was smart enough to know that I had much to reckon with.

Today, as a child of God, I am able to address all the issues of life and to face death head on. I have been set free from the bondage of the fear of man. If our faith is firmly rooted in God, we have nothing to fear. Physical death is a wonderful release for the believer, not a catastrophe as many people in the world suppose.

I marvel at the grace of God that protected me while I was yet a sinner, before I acknowledged Him and his salvation. This grace brought me through my physical weakness as a child and the prognosis of early death. It also brought me through the brush with death in the road accident, the five breaks in one leg and three in the other, gangrene, and skin grafts. And of course, although I didn't know it then, his grace was sufficient to bring me through the prognosis of possible permanent paralysis of my legs. There were other times, of which I was probably not even aware, when He protected me and brought me through the valley of the shadow of death.

God's call to us is a choice between life and death: See I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil. (Deut 30:15). This is the greatest decision we ever have to make and on this choice will depend where we spend eternity. We are created to have fellowship with God and we all have a God-shaped vacuum that He alone can fill. Through sin, that fellowship has been broken. Now with faith in Jesus and his atonement for our sin on Calvary, we are restored from the moment that we are born again. We are brought back to a relationship with God and can then start to worship and praise Him. My experience was that, the Word came alive to me, and I was completely absorbed in it.

Our value system is completely changed and, in varying degrees, this becomes apparent to ourselves and to those around us. As we surrender areas of our lives to his Lordship, our desires and aspirations begin to change too. Life goes on and we come to understand that our thoughts are not the same as they were before. We do not need or want the things we used to, but instead focus more on His godliness. We can no longer agree with the talk and actions of the ungodly. We are confronted daily with the issues of right and wrong, morally, culturally and in every possible way. The study of the Scriptures begins to build strength into our inner being.

Our day of reckoning eventually comes and we are forced to address our choices. We are able to look at our lives and realize that we have made choices and that these choices add up to a result. However, if we make the wrong choices, then nothing awaits us but heartache and grief.

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We are admonished to ask for God's wisdom in every situation and then we become increasingly better equipped with godly counsel and a desire to reverse the lies of this world. This process is called sanctification, being separated unto God. Sin becomes more and more abhorrent to us and we should make a daily practice of confessing our sins to God, (1 Jn 1:9).

Choices, that is what life is all about. First, God choosing us and us responding, our choice. 1 Corinthians 1: 27 says: God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that the world calls mighty.

If we make the right choices, which of course can only be made by a regenerated mind, then blessing will result. However, if we make the wrong choices, then nothing awaits us but heartache and grief. Choose you this day whom you will serve, states Joshua, in Joshua 24:15(a). In John 15:16-19, we read: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit shall remain; that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in my Name, He shall give it to you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Just think for a moment: Our words are a choice. Our habits are a choice. Our friends are a choice. The things we do are a choice. What we eat and how much we eat.

THEREFORE HEAVEN OR HELL IS ALSO A CHOICE.

In my unsaved days, I was very ambitious, a great achiever. I was into material possessions and cared
little for anything but improving myself. I lived a life in the so called fast lane, doing all the correct social things that accompany that kind of living. I drank as much as I wanted and smoked as much as I dared, and that was excessive. As a result, I had early stages of emphysema and was an asthmatic. The doctors told me to stop drinking and smoking, and I laughed, knowing that I enjoyed both these things too much to give them up. Actually, I knew too that I did not have the power within to resist.

God had ordained the day, however, and on that day my encounter with Jesus Christ was so powerful that, in a moment of time, God removed my desire to partake of drink and cigarettes. Still, my body was not so miraculously healed. For another year I continued to be an asthmatic. I believed that God would heal me completely, seeing He had already accomplished other amazing things in my life. The damage I had done continued to be evident.

Then one day it happened. I was standing talking to a friend of mine in a busy shopping centre in South Africa. I was telling her about my experience with God and how my life had been changed. My breathing was strained and she asked why, if the Lord had done so much for me, was I still battling to breathe? She took me by the arm and led me to the nearest pharmacy to get the help she thought I needed. As we approached the shop, I felt the Lord saying to me, "Do you believe in medication more than you believe in Me?" I stopped, transfixed, and again I believe I heard the same words. The choice was mine: to step into the pharmacy I would be trusting in medicine, but to turn away I would be trusting totally in God.

The moment was one I shall never forget. I made my decision — my foot moved back and as I left the pharmacy, my breathing started to return to normal, and I have not had an asthma attack since that eventful day. I know and cherish the revelation that if we are careful to stop and think, we can see where these choices have to be made, God does give us the grace to make the correct decision, by the way!

Our Lord does not always instantly perform healing for the physical body. He sometimes chooses to use doctors and the science of medicine. They, too, are his channels to diagnose, operate, and so on. But the source of healing is in Him, and Him alone. We must remember that He is sovereign. We need to seek from Him the method of healing He would choose for us and wait. The instruction will come in time. It is easy to fall into presumption and we are then disappointed when He does not do it our way. So often, we want these miraculous signs because we as humans love the spectacular. God's ways are not our ways. Let us be careful to hear his voice in all matters and not to delay our obedience to his Word.

There are times when the healing occurs only after a long period of cleansing and repentance. For instance, if bitterness reigns in our hearts, this deadly sin leads to all kinds of illnesses. So, being very thorough, God will choose to deal with the root first. This could take a long time, as roots run deep. Once that bitterness has been rooted out, the healing process and the power of our Lord can flow. I was so blessed by the way He chose to do that for me . . . Hallelujah!
Chapter 4

It Is Finished

Never let it be said that we do not change, for change we surely do. If nothing else, we simply grow up and it is sometimes embarrassing to look back and admit that we saw things a certain way once upon a time, but today we see the same things quite differently. If we can't admit that, we are in a sorry shape.

In my late twenties, a time when I was very much into myself and into the things of the world and what I could get out of the world, circumstances found me holding the Bible somewhat uncomfortably. It just happened to fall open at the place where Jesus was uttering his final words while hanging on the cross. These words were, IT IS FINISHED, and, immediately thereafter, Jesus died.

IT IS FINISHED was a term I often used myself, which in the interpretation of today's language means disappointment, frustration and basically termination or precisely the end of that to which you were referring. In other words, IT IS FINISHED, in my mind, meant it was all a waste of time. That was my conclusion and my interpretation.

Needless to say, I was not born again at the time. The born-again event occurred and was positively cataclysmic when I was thirty-three years old, and I have never been the same since. In those days, the Bible was dead, as I in fact was also dead, so it was not surprising that it seemed far out and didn't have any relevance to me or my life in its rebellious state.

IT IS FINISHED. Indeed, just three words that did not hold any earth changing meaning in my unsaved condition. In fact, they meant a big zero to me. How could it mean anything else to me? After all, I was living in darkness and hurtling along at a dazzling speed to nowhere. Other people watching my life could clearly see that, by my choices in life, I was NOT a child of God. After all, children of God behaved differently, very differently. I had not encountered any children of God, so how was I to know the difference? Without provocation, exposure or example, it is impossible to understand something new.

The Word of God is spirit, and life, and truth, and it only comes alive in the heart and life of a child of God. That is why the unsaved, when reading the Bible, become confused and misunderstand the message. The Bible is mysterious. It is written for the seeker, not the mocker.

When I was born again at the age of thirty-three, I immediately cherished the Bible. Its precious words and teachings literally became life to me as I devoured it on a daily basis, feeling more and more liberated and joyful with every word I read. IT IS FINISHED opened to me like a flower, not meaning what I had thought it meant in my unregenerated state, amidst failure, discord, suffering, pain and disappointment. It was a victory statement meaning; THE TASK THAT WAS SET BEFORE JESUS CHRIST FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD IS COMPLETE. Jesus, the mighty deliverer, the sacrificial lamb that hung on the cross, had done it all. IT IS FINISHED, means nothing can ever take away from what Jesus did. It marked Jesus undeniably as the Jewish Messiah and the Saviour of the world. Suddenly it was all so clear. Jesus, God in the flesh, was spat upon, mistreated, scourged, misunderstood, rejected, forsaken, crucified, yet He rejoiced as his work and purpose for coming to earth were in no way affected by these human things. Jesus' cry, IT IS FINISHED, was triumphant from the cross, meaning I have accomplished that which I came to earth to do! Hallelujah!

In the lives of all those who have trusted in Jesus from that time to this, and beyond this day until He returns, this statement, IT IS FINISHED, means salvation. How amazing! What seemed like a negative statement when I was in darkness, and therefore negative myself, was turned around and became the most positive of all statements when I became born again. The veil was removed and at last I could see. Suddenly the Bible was opened up to me. The more I read it as a child of God, the more I wanted to read it, and the more I understood. Nobody had to explain anything to me, it was all too wonderful for words. The spirit of God had taken control of me, my thoughts and therefore my actions. No longer was I buffeted around. Truth had at last captured my heart and, like a rudder on a ship, it was skilfully turning my confused life around. No longer did I have any desire to go my own way. I was captivated by love, I knew it and, what is more, I liked it. This is what life was designed to be. No longer a slave to myself and the things that bound me to the earth, I had been set free to be the person God declared me to be. Willingly I had given myself to God, so I had in fact become his slave, released from the bondage of money, work, pleasure in wrong relationships, from it all.

Read Matthew Chapter 27 and you too will see the magnificence of God's plan for mankind. Nothing was left undone, indeed it was FINISHED.

What a precious gift the Bible is, the handbook of life, which brings us the good news that the Holy God entered his own creation and gloriously died a painful and humiliating death in the place of you and me on the
cross. Such love is hard to understand. On the cross He died as our substitute, taking our punishment and our
sins so that we can go free, wrapped in the love and trust of our Saviour. He who was without sin, willingly took
the world's sin upon Himself and gave us, in return, salvation and right standing with Him.

Trusting Jesus involves acknowledging our own spiritual poverty so that all the resources of heaven can
be mobilised on our behalf.

In Jesus' final hour on earth, as He hung on the cross for mankind, all mankind, one note of joy thrilled
through the pain: the thought of the souls given to Him. A countless multitude would honour and serve Him.
From that day forth, from every corner of the world, his people who are called by his name would do the works
of the kingdom empowered by Jesus. He dwells in all those who believe in Him until He comes again.

He will come SOON in power and glory, this time in the clouds to call his people to Himself, first the
dead in Christ and thereafter the living. That, I believe, is talking about us, you and me.

For his people, who have grasped the purpose for which He came to this earth, and who understand those
victory words, IT IS FINISHED.

Hallelujah, what a Saviour!
Chapter 5

Any Old Newspapers?

It may have seemed a strange request, but a request it was all the same. There on the doorstep of my parents' house in Zimbabwe stood two young girls asking for old newspapers. In the hustle and bustle of all that was going on in the house at that moment, I did not ask the girls why they wanted old newspapers. I simply fulfilled their request with a great pile of old papers. God bless, I said, but missed the opportunity of touching their lives with the Good News.

It is my firm conviction that nothing happens by accident. The events which occur, no matter how great or small, or the people who come into our lives, no matter how great or small, do so by God's design. Each person, if handled correctly, carries with him a blessing which we should receive and vice versa. I have lived my entire Christian life with this principle in mind and, as a result, have had more adventures and good experiences than I can remember. Granted, I have also had a few of the other kind of experiences, which I choose to forget, since the telling of them would not benefit a soul. Besides, the worthwhile experiences have far outweighed the others.

Hebrews 13:2 tells us: Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Our own suspicions and fear of strangers have excluded us from many a relationship that God has intended as a blessing. Choose rather to be friendly and interested in the stranger and remember that you are also a stranger to many.

What is it that causes the human being to shy away from someone he doesn't know? FEAR is the bottom line and that explains why there are so many lonely people in this world. It is because they have missed the opportunities that God has given them and loneliness is the end result. The two girls deserved more than I had given them. I should have made the time to speak to them. They were more important than the other menial tasks I was involved in at that moment. My priorities were wrong and an eternal opportunity had slipped through my fingers. The faces of those two girls kept coming before me. I could tell that they were in need from their appearance, and I wanted to give them something more than old newspapers. I wanted to give them the Good News, to introduce them to Jesus, who was the One who brought them to my parents' doorstep in the first place.

I was about to leave the country, my ticket was paid for and I was going as I always do, with nothing more than the sure knowledge that God would provide for me. Still, those two faces were on my mind. For this reason I prayed in earnest that God would bring them back before I left. Shortly after praying this prayer, I was
handed a large amount of Zimbabwean money, which is not negotiable anywhere else in the world. I knew instinctively that this money was not meant for me but for those two girls and, deep within, I also knew that God not only wanted to bless them with the truth, but also materially. They would return, of that I was certain, even though there was no earthly reason why they should.

I was not surprised, therefore, when, less than 24 hours before I was due to leave, I saw the two girls walk through my parents' garden to the front door. This time I received them as I should have the first time, and they were understandably bowled over by the unexpected welcome. We had tea together, and I shared with excitement how I had prayed for their return. They said, somewhat startled, that they had had no reason for coming, but found themselves coming anyway. I told them how much God loved them and had given me such a burden for them. They saw God directing them and willingly prayed and asked the Lord to come into their hearts and rule their lives. I gave them the money. Their faces were tear-stained and their hearts overflowed with the realisation of the goodness of God in seeing their need and providing the means to take care of it. They went on their way rejoicing and so did I.

I flew from Zimbabwe to Athens where I had a stop over of three days. I wandered the ancient streets with interest. Next to Israel, Athens must be one of the most interesting places on the face of the earth. I stood on the spot where Paul preached his magnificent sermon to the unknown God, I walked amongst the ancient relics of the Acropolis and mingled with the hundreds of foreign tourists who were there doing the same thing. I spent all the money I had, which was easy to do since there was not very much of it, on a few essentials. The next morning, flying on to Israel, I knew that God, who does not see the righteous forsaken, saw my empty purse and my expectant thankful heart.

I had previously arranged for a friend to meet me at Ben Gurion Airport and, thrilled to be back in Israel, I rejoiced all the way to my rented house in Ein Karem. My home smelt a little mouldy from having been closed up, but otherwise everything was just as I had left it. The only thing I didn't have was food, but I was not worried. The fact that the cupboards and refrigerator were empty did not mean that I was in need. I might be so the next day, but for that day I was not. Oh, the blessed principle of living one day at a time, knowing that God holds our tomorrows just as surely as He holds today.

Early the next morning I was up and about, calling some friends to tell them that I was back. I hopped on a bus into Jerusalem to clear my letterbox, which I was delighted to find bursting at the seams. How I love receiving mail, bringing me news from all around the world, from friends in similar situations, writing of God's goodness to them and sharing the trials that we all face in living the Christian life.

Such is my love for my worldwide Christian family with whom I correspond, that I have to set aside two whole days a week, with no interruptions, to reply individually to every letter I receive. It is work, it is commitment to those I love and it pays its own dividends of support both prayerfully and financially. When I consider what is most important in this world, I can honestly say that, besides Christ Himself, His Body comes next. Whether they are babes in Christ or mature in wisdom, each one is precious beyond words. Each one was bought and paid for with the precious blood of our Lord, which makes us all one, just as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one.

The very first letter I opened came with love from a Christian sister in America, from whom I had not heard for about two years. Enclosed with her heartfelt words of encouragement was a cheque for three times the amount that I had given the two girls back in Africa.

Glory to the God who never fails! The all-seeing, all-loving, almighty God had honoured His Word yet again: *Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down . . . and running over, shall men give into your bosom,* (Lk 6:38).

I went bouncing along to the grocery store where I bought enough to fill my empty shelves and fridge. I set aside a tenth of what I had received, a bundle to give to somebody else who had a need. All my needs were taken care of for that day. The next day would have its own cares and was as secure in God's economy as that day.

We were not created to strive after money. God knows we have need of it and He has all kinds of ways of getting it to us. His purpose for us is to; *seek first his Kingdom and his promise is that all these things shall be added unto you,* (Mt 6:33).
Chapter 6

Love ~ Israeli Style

Being a single woman in a foreign country brings its own set of problems. However, I would not have it any other way. I believe God uses femininity and, so long as it is not exploited, it is yet another tool for evangelism. I have been told that in my writing I lay myself emotionally bare; that is my intention. I am also prepared to allow myself to be laughed at if, by so doing, I can help my brother or sister through. I am prepared to highlight my own failure if it will help others to overcome a similar experience.

I write to encourage, uplift, edify, amuse and provoke others to do the same. Let's face it; if I can write, then you can too. I was only one year old in the Lord and thought I knew it all when I moved to Israel, convinced that I was going to do a great work for God. I cringe when I think of how ill-equipped I was and marvel at God's love that permitted me so much freedom in the face of such adversity.

I write this story primarily for young women who may secretly hope to find a husband in the mission field. I was by no means obsessed by this dream. Nevertheless, in my mind I had a picture of the kind of man I was hoping God would give me. He had a certain look about him, he had to have a certain type of personality and, because I was in love with Jesus, of course this man had to be Jewish.

It was not long before a man fitting all these requirements came along and I didn't know what to do with him. At the time I was working for, The Voice of Hope, the Christian radio station based in Israel, broadcasting from across the border in Lebanon. George Otis was the mastermind behind the operation. There were ten of us, all born-again believers from many different countries who found ourselves in a war-zone, broadcasting the Gospel among much activity. Each one of us felt very privileged to be a part of what God was doing in the midst of the horror around us.

Security was tight on the borders and the only people with permission to cross were the Israeli army and our little group of Christians who worked on both the Israeli and Lebanese sides of the border. As we travelled across we removed our Israeli licence plates. It was agreed that there was no point in making targets of ourselves. However, around those parts everybody who was anybody knew us and treated us with the utmost respect.

The road was in very bad repair as a result of all the heavy machinery using it. On this particular day I had to stop at a checkpoint, another checkpoint, there seemed to be so many of them. I was running late for an appointment on the Israeli side, so I was anxious to get there. Suddenly I heard these words from a very macho Israeli officer, leaning into my car, "What in God's name are you doing here?"

I stared at him, somewhat startled, and found myself saying, "That is no way to speak to a lady!"

"It's because I see that you are a lady that I am speaking to you that way," came the curt reply. "Don't you know that you are on very dangerous ground?"

"Dangerous? What is dangerous?" I asked with a silly smile on my face. I could see that he was really angry and I became a little irritated by his attitude.

"Explain to me," he said sternly, "what exactly you are doing here."

"Here are my documents," I said. "My name is Maureen Woods, I work for the Voice of Hope and there is no problem about me being here."

He grabbed the papers from my hand and, scrutinising them, said, "My questions remain the same: What are you really doing here?" His face turned a shade of purple. "Don't you know that I am a Jew, and Jews are not interested in Jesus Christ?"

"Jesus Christ loves you, Jew or otherwise," I said with eyes penetrating his.

"Get out of here," he said, as he pushed my documents back at me.

"Have a beautiful day," I said smiling, as I hurriedly put the car into gear and left him smothered in dust. I thought nothing more of the incident and went on my way.

A couple of days later, I was sitting in my office talking to a colleague when the door opened and walked a man. Without any invitation, he pulled up a chair, sat down and said, "I am here to see you, Maureen."

How did he know my name, I wondered. I seemed to know his face, but could not think where I had seen him.

My colleague felt obliged to leave and, somewhat startled, I got up and walked to the door with him. I felt the man watching my every move and I remember feeling just a little unnerved. I walked back to my desk, sat down in my chair and out of sheer nervousness, started to swing in it. For what seemed like an eternity, he just sat there and stared at me as I kept swinging in the chair.
Then he laughed and I remember noting what an attractive laugh it was. "Now stop swinging in your chair and listen to me," he said. "I have something very important to say to you."

I kept on swinging, smiling inwardly, as I suddenly remembered who he was. He had been the officer at the check-point in Lebanon.

He stood up and leaned across my desk, and what he said next stopped me swinging in my chair! "I had a dream last night and I am here to tell you what it means. This dream was from God and it will be so." He paused. "You and I are going to be married, I am going to build us a beautiful home in Jerusalem and together we will travel the world talking about God."

Then he turned and walked out the door, leaving me staring after him, stunned. He was certainly Jewish, with a personality like none I had ever come across, and even the look for which I had prayed to the Lord. I was interested and that shocked me more than anything else. I knew I had met my match and that unnerved me.

He meant business and obviously had a well thought out strategy. He showed up at all the places where he knew I would be. He fitted all my requirements, except the most important; he was not saved, he had not yet committed his life to Jesus Christ.

I explained patiently that, he and I, could never be. Instead of making him understand, all it did was to make him more determined. I could see that I had a big problem. He would not take no for an answer and I would not accept the situation as it was. I had to leave and as quickly as possible. I had not come that far for nothing.

As hard as it was, I left my beloved Israel and stayed away for a whole year. When I returned I assumed that time had dealt with the situation, but I was seen by one of his friends at Ben Gurion Airport and that same day he traced me. The game was on again.

How I thank God that He gave me the grace to walk away from so much that appealed to me. Just as we make choices for the sake of righteousness, so we must also make choices in relationships with the opposite sex, avoiding what seems attractive.

For the believer, the attraction should be the working of the fruit of the Spirit in the other person. The foundation on which we are to build is commitment to the Gospel and total mutual respect. The Lord allows certain situations to occur in our lives, often as a result of that for which we have asked Him. These situations determine our growth and cause us to see that our focus is not always where it should be. Our resultant choices determine our future. Let's face it; we are the product of our choices.

When it comes to the affairs of the heart, be very careful, young Christian, and the not so young Christian, your choice is a matter of life or death. Being single, as the Bible tells us, has many advantages. The key is to be satisfied, whatever your status may be. If you are content with being single, the chances are you will also be content to be married. Contentment comes from within and contented people are not threatened or intimidated, nor are they envious. Therefore they are always a pleasure to be around. True contentment is a Christlike quality which is only found in Him.
For 50 years or more, my parents wore three magnificent one-carat diamonds. They were part of the family fortune and earmarked one day for their three daughters. We were forever admiring the beautiful sparkling stones, looking forward to the day when we would be the proud owners of our eventual inheritance.

All things finally come to those who wait, and so did the three diamonds come to us, soon after my darling Dad had passed away. My two sisters kept their diamonds in their original old-fashioned settings, but I chose to have my setting melted down and my diamond reset in the latest tube setting. It was recommended by the designer for the safety of the diamond. It was set in a broad band with chips surrounding the centre stone, and it turned out beautifully.

On my way to work a few weeks later I happened to brush my dress, and something caught. I lifted my hand to find the reason why, and stared in horror at the hole in the setting where the diamond had been.

So, the search started. Every inch of my house came under scrutiny as I was on my hands and knees looking everywhere. I even washed the garbage and all the fluff sucked up by the vacuum cleaner, and also dismantled the plumbing. With every day I became more and more disheartened as the ridiculous search extended into my car, garden and garage. By then, all my neighbours knew that a diamond was lost somewhere on the property, and I even went as far as offering a reward to anyone who found it.

In the meantime, I took the ring back to the jeweller who had designed it and, on examination, it was verified that the tube setting was split, and that was why the diamond had fallen out. Undaunted, I went on to involve the SA Jewellery Council, who were hot on the case, saying they had not seen this happen with such a setting before. Being very helpful, they as much as told me that the diamond would be replaced on the basis of bad workmanship. Still the search continued. Everything was turned upside down, but my precious diamond was nowhere to be seen. I didn't want the diamond replaced, all I wanted was my diamond back, even though I realised as each day went by that my chances of recovering it were a million to one. Still, I prayed, "Lord, help me find my diamond."

Twelve days later, again on my way to work, I decided to pick up the local newspaper at our complex postal area. I knew I had been there on the day the diamond fell out of the ring, but I reasoned that if it had fallen out there, it was long gone, locked in someone's tyre tread or trampled over, as everybody in the complex walks.
and drives around that particular spot. As it happened, on that day the sun was shining in my face, and I screeched to a stop. I saw something brilliant, gleaming on the cobblestone drive. So brightly was it shining that I swear a blind man could have seen it. My, my, my diamond was there, literally waving at me, and my joy knew no bounds as I stooped to the ground and retrieved it. Tears filled my eyes at the realisation that my frantic search was over. In great excitement I sped off to the designer, whose face was a picture when I showed him what was in my hot little hand. His relief was enormous, but not as big as mine.

The ring was back on my hand, reinforced at no expense to myself, and somehow looking twice as lovely, forever a symbol of God's faithfulness in my heart and now on my hand. The Creator of all things great and small, the One who holds the universe together and opens eyes so they can see, is the same God who closed everybody else's eyes and opened mine that I should see. Diamonds are precious indeed, but even more precious is the One who created the diamond and everything, including ourselves, the Lord of Glory who told us to seek and we shall find, to ask and it shall be granted to us. A gratitude filled my soul because I knew He was watching over me, and He promises in his Word that He will do the same for each and everyone who puts their trust in Him.
I was gloriously saved and I knew it, having had a Damascus Road experience which left me in no doubt that something amazing had happened to me. Those around me were quite flabbergasted. The news spread like wildfire and it seemed that everybody knew that Maureen Woods had gone through a radical conversion experience. She had become a Christian and had turned 180 degrees around in the opposite direction. Beware! Watch out! My worldly friends ran a mile from me for fear that the same thing would happen to them.

"Horror of horrors," they said. "How could such a thing have happened to, Maureen, of all people? She was such a fun-loving person, and now she will take off all her makeup, scrape her hair into an awful bun and become miserable. Oh, what dreadful news."

I wondered at the time why my salvation experience had been such a dramatic one. But it was dramatic simply because I am dramatic, and God clearly meets us where we are. I have always been an, all or nothing, kind of person and will always be, so God revealed Himself to me in this fashion. I accepted all and left nothing behind.

Indeed, my spiritual awakening caused me the very next day to walk away from the world and all its attractions and pleasures that had held me fast for thirty-three years. What power! I presented myself to the pastor under whose ministry I had been saved the night before, and volunteered my time and secretarial skills as a free gift to the ministry. Such was my confidence that God had called me and would therefore take care of all my material needs, that I was standing firmly on the Scripture, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.

I positively bubbled with joy and excitement in the assurance of my salvation and had no intention of removing my make-up or putting my hair in a bun! That wonderful feeling of liberty has remained in and with me from that day to this, a never-ending source of joy because I understood immediately what salvation really meant. Nobody explained it to me, I just knew and acted accordingly.

Everything in my life was immediately challenged and rearranged. This Christianity was what I had longed for all my life, but, because it had never been presented to me with such victory and power, I had never had the opportunity to consider it. I also had a mistaken idea of what a Christian should be, down-trodden, uninteresting, unattractive, and so on. Little did I know that overnight I would become one, and I certainly did not feel any of the above. In fact, I noticed with joy that the Christians around me were not like that either, proving that a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing.

I remembered that about a year before my conversion I was walking through a busy shopping centre in Durban, South Africa, when a woman came up to me and simply spoke the words, "Jesus loves you." No other words could have been more astounding. The effect was mind-boggling and my emotions ran riot. I still recall that woman's face as if it were yesterday. She sowed truth into my life and that was the purpose of her statement. Very effectively she touched my life and then disappeared. I now do the same, as often as the Lord leads, and watch the faces of those confronted with much interest. I hope that I too will be remembered in gratitude as I remember the lady who said those words to me.

If only God's army was willing and available daily to be used in what would sometimes seem to our natural minds as something silly and ridiculous. Instead, they sit at home and pray that God will use them. Meanwhile, there is a dying world out there, with few doing anything about it. God is in the habit of using the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and, let's face it, we are either fools for the sake of this world, or we are fools for Jesus Christ. What is your choice?

How wondrous it is that the Lord of Glory, the Creator of all that is in this universe, stands and knocks at our hearts individually, and only enters where He is welcome, for the door-handle is on the inside of our lives and only we can open the door. The question as to where exactly we will spend eternity rests entirely with us. Individually we will stand before God one day and I believe that at that moment our entire lives will flash past us. Will God say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant, enter in," or will God say, "Depart from me, for I never knew you"? There are no grey areas; you are either for Jesus Christ or against Him.

You have to be as trusting as a child to receive the Gospel. Christianity cuts clean across all colour, creed and class boundaries. It makes us all simply sinners saved by grace. It is the great leveller.

In a race it is not the start that counts, nor the even pace of the long stretches. It is when the goal is in sight that heart and nerves and courage and muscles are strained almost beyond human endurance, almost to breaking point. So it is with you. When the goal is in sight, and as you cry to God, He Himself provides the
encouragement to spur you on to the victory, which is already in sight. In the annals of Heaven, the saddest records are those that tell of many who ran well, with brave hearts, until in sight of the goal, of victory, and then their courage failed them. Whereas the whole host of heaven longed to cry out just how near the end was, to implore the last spurt, they watched as the runner slowed down and then withdrew from the race, never to know until the last day of revelation how near they had been to victory.

Just think for a moment what it means to be a friend of God. To have a relationship with God means having a power greater and more far-reaching than that of any earthly king. That's what it means when we say, Greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. No invention, no electricity, no magnetism, no gold could achieve one millionth of a part of all that you can achieve by the power of God's spirit as it dwells in a child of God, miraculously, at the moment of being born again. It is an awesome realisation to ponder.

Let us remember that it is not what we do, but rather who we belong to that brings about this miracle-working power. This does not mean that being a child of God shields you from the hurts, disappointment and pain with which this world is filled. On the contrary, the child of God can suffer even more. But our strength is in Jesus, and He promises never to leave us or forsake us. With this knowledge and with his grace, a child of God can suffer anything and overcome. Think for a moment of those outside of Christ. Who do these people cry out to and cling to when a crisis hits, and believe me, they hit everybody from time to time. For these people it usually means total devastation, from which some never recover, whereas to the Christian it is promised that, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose, (Rom. 8:28).

I am really pleased that the God we serve is an, ALL OR NOTHING GOD. His Word clearly eliminates all grey areas. As He leads and we follow, we find that it is a narrow road. We can choose the wide road, the road to destruction at any point in our lives, but for what? It is at the end of the narrow road that we will meet face to face with Jesus, who said, I and the Father are one; no-one can come to the Father but by me.

Jesus paid the, ALL OR NOTHING, price for you and me. Does it not stand to reason that we are called to pay the same price for Him? Love works both ways, or it doesn't work at all.

Jesus is irresistible! It was He who said, Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth. (Isa. 45:22). Not for merit was salvation, the promise was to ALL who looked. To look, is surely within the power of everyone. One look, suffices and salvation follows. Look, and you are saved from despair, worry and care. Look, and into you there flows a peace beyond all understanding, a power new and vital, a joy wonderful indeed. Look, and keep looking. Doubt flees, joy reigns and hope conquers. Life, eternal life, is yours because the choice is yours.
Chapter 9

The Beautiful Lady Statue

On the way to meet a friend, walking through and browsing in a fashionable shopping centre, I spotted an exquisite lady statue. She was something to behold, quite heavenly, depicting a tall lady perfectly proportioned with an upturned face, arms held high as if in worship and adoration. I stopped in my tracks staring at the statue, not having seen anything quite so beautiful in a long time.

A few days later I was in that centre again and found myself going out of my way to stop and admire the beautiful lady. This time somebody else was standing next to me, also admiring her and I struck up a conversation with the stranger about the excellence of this exquisite work of art. How I would love to take her home to live with me, I thought to myself. Home! Have you forgotten, I reminded myself, you don't have a home.

How right I was. For the past 15 years, in the prime of my life I had been travelling around the world, encouraging the body of Christ and preaching the Gospel. Having a home was not that high on my list of priorities. However, I sensed that a home was one of the things that God was preparing for me and in my heart of hearts, I knew that day was not far away.

For the past year, back in Johannesburg, South Africa, I had been house sitting and it had been a year full of action, of moving without any permanency, not an easy thing to do but necessary in view of the fact that I had nothing in the material realm. When you start from scratch, the way up is long and hard. Still, I had met masses of people during this time and was richer and hopefully wiser for the experience, intending to continue house sitting until I was equipped to move into something that I expected eventually to rent. Did I intend dragging this fragile, beautiful lady statue around with me until that day? Yes, I liked her enough to consider doing just that!

That night I dreamt about the statue. She was worth dreaming about, so elegant and graceful. She was more than a statue. She was a symbol to me. The following day I found myself in the shop asking the price of the statue and, without giving it another thought, I gave everything I had on me to the shop owner as a deposit to hold her for me. Since the price was high, I gave him a reassuring smile saying I would be back.

Life went on, and I continued house sitting, knowing that in God's perfect timing He would provide me
with a nest of my own. In my dreams, I was already living in and decorating this nest I knew would soon come about; faith being, the evidence of things hoped for, the substance of things unseen.

What I hoped for was something small, something beautiful, set in a private garden, a place fit for the daughter of the King. In this place I could see myself and my beautiful lady statue residing in peace both looking upwards in adoration, worshipping God whom I sincerely believed would make all this come to pass.

How we change in our understanding. As children of Christ, just like natural children, we demand things, attention and action, and to a child God graciously gives. However, as we grow up in God, we learn to wait and trust, two necessary qualities of growth which are never seen in a child. It is these two qualities that meet our needs. Without stress and strain, they come naturally as an outgrowth of our lifestyle in Christ. Seeking first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you is a promise that works, just as all God's promises work when they are applied to your life. This Scripture was the first I ever understood, the first that I ever read when I was born again. The truth of it literally fused into my being. No ifs, no buts. It has worked for me and it will work for you because God is no respecter of persons. God does not love any one human being more than he loves another. If He did, He would not be God, and we who believe in Him would of all men be most miserable. However, the good news is that we walk in victory, even though it might not seem like it at the time. When all is said and done, and the race of life is over, if we are truly living that life, we are victorious always and forever.

In the meantime, the beautiful lady statue stayed with a sold label attached to her in the shop. I thought of her every now and then and smiled to myself, knowing that she was indeed a symbol to signify a turning-point in my life. I kept trusting and hoping in things unseen, expecting them to come into the seen realm, in other words, making the impossible possible, simply by believing. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. All who follow his precepts have good understanding, (Ps 111:10).

From house to house I went, fulfilling the assignments that were entrusted to me. All the time I was interacting with new and different people, getting to know their values and reasoning, and marvelling at how houses made of mortar take on the personalities of those who live in them, who are made of dust. Some homes I lived in comfortably, but there were others that gave off definite bad vibes amazing. Some home-owners expected the impossible from a house sitter, thinking they were hiring some macho security guard in skirts, who would stand by and protect their possessions with her life, and even at the risk of her life. Others were more reasonable and realised that a house sitter is merely a deterrent.

Many ways to show your character, and many made me smile. What priceless lessons we learn in life about the make-up of our fellow man.

During this time, my object was achieved. I was living rent-free and therefore able to accumulate a few bits and pieces which would eventually grace the home that I was trusting God to provide for me, and that day was growing closer and closer. I was house sitting a lovely home in a beautiful garden setting in Sandton, delightful in all ways. The owner had recently been widowed and had developed the property by building five more units. She was a lovely Christian lady with two teenage daughters and I had the pleasure of getting to know her.

I moved on from there to another property and one day I was surprised to receive a telephone call from my friend, offering me a beautiful one-bed roomed cottage on her property which had just become available. I smiled to myself again, and myself smiled back, certain that it was not me who had initiated this offer. When I was shown what was being offered, all resistance crumbled. It was above and beyond all my hopes and expectations: clean, white, small, private and perfect in every way. Without giving it a second thought, I agreed to rent it and my next thought, despite being without numerous necessary things, was to pay for and collect the beautiful lady statue. I knew just where I would position her.

Three months had passed since I had put the deposit on the statue and the next day I headed joyfully for the shop to pick up the lady.

"I have come to collect the beautiful lady statue," I said with excitement to the shop owner, who remembered me.

I watched him go a paler shade of white, and heard him say, obviously in shock, "But, Mrs. Woods, only yesterday a lady collected and paid for the statue on your behalf!"

I stared at him in amazement, saying, "Excuse me, but how could this be?" Nobody even knew about this statue, except the lady who stood next to me all those months ago admiring the statue through the window. I remembered this woman vaguely, so I asked the shop owner to describe what she looked like. His description fitted and I just stood there shocked and in tears. The shop owner was embarrassed and upset, and added the news that the company who manufactured these statues had gone out of business some time back, with the result that no more statues would be available. It was my turn to pale as I realised that this woman had got away with my deposit and my statue.

I wiped the tears from my eyes and, before I knew it, I was comforting the shop owner, saying, "I am a Christian and I forgive the woman who lied and cheated to get the statue. Obviously her need to have it was very great"

Now it was time for the shop owner to get tearful. His shock at my reaction was priceless. "I am a
Christian too," he said excitedly and only then did I notice that he spoke with a speech impediment, as he went on to tell me that six months before he had had a thrombosis and had died on the operating table. For some fleeting moments, at the point of death, he had seen the Lord with his arms open wide, welcoming him. All pain was gone and he was whole in every sense of the word.

The man went on to elaborate that up until that point he was just born again, but since this incident, he had been consumed with the love of God and the desire to worship and serve Him. He could not stop talking about the greatness and wonder of eternal things, going on to explain that on the operating table the surgeon had used shock treatment on him and at that moment he was suddenly back in his body instead of being with the Lord. He was back in his pain-racked body, fighting for his life, and the bottom line was that he would have preferred to have remained with the Lord.

Needless to say, the two of us forgot all about the beautiful lady statue as we now spoke in depth and at length about things that really mattered, things of real consequence. We were brother and sister and it took an incident like this to reveal it.

Mysterious are the thoughts and ways of God. Perhaps the statue had become too important in my life and I needed a gentle prod from the Lord as to where my priorities lay. Nothing happens without the Lord's knowledge and as I released the statue, and the lady who had taken her, to the Lord, I was set free to minister to my brother. Thank you Lord, that you lifted my eyes higher than the problem, or else I may never have found him.

A week later I was walking through a different shopping centre on the opposite side of town. The last thing on my mind was the statue. I was simply walking along, praising the Lord, when suddenly I heard my name being called. I clearly heard, "Maureen," and then again, "Maureen!" I stopped in my tracks to see who was calling me. As I turned around, out of the corner of my eye I saw the beautiful lady statue standing proudly on a tall pedestal. I could have sworn she smiled at me. Blinking for a moment, I found myself running into the shop. I happened to have sufficient cash on me to buy the statue, at a much reduced price. The new lady statue looked even more beautiful.

This time, with joy in my step, I held her close to me and together she and I went home. We are never to be parted again, in the atmosphere of beauty where we both now live, in my little garden cottage that God provided, just as I knew He would, a place fit for the daughter of a King.
Deep in concentration, I was startled to hear a girl's voice say, "Excuse me, can I sweep your floor?"
I looked up to find a cute young Jewish girl with a delightful smile standing in the doorway of my office with a broom. "Hi," I said, "I haven't seen you around before. I am Maureen, very pleased to meet you. What is your name?"
"I am Eti and I started work here today. Sorry, my English is not very good."
"Please don't feel bad, my Hebrew is not very good either," I said, "perhaps we can help each other"
"Tov meod," (very good) answered Eti with another of her beautiful smiles. "Are you busy?" Eti inquired.
"Never too busy to make a new friend? I answered and, pulling up a chair, said, "Sit down Eti and tell me about yourself"
Suddenly, I noticed that she was nervous. "Not now, later I am supposed to be working."  "OK, what time will you be free?" I asked.
"Arba ve reh-ka," (quarter past four) she replied.
"Zeh beseder," (that's alright) I said, "come and have tea with me here then."
"I want to sweep your floor please," said Eti.
"Thank you, please go ahead. You have a beautiful smile, Eti," I said. She smiled again.
At a quarter past four, there stood Eti. Over tea we started to get to know one another. I listened very intently and with interest as she told me about her life, her background, her hopes and dreams for the future. A member of a large close-knit religious Jewish family, she had lost one of her brothers while he was serving in the army. Sad to say, there is hardly a family in Israel that is still intact.
Eti was working during the school holidays, hoping to make a bit of money. Even that first day, we felt a bond between us, which stands strong to this day. Two people from two vastly different worlds, reaching out with understanding to each other.
I shared a little about my life, the fact that I was a born-again Christian and felt called to take the Gospel to the nations and especially to Israel. Eti was quite intrigued. From that day on, we spent many wonderful hours together, comparing our thoughts on God and life in general.
Eventually, the school holidays were over and Eti's parents decided to send her to a religious Jewish boarding school in a neighbouring town. Eti was not looking forward to boarding school, but she went because she wanted to honour her parents. How I loved Eti. Her desire to do right was clearly a part of her character. I blessed the day that she had walked into my life.
It took a lot of adjusting for Eti to be away from home and many a night she was crying when she called me. Our friendship was valuable and, even though Eti was young enough to be my daughter, it made no difference. From the beginning, I sensed God's hand upon her. In any way possible, I would encourage her to be the person that God had wanted her to be.
Just as we all look different, so we all have weaknesses and strengths. By building on the strengths, the weaknesses become strengths too.
It wasn't long before Eti was called into the headmistress's office. It had been brought to her attention that Eti was making phone calls to a certain telephone number in Metulla and at that number lived a born-again Christian. Eti was reminded that she was a religious Jew at a religious Jewish school and that she had nothing in common with me. Much to Eti's amazement, she was cautioned about keeping company with such a radical. Eti was in a furious frame of mind when she called me, straight after the incident, relaying word-for-word what had happened.
Eti had been severely reprimanded because she had told the headmistress that there was no way she was going to stop the contact which she enjoyed so much with me, stating that "Maureen was her best friend and the most understanding person she had ever met, radical or not." It takes courage to stand with those who stand alone. Eti had just experienced this truth in real life and in so doing, she had taken her first step towards becoming a radical herself. Our relationship was not in any way weakened. Quite to the contrary, this incident caused a strengthening. Just as God's Word tells us, what the enemy intends for harm, God turns around for good.
On occasions like this, we should not be disheartened. In fact, we should count it all joy. We are the salt of the earth, the world knows we are different and that is what unnerves them. The truth is they would prefer
that we did not exist, but God has a very real purpose for our being here and it is He who has established us. The world is threatened by individuals who are just that, we do not fit into the world's mould. We are people who face the same disappointments in life and yet we are noticeable by the fact that, even though sometimes we are knocked down, we are never knocked out. The overcoming power of Christ is what sustains and propels us forever upward. Hallelujah!

If that is the definition of a radical, then I am happy to say, that's me! That is what being the salt of the earth is all about.

We are rejected by the world, but then so was our Saviour, Jesus. What an honour it is to be associated with Him. Jesus didn't say we would be popular, but He did say that all who live godly lives would suffer persecution. This incident was a very small thing, but it carried the power to destroy, had we let it. Instead, we smile and pray in love for those who are against us.

Take heart, beloved, no matter what we go through in this world, remember, *Eye has not seen nor ear heard what God has prepared for those who love Him,* (1 Cor 2.9).

Knowing my friend Eti, I am sure she wouldn't mind my sharing these truths, that others should also be encouraged.
Chapter 11

The Harvest Is Plentiful
The Workers Are Few

Dreams of adventure, the world of imagination, make up the very essence of childhood where the dividing line between reality and fantasy is often smudged.

I wanted to fly. One day I took my umbrella and decided to fly from a tall pillar which I thought would do for starters. I did fly a few feet and it was wonderful. I also fell, but I didn't mind because, you see, I had flown!

Perhaps the seeds of many adventures and travels were sown in that desire, to launch out, to take risks. Certainly I acknowledge that the Creator imbued me with an adventurous spirit. Names of many places in the world have threaded through my stories . . . South Africa, Zimbabwe, Jerusalem, Lebanon, Cyprus, Canada, America, Hawaii, the United Kingdom. And people say, "It must be very exciting to travel to all these places."

Perhaps you too are one of those people who get a tug at the heartstrings when a plane flies overhead, a ship's hooter sounds on the waterfront or you hear the whistle of a train in the distance. On the other hand, you may be one of those intrepid bundu-bashers who think nothing of spending a great deal of time and energy, not to mention money, in conquering a mountain peak, diving to the depths of a lake, or traversing the Arctic wastes, and loving every minute.

You could be one of those people who, since childhood, has loved to meet people, especially different people. Stories of Red Indians, Eskimos, Peruvians, Polynesians and Kikuyus captured your imagination and maybe you dreamed of destinations such as Singapore, Rio de Janeiro, Moscow or Reykjavik plastered all over your suitcase. Here is the challenge; have you ever considered that you may be one of the estimated ten percent of the Body of Christ who are called out ones to go to places near or far, carrying the Good News and bringing in a harvest of souls to the Kingdom? That this will become your greatest ambition, your burning desire, your all-consuming passion? Other things will be added to you, although you will not seek them.

What, you may ask, is a missionary? There are many role models for you to study, from the apostle Paul to David Livingstone, from Timothy to Jackie Pullinger. In the Kingdom of God, the missionary is the sent-out one ,or apostle, and is a person whose passion is to make the Lord Jesus known to the whole world.

A true missionary is also someone who will risk everything for the sake of the lost of the world. He or she is completely under the command of the Lord Jesus, submits to the Word of God and leading of the Holy
Spirit and is willing to learn obedience. The goal of the true missionary is to please and glorify God in whatever task he is called upon to perform. It does not matter where he is stationed, for such is always at home in the Father's care, regardless of what the landscape may be.

To be called a missionary, even when it was said in disparaging terms or when it led to a degree of persecution, was and still is for me a title of the greatest honour and privilege. I am one of those souls who says, "Here I am God, send me." The mission field, whether here, there, or anywhere else He establishes you, is fulfilling, rewarding and excitingly designed by God Almighty Himself to give you a life spent in total and absolute satisfaction.

The Harvest Is Plentiful, But The Workers Are Few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the Harvest to send workers into his harvest, (Mt 9:37). This is the simplest way to regard yourself, as a worker. Let us look at the phrase, The Workers Are Few. Ever since Jesus spoke those words, the supply of workers in the fields of soul-winning has always been pitifully low. Today the need is the greatest it has ever been in the history of mankind as we are now in the last days. More people are alive today and more souls are at stake than the total number of people who have ever lived upon the face of the earth in all our human history! It is estimated that there are approximately 250 million believers throughout the world, so, taking the fact that ten percent are called as missionaries or evangelists, there should be 25,000,000 working to spread the message of Jesus Christ. The missionary is only one part of the army of God, but a very vital and visible part. The enemy forces, (Satan and his demons), will do everything in their power to stop believers from enlisting in this VIP squad. There are many ploys used by Satan to attack your thoughts and these can easily become translated into excuses:

But I'm not called, or the call couldn't be for me. Remember that the Scriptures say; Go ye into all the world, (Mk 16:15). But my family and friends would frown upon my going. He who loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me, (Mt 10:37). We are not to use approval of family as our criterion. While still honouring parents and esteeming friends, we must be willing to leave all, (Mk 10:29).

But I need to get married first and then maybe my mate will want to serve God full-time, rather than me going alone. No. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you, (Mt 6:33). If you are not yet married, seek diligently to find your calling in the Body. This applies whether you go out as a missionary or not. Then, if you are meant to be married, trust God to bring the right man or woman into your life to serve alongside you in your calling, (read Mt 6:8).

But the mission field is dangerous, God would not have me put myself in danger of disease or hostilities, would he? It is all a matter of our priorities. Do we look at circumstances or listen to His voice and call? If anyone wishes to come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it, (Mk 5:34b-35). In practical terms in these last days, there is really no place or country that can be called safe, and disease knows no boundaries.

But I could not afford to get the training and raise the necessary finances to place myself, (and my family), in the field. The financial situation is a very real area of attack and continues even when one is out in the field. It is a Scriptural fact that wherever God leads, He provides for us, training us to trust Him for every need.

But I don't have any special talents and abilities that would qualify my being a missionary. A good attitude to have, you are just the person God is looking for and you will depend on Him. However, our concept of a missionary's job is very stereotyped. If you have already been trained for a vocation, He can use you in that capacity, be it accountant, teacher, mechanic, nurse, secretary or one of many other categories.

But how could I commit myself for years and years to the mission field without having a chance to see what it would be like? Fear is the basis of this subtle attack and is one of the reasons why missionary organisations give excellent training so that you will be adequately equipped.

But I'm not ready to make that kind of sacrifice and commitment. This is where the real heat of the battle takes place and you have to bring your WILL into the firing line, remembering that you are under God's orders, That you are not your own, you have been bought with a price, (1 Cor 6:20). When the victory has been won in the area of your will, you will have great peace and you will be in the place where you can hear his voice; My sheep hear my voice, (John 10:27).

Now I know that many of you have not identified with much of the above. Perhaps you have skimmed over the preceding paragraphs thinking that they certainly do not apply to you, that you are part of the ninety percent that are not called to go to places far from home.

Not so fast! The call to spread and share the Good News is to the whole Body of Christ, whether you are metabolically in Jerusalem, Samaria, or at the end of the earth.

It is obvious that many Christians are called to reach out to the lost in ghettos, red-light districts, and homosexual communities in their own areas. There are always those faithful wives and mothers who diligently
make Christ known to their doctors, plumbers, and PTA groups. Wherever Christians are employed, whether in hospitals, factories or offices, they are called to bring the Good News both directly and through life-style evangelism. All of these can be every bit as challenging as going to Europe or South America, as can raising your own children in the fear and the nurture of the Lord, (Eph 6:4).
Chapter 12

The Injured Mugger

The incident I am about to relate is, as are all the subjects I write about, true. I purposely use myself as the key figure as I am not shy to embarrass myself and would rather criticise myself than somebody else. If I had to relive this incident, and I pray to God I never will, I believe I would handle it differently because of the lesson this incident taught me.

I was back in Jerusalem, it was winter and I was walking to church with my Bible under my arm, praises on my lips and a smile on my face. I was wrapped up in a heavy winter coat which had graciously been given to me by some Canadian believers who know how to dress for the cold. The sun was just going down and the night was in sight. All was well.

I am a tall lady and in Israel quite above average in height. I also just happen to look like a foreigner by my colouring and the way I dress. This has made my missionary activities all the more interesting, believe me. Sometimes it works for me and sometimes against me, and in this incident with the mugger, it would seem that my appearance worked against me. To the mugger, I must have looked like a prosperous visitor to Israel. Meanwhile, the only things that were prosperous about me were my appearance, my attitude to life, and of course my spirit, which is ultra prosperous, adventurous and tingling with life, looking to be involved in everything to the glory of God. Minding my own business is something I have never learnt to do, and never intend doing! Life would be so boring if I had to mind my own business.

Anyway, as I walked down the street I suddenly became aware of a noise behind me. As I turned around, I looked into the angry face of a man in his mid-twenties about to pounce on me. My reaction was immediate and as he leapt at me, I knocked him flying with
my elbow. Now he was really angry and came at me with full force, throwing me to the ground and, at the same time, covering my eyes with his free hand. The more he tried to prize my handbag away from me, the harder I clung to it. The bag was being twisted completely out of shape as the mugger and I wrestled on the ground. My head was bleeding as I lashed out at him with everything I had. I screamed, but nobody came to my assistance and it seemed a long time that we thrashed it out on the ground. Eventually his brute strength got the bag from me and the fight was over. I was left lying on the road and he went off limping, back the way he had come.

I lay there for a few moments, stunned. My face, my head and my coat were badly stained with blood, the mugger's blood and mine. Things hadn't gone quite the way the mugger had planned. He too would be licking his wounds for a while, but the cold hard facts were that he had my handbag, which meant he had my house keys, my bus ticket and, worst of all, my address book. It was my most prized possession, with the names and addresses of my Christian family all over the world, of which there was no other record. He also had my hairbrush and my lipstick, another great loss to me!

Why had I fought so for the handbag, I asked myself as I lay there. I was fighting for the principle. How dare he, the mugger, have done what he did to me? I was crying as I got up and tried to rearrange myself, horrified that in the attack I had lost all my Christian contacts that had taken me ten years to accumulate. By the time I was upright, I was back in focus, greatly disappointed by my loss, but thankful that I myself was alright. I had lived to tell the tale.

Suddenly people came forward to help, the police were called and we circled the area in the police car looking for my attacker, who was, of course, nowhere to be found. Locksmiths had to be called to access my rented house and new locks had to be fitted. This cost money that I did not have. My head ached from the injuries I had sustained and the next day I was expected to speak to a group of Christians in London.

I boarded the plane to the UK in the same coat, with noticeable blood-stains all down the one side, and when I was seated, I again wondered why I had fought the mugger. Hadn't I always advocated that if anybody wanted anything from you, you should give it willingly, no matter what? So why had I done what I had done, I questioned myself.

The only answer I could think of was that it was the principle of the matter. Meanwhile, back in Jerusalem, in my absence, all kinds of interesting things were happening. The mugger, limping as he went, must have thought he really had something of great importance in the handbag. After all, why else would the silly lady defend it as she had. To his disappointment, he found nothing of value in the handbag and in his haste to get rid of the evidence, he had thrown my twisted and mutilated handbag over the hedge of one of the houses along the road. It so happened that the owner of the house was sipping a gin and looking out of his window when he saw the handbag being thrown into his garden. He immediately retrieved it, saw my name in the address book and the next morning my handbag was at the police station with everything intact, awaiting my return.

In London, the first thing I did was to have my bloodstained winter coat cleaned and then went about the Lord's business as usual. Every now and then the thought came to me, "Why did you defend yourself in that awful incident of the mugging?" The Lord kept impressing upon me that I did not have to defend myself. He Himself was the defender and for as long as I protected myself in any way whatsoever, I would not be provided with divine protection.

Deep down I knew this was right. It had not been necessary to fight for my so-called principles. That issue was the Lord's. Who is the judge? The Lord or the children of God? Clearly God is the judge and if we are smart, we will leave such things to Him.

Ten days later I returned to Jerusalem, still nursing my wounds and my bruises, to find
a note on my door telling me to contact the police. The next morning I presented myself at
the police station, only to be handed my battered handbag, the contents of which were just
as I had left them. As I was rejoicing and praising the Lord, He impressed upon me how able
He is to correct and control situations. Because I had taken everything into my hands, I had
a hefty locksmith bill and a discomforted body. The lesson I learned is; DO NOT TAKE
YOUR LIFE INTO YOUR OWN HANDS.

I had my address-book, my bus-ticket and my comb and lipstick, and I went away
smiling and wiser in the knowledge that nothing happens without a purpose. When the chips
are down, do we really believe that God will take care of us? Because, if we don't believe
that, then who are we fooling?

I can only encourage you all with my own experience. For me it was a decision I made,
following hard on the heels of my conversion. I was thirty years old and had convinced
myself that I was content with my achievements, being in the prime of life. In a moment of
time I was made aware of my utter nothingness and realised that my life up to that point had
been a complete fiasco, wrapped up in pride, materialism, and gross darkness.

So radical was this conversion experience that the very next day I presented myself to
Pastor Fred Roberts, who had given the call to make the decision the night before. I told him
that, as of that day, I was walking away from the world I had been involved in and wanted
to answer the call on my life that had come clearly from my Saviour. I would not be
dissuaded, regardless of rebuffs from every direction.

My precious friends no longer wanted to know me, but what a glorious new family
God has given me all over the world. I would willingly do it all over again. My only regret
is, why didn’t somebody care enough to tell me sooner?
All through the scriptures we are told not to be anxious, not to be fearful, not to hoard or save, because the invincible Almighty God knows our every need. We are also told that we need to believe in Him and his mighty working power. *All things are possible, only believe*, (Mk 9:23).

It is a fact that it is difficult for us to believe in God, because in most cases we have had excellent training in unbelief. I'll only believe what I can see was supposed to be the height of wisdom, when in fact the complete opposite is true wisdom.

We live in a world of externals, where we think everything just happens. We are too ignorant to know that everything that happens to us happens because we ourselves set in motion the machinery which produces good or evil in our pathway.

We do not know that words and thoughts are a form of dynamite and should be handled very carefully, with wisdom and understanding. We speak words of anger, resentment or self-pity, then we wonder why life is so hard.

*Let us leave behind that old mind-set, and trust in God, learning to be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God*, (Phil 4:6). Could anything be more simple or direct? Has anxiety become a habit? Do old thought patterns you have built up in the subconscious hang on like barnacles clinging to an ocean liner? Just as the ocean liner is put into dry-dock every once in a while to have the barnacles scraped off, so your mental barnacles must go through the same procedure if you seriously desire a higher way of living.

The average person resents, resists, or regrets. He resents people he knows and even those he does not know! He resists everything and therefore has resisted himself. He regrets what he did or what he did not do. It is very wearying to be with people like this who usually don't have any real friends simply because they have exhausted them. The key to life is not to live in the past, or to be dreaming of the future, but: *Behold now is the acceptable time . . now is the day of salvation*, (2 Cor 6:2).

Now is the time. Live this day to the full in blessing and thanksgiving, and when tomorrow comes you will do the same. True freedom is to be unafraid and to live fully in the NOW, to be fearless in using what we have, knowing that our Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills. His abundance is inexhaustible, and we should know that fearless faith and praying in God’s will release the supply. Jesus Christ taught us to trust Him and not be afraid. There are 366 scriptures that command us not to fear. He knew that fear was as dangerous as uncontrolled electrical forces. Words and thoughts must be handled with wisdom and understanding. The imagination is man's workshop and an imagination running wild is an extremely dangerous thing; building up fear pictures is just about as safe as riding a bucking bronco!

There is only one way of getting rid of fear, and that is to transmute it into faith. Fear is the complete opposite of faith. *Why are ye fearful, 0 ye of little faith?* These words ring down through the centuries. Jesus Christ taught that the Father could be absolutely trusted to guide, protect and provide for his children. The presence of fear explains why so few recognise and operate in this truth. Jesus Christ demonstrated this trust in the omnipotence of the Almighty over and over again in order to convince his followers.
How are we to get rid of this anxiety, which we might call anti-faith? There is only one way; the way of David against Goliath, the giant. BE COURAGEOUS and come against the very real bondage of your fear in the mighty Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Trusting God is like walking a tightrope. Doubt and fear cause you to lose your balance and fall off into lack and limitation. No matter how many times you fail, give the problem into his hands. Soon you will acquire the habit of walking with Him in every situation and not trusting yourself. Then, watch out world you will walk joyfully into the Kingdom that was designed with you in mind, created by God and explained by Jesus, whose message was, *Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your request be made known to God,* (Phil 4:6).

This is certainly a wonderful arrangement, all in favour of the believer, who, being free from worry and fear, asks for his needs with thanksgiving and is given what is good for him.

One of the most dramatic Bible miracles was the healing of the man who had been blind from birth. The opponents of Jesus questioned the man, hoping to find something against Jesus. But the healed man would only say, "*One thing I know; whereas I was blind, now I can see.*" This is a marvellous statement to make to yourself. Whereas I was blind, now I can see. Blind to opportunities, blind to appearances, even blind in so far as making friends of enemies. When you are blind you are capable of every error, but when you are alive to God, your eyes are opened and you know who your real enemy is; Satan.

God in his mercy places people around you and uses every person and situation for your good. Hindrances are friendly and obstacles are stepping-stones to your becoming the person God means you to be.
Washington DC

Washington DC. If any place could be called a town of competitors, Washington DC would be top of the list. It is very much a case of who can outdo whom! It is an environment that breeds excesses in all forms. Washington DC is a very glamorous city and its people mirror that image. I asked my friends living there to take me to the seedy side of town where I could speak to the people on the streets. They laughed and, tongue in cheek, replied, "Washington DC is all seedy, corrupt through and through. The only difference here is that we hide the fact that it is seedy." "Here," they said, "people are too busy with their selfish pursuits to stop and talk. They will not be interested in what you have to say, neither will they expect you to be interested in what they have to say."

"Really, is that so?" I answered.

Yes, the principality over Washington DC was definitely power; power to wheel and deal, power to manipulate, a power so real that you could actually feel it in the air. Having travelled so extensively around the world, I have become very aware of spiritual strongholds over cities, so I guess it wasn't too surprising to find that the capital city of America had its own principality.

Have you ever wondered why people gravitate to different cities around the world? It is the spiritual appeal that attracts them, and often the people being drawn there are unaware of this. Drawn for leisure, for pleasure, for action, for perversion, or for power, as was the case with this city called, Washington DC, which gives the outward appearance of being so beautiful. I was being taken out to lunch by four Christian women, all dear friends with a love and understanding for Israel. They were all firmly established in different Christian ministries, all doing exceptionally well in their own respective fields and all terrified that God would call them to forsake everything and travel the world with just one suitcase, as He had called me to do. Clearly they thought my life very scary, but they were fascinated all the same. I, on the other hand, was wary of their so-called security. No way would I have swapped one day of my exciting life for one of theirs.

How marvellous that God prepares each one of us individually for that which He has called us to do with our lives, each different, just as He made each snowflake and every fingerprint and face different. Here we were all soldiers in the army of God, each prepared for battle, each with a specific task. What an excellent plan, giving humanity a purpose on the earth and at the same time achieving the plan and purposes of God for the ages.
After a delicious lunch, my friends wanted to do some shopping, so we agreed to meet back at the same spot in an hour. I strolled around observing the people, wondering if what my friends had told me about DC people was true. I was admiring the beautiful merchandise in the exceptionally beautiful mall. I was hoping for a bit of action, so it wasn't surprising when I came upon it. Why do I always come upon the action? It is simply because I live in an attitude of expectancy, availability and flexibility, wanting to be used for the glory of God and believing that our days always count, saying, "Lord, use me, send me, and being prepared to go wherever the need.

In the distance I noticed a group of about ten men and women demonstrating with placards, very noticeable in bright red jerseys. As I approached them, I saw with real interest that they were wearing slogans on their jerseys and making loud statements about apartheid in South Africa. How very interesting. Obviously I stopped to listen to them. How could I resist? They were making a point about not supporting any product made in South Africa and slamming the structure and politics of South Africa. I couldn't help but notice that everyone around them seemed to be avoiding them, as if disinterested. Perhaps my DC friends were right after all.

With a prayer in my heart that God would use me and a huge smile on my face, I walked purposefully among the group of demonstrators. All ten of them descended on me as a fly caught in a trap, and they all had something destructive to tell me about South Africa, some of which was sadly true, but most of which was just hearsay propaganda.

"Why is the South African situation such an issue?" I asked, to which I received ten different answers! We spoke about some of the problems to which they referred and no one was prepared to say anything in favour of my country. Strange, I concluded, they didn't even enquire as to how I knew about the subjects about which they were going on, and not one of them picked up my South African accent. The demonstrators were delighted to find in all these people just one person who was interested enough to enquire what they were all about.

"You are the first person to stop and talk to us all day," the one man said.

And I have a very definite purpose for doing so," I replied with a smile.

"What is the reason?" he asked and all the others were suddenly very interested to hear. I had their undivided attention. Excellent.

"The reason is that I am also on a mission and have been for fifteen years, and this mission will continue all the days of my life. My mission is for a cause even higher than demonstrating against apartheid. It's a mission from which everyone of you will derive purpose, satisfaction and meaning of life."

They were now hanging on my every word, so with satisfaction I continued, "It is a known fact that just about everybody is on a mission, some more fervently than others, some for purposes higher than others, until you link up with the most exciting mission of all, the supreme mission that makes all other missions pale into insignificance. I put it to you, ladies and gentlemen, that this is not your ultimate mission. The South African apartheid system is just a stepping-stone to the real issues of life and death."

My group of demonstrators were well, and truly, captivated, they knew it and I knew it. I purposefully looked each one in the eye and slowly, just to add impact to that very special moment, said, "Jesus said, go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel. That is the mission of all missions the great commission. Jesus is the One who has all authority to change the hearts of man, the One who is coming soon to judge the people of the earth. To Him alone every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. I challenge you to trade in your red jerseys and way-out apartheid theories for the real thing, the Bible, which is truth and life. The motivating force of your deep reasons for demonstrating here today is because your soul is longing for fulfillment, which can be found nowhere but in Jesus Christ.

This was a divine appointment!" I said, closing off, again looking purposefully into each one's eyes in turn.

It struck me that these demonstrators may have been paid to demonstrate. They knew little of what they were espousing. They did not have answers to any of the South Africa questions I ask them. They seemed quite dumbfounded when they learned that they were actually speaking to a South African.

I was happy that I had been given opportunity to present some real truth to them. Suddenly, the hour was up and I hurried off to meet my friends as arranged. They arrived piled high with purchases. "You didn't buy anything!" they exclaimed.

"No, I didn't buy anything!" I replied with excitement. "I actually sold something that money can't buy! Let me tell you what I have been doing."

I turned and waved to the demonstrators who weren't demonstrating anymore and my friends asked me to whom I was waving.

"Oh," I said, "just a few people who we thought didn't have time to stop and talk." I chuckled to myself.

People are people, no matter where they live in the world and God's Word will accomplish that which it was sent to do. Some sow, some plant, some water, and some reap. God arranges the appointments and when we have done the spade work, He Himself brings in the increase. What an honour and a privilege to be coworkers with Jesus Christ for the glory of God. There is no format for evangelism. God leads, God arranges, God even promises to fill your mouth with the right words and give you the boldness to go forward to fulfil the
great commission. Nothing on earth could be more exciting. Thank you Lord.
Chapter 15

The Joy Of Possessing Nothing
And The Beauty Of Fire

To have what we want is riches, but to be able to live without, is power.

*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.* (Mt 16:24-25).

Those profound words of our Lord had great impact on me as a young believer. I did not understand them as I do today, nor did I imagine that I would be called upon to do exactly that. Just because it has come to pass in my own life, it does not necessarily mean that it will also be the same way for you. Only God knows why it had to be this way for me and I simply relax in his sovereignty, knowing that there is a time and a season for everything. The sooner we are gracious and accepting about the situations in which we find ourselves, the sooner these situations will change. We are then free to move on to the next challenge, whatever it may be.

Jesus referred to life and self, or as we would perhaps say, the self-life. Sadly, its chief characteristic revolves around possessiveness. The way to deeper knowledge of God and growth is not through the mountain top experiences, but through the lonely valleys of soul poverty and the turning away from things. Things have become necessary to us, a development never originally intended.

Possessions are meant to be used by us, not to take priority. Those who, by God's grace, are able to walk away from things, have broken the yoke of the oppressor and they have done this not by fighting, but by surrendering. Now, free of the sense of possession, they possess all things. That is the effect of the Cross of Christ, calling to death our sinful nature.

In the story of Abraham and Isaac, we have a dramatic picture of the surrendered life. Isaac represented everything precious to Abraham's heart. The promises of God, the Covenants, the hopes of the years of Messianic dreams, all were wrapped up in Isaac. Imagine how Abraham must have felt when he heard God say, 'Now take thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of,' (Gen 22:2).

How could Abraham reconcile this act with the promises? Abraham did not hesitate. His mind was made up the same night. He would offer his son as God had directed him to do and trust God to raise Isaac from the dead.

God let this suffering old man go through with the plan up to the point where He knew there would be no turning back and then forbade him to lay a hand on the boy. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing that thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me," (Gen 22:16). Only then was Abraham a man wholly surrendered, a man utterly obedient, a man possessing nothing, a man who lived by *thy will be done*. Everything was at stake in Isaac, and God required that Isaac be offered to Him. Why, but to set Abraham free. Therein lies a spiritual secret. Abraham was surely never the same again after that experience. The sense of possession was uprooted from his heart. Abraham had been rich, but then he became richer. He had understood that his real treasures were inward and eternal.

That was Abraham's trial by fire and because we are his offspring, we too will have our trials by fire. The form in which they will come we do not know, but come they will to test our faithfulness to obedience.

Most often it is in the area of material possessions or relationships. We are sometimes hindered from giving up our treasures to the Lord out of fear for their safety. These treasures are usually family, friends, gifts, achievements, personal talents or even our appearance. But who made us different from each other and gave us these things in the first place?

The acid test is; do we serve God because He blesses us, or do we serve God simply because we love Him, blessed or not? What would we say if we found ourselves in Job's situation?

The church world-wide, I am sad to say, is big on blessings and, by comparison, very low on obedience and holiness. Many of my precious brothers and sisters are serving God to be victorious and see no value in suffering, denying one's own desires, or in persecution. They honestly believe that unless you are being blessed, God is not with you, or that you are short of faith. What a misunderstanding, what ignorance of God's Word and his ways of working in our lives. Jesus suffered deeply; how much more will we, with our sinful nature, taste of his suffering if we are to follow Him and walk in his footsteps?

I am sure all of us know of a number of godly men and women who have left this world in suffering. We all have to leave, one way or another. The issue is, do we hold fast to the Word of God, completing the race, regardless of the obstacles? I believe that the more serious we are about serving and loving God, the more
difficult the tests, not the other way around. None of the trials we go through are for the benefit of anyone but ourselves. Others do benefit when they see the purification, and inevitably their own lives are touched because of it.

The radical person has a greater advantage. At the testing place, the trial by fire, there will not be a dozen possible choices for us, just two alternatives. But our whole future will be determined by the choices we make. Great faith means great tests of fire. In these tests, God will bring out the dross and reveal the true condition of our hearts. He will stop at nothing to produce true gold in us. Great tests bring forth, and squeeze out of us, character and strength. God is more interested in our being conformed to the image of his Son than in our comforts.

I believe that I am in the midst of such a trial as I write this. In and through it, I have been keenly aware of God's grace upon me, joined with an inexplicable anticipation of excitement that God Himself has brought me to my present situation. I am also aware that his plan for my life will unfold day by day, bringing with it his blessing.

At my parents' request for help in their old age, I have returned to Zimbabwe, to the house where I was born, to my old bedroom that I left when I was eighteen years old. To some, this might seem trivial, but to me, in responding to their call for assistance and the sure knowledge that this was required of me, it meant giving up my home, my possessions, my independence, my friends; in fact everything that I held precious I have forfeited for the sake of honouring my parents.

This decision was not taken lightly, I knew what it meant when I made it. I also knew that there would be no turning back. I felt I should return to my family home and remain there for the duration of both my parents' lives. I am now by choice a cook, companion and their nurse, and I am doing it without payment, as unto the Lord.

"For how long?" people ask me and my reply is, "Only God knows." A commitment is a commitment and with God's grace, I will see it through. Sometimes I think of how odd my life must seem to others.

"Poor Maureen has no husband, no children, no home of her own and nothing in the bank. How does she exist?"

I overheard someone saying of me, "Amazingly, Maureen is happy, she lives one day at a time, has travelled to more countries than she can remember and is content to spend the rest of her days doing just what she is doing. She has no plans for herself and no explanation for her existence. Wherever she is, her very existence proves that God is who He says He is. She took God's promises seriously, having the nerve to go to the other side of the world with nothing other than faith and trust and a healthy measure of anticipation. She has not only existed, but existed in excitement and adventure every day since!" And it's true, every word.

Our Lord referred to this tyranny of things when He said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it," (Mt 16:24 - 25). I am here, possibly for no other reason than to testify that this is true.

When the Lord divided Canaan amongst the tribes of Israel, Levi received no share of the land. God simply said, "I am thy part and thine inheritance," and by those words made Levi richer than all his brethren, richer than all the kings who have ever lived in the world. There is a spiritual principle here. One which still remains valid for every servant of the Most High God.
I believe the Lord called me back to Africa. My parents were the hook in the flesh to bring this about, as nothing except my beloved parents would have caused me to leave all behind in Israel. The Lord called me back to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. However, from then on I clearly got in the way of his plans. I took it upon myself to make the sweeping statement that I would remain there until my parents were no more. After being with them for eight months, the day came when I had to eat those words. Imagine how hard it was to say, "I'm leaving again," when I had promised that I would stay.

I had countless ministry opportunities in Zimbabwe. I often never even inquired where I was being taken by one or other representatives of the Body of Christ in all its magnificent colours and diverse ways. Sometimes I would go off on the back of somebody's motorcycle and my parents would just shake their heads and say, "What will she do next?" They always wondered if I would come home in one piece, especially when entrusting myself to strangers. They weren't strangers to me. They were part of my family and, funny as they may have been, I trusted them, and I always came back.

The great commission to go is almost always foremost in my mind and the urgency to be going forced me to bid farewell once again to my elderly parents. Choking with emotion, I bundled myself and a few possessions into the back of a young student's car and headed for Johannesburg. I had no idea why I was going to Johannesburg, but I knew that it was where I needed to be. God would establish me as He had in the past. All I needed to do was to be there.

Initially, I went to stay with my young sister, her husband and family. Shortly thereafter, I moved in with a sister in Christ who needed assistance in the selling of a retirement village she was promoting. My heart leapt with joy when I saw the ministry opportunities open to me in this situation, and I thought it was amusing when an offer was made to me to become financially involved in the development. Money cannot compare to the satisfaction of soul-winning. I wasted no time in becoming involved in the lives of the precious people around me and watched in wonderment as favour was meted out to me. God took care of all my material needs and I was doing what comes naturally, (to me), with great joy, fulfilling the great commission; going into all the world preaching the Gospel.
One sunny day, a friend of one of the purchasers came to measure for curtaining and happened to stop and ask if I would help her. We went off to measure up, and, in the course of conversation, I told this charming lady a little about my missionary activities. She listened with interest and, on leaving, mentioned in passing that she was Wendy Millin's mother-in-law. Wendy is a very well-known presenter of Christian radio and television programmes in South Africa, and it wasn't long before I heard from her.

The next thing I knew I was being interviewed on radio, and subsequently twice on television. This exposure was phenomenal. I was introduced to the Body of Christ in South Africa and invitations from all over the country came in fast and furiously. I jumped into my little second-hand car, praying that it would get me to my various destinations and I shared joyously wherever I was invited.

I arrived in Durban with precisely R4,50 to my name. I promptly went out and bought a new pair of pantihose, so that left me with only a few cents. I walked around without a care in the world and the finances came, not because I did anything spectacular, but simply because God is faithful. I had lived in Durban thirteen years previously, so this city and its glorious family of God was of particular interest to me. I left there on a spiritual high and with enough money to get to Cape Town, which was my next port of call.

Cape Town in the spring is magnificent and its beauty stole my heart. I spoke at various churches around the Cape, staying always with the Body of Christ as a result of the radio and TV exposure. At some point during my three-week stay in the Cape I got a bit ahead of myself. I had enjoyed it so much that I imagined God was calling me to come and live in Cape Town. I prayed about this, but I recall it was more a prayer of MY will be done.

Without giving this move any more consideration, I came back to Johannesburg, packed up my few belongings and piled them all into the car that people said wasn't safe to drive around Johannesburg, let alone the 1000 miles to Cape Town. As insurance in case of a break-down, I found myself two charming male companions to accompany me on the journey, and off we went.

I was about to learn one of the biggest lessons of my Christian life and didn't even know it. I disregarded warnings that Cape Town was a place of really intense spiritual warfare, precisely because of its unique geographical position. I thought Cape Town would be just another place where I would be effective in evangelism and carry out speaking engagements, as had been my experience for the past 13 years. I just assumed that God would be with me. After all, the whole world is His, and He promises that every place on which our feet shall tread He will give to us. The latter promise is often quoted out of context...as I was about to learn.

Initially, a Christian couple gave me the keys to their magnificent home in Muizenberg. But even at that early stage, beautiful as everything was, things were just not right! The exhaust of my car expired and I started to feel the cold as winter approached. I had not done my homework concerning the Cape winters and was in for a rude awakening with my skimpy winter essentials. When I left Israel to return to Africa a year previously, I had figured that I no longer had need of a winter wardrobe, as everybody knows that Africa is always warm! Surprise number one; Cape Town of all the cities in the world is definitely one of the most picturesque. But it is also renowned for its mean winters. I report as an authority! Still undaunted, I pressed on, sharing my life and the Gospel with everybody whose life touched mine. Marvellous things did happen and I had the privilege of speaking at various churches, but somehow not with my usual excitement. This should have been another clue that all was not well, but we are clever creatures at covering up what we do not want to accept.

I was busy making many new friends and basking in the magnificence of the Cape. Its rugged mountains and beautiful coastlines, where the Indian and Atlantic Oceans meet, one warm, one cold, and noticeably different in colour too, enthralled me.

My car continued having problems, always something unexpected and costly. I felt no sense of belonging in Cape Town and instead of recognising this as another sign from the Lord, I moved to four different areas hoping to find a place suitable to settle. Housing was a major problem and peace evaded me.

I had been called to other places in the world and knew it. Why didn't I feel this way about Cape Town? Good question, but I wasn't prepared to answer it. I was troubled within and had to admit that the joy, which up until then for fifteen years had been so much a part of me, was diminishing. I knew it and those around me began to notice it too. Still I pressed on, not wanting to consider the cool hard fact that I could be out of the perfect will of God. After all I had learnt about being in his perfect will, you would have thought I would know the difference. But, alas, I had fallen into deception and was subsequently blinded to this truth.

I was struggling financially, and physically, as I did not earn a salary, neither did I have a medical aid. For fifteen years, as I had travelled the world, I had simply believed, and, according to the Word, all my needs had been taken care of. Now it seemed as if the proverbial rug was being pulled from under my feet. Everything was wobbling, and it was scary. All was not well with my soul and I knew I was not in a safe place. Realisation had come!

I began to perceive that God was using all these circumstances as a testing ground for me and I suddenly understood the Scripture about a grain of wheat having to fall to the ground and die before it can bear much fruit, (Jo 12:24). I was that grain of wheat and God, in his great love, was dealing with me through adversity, a tool which He uses often and with great skill, usually on people who do not humble themselves. God has an effective remedy; He allows circumstances to humble us and this, I concluded, was my time for correction. Out
of the ashes, God was resurrecting life in me. Truth dawned on me and tears flowed. I was coming out of deception, out of darkness, which I had created by myself, and back into the light.

At this realisation, joy came rushing back to me and so did purpose, vision and zeal. The nothingness of myself and the greatness of God gelled and in a precious time of weeping and repentance before the Lord, I confessed to myself and to the Lord the situation as it was. Gloriously I felt the Lord pick me up, dust me off and say, "Go, my child, you have learned your lesson well." I headed back to Johannesburg without further delay, a whole lot poorer materially and without a car, which had come to a grinding halt, as I would have, had the Lord not intervened!

I wiped a tear from my cheek as I stared out of the bus window, speeding through the night away from Cape Town. In retrospect I was actually enriched by this experience. So what if I was poorer materially? I knew I could always get back to where I had been. Spiritually I was certainly stronger. Adversity had done its work and the outcome was good. It was a more understanding, compassionate human being sitting in the bus than the lady who had driven down to Cape Town six months previously, expecting things to materialise through sheer presumption. Instead of going where God meant me to be, this time I had dared to make my own plans and because they were my own plans, they had come to nothing. Ouch! Indeed I had learnt my lesson well.

I did not want to share this experience, as it seemed negative, but the Lord prompted me to share it anyway. May it serve as a reminder that, no matter how far we go in serving the Lord, we should always check our motives and be honest with ourselves, questioning ourselves for doing the things that we do. I am simply a child of God who makes mistakes and yet knows whom to run to, and not whom to run from.

I am now back in Johannesburg and functioning with excellence. I know my limits and definitely do not want to get out of line again. The good news is that nothing is ever wasted. In the economy of God, all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose. Thank you, Lord, for proving this wonderful promise true in my life.

Johannesburg may seem a far cry from Jerusalem, but it isn't really. It is very much a happening place, a trouble-spot with a significant Jewish community. It is also known as South Africa's City of Gold. The Lord has his soldiers strategically placed around the city and I am pleased to be counted as one of them.
Chapter 17

Jesus Is The Master
Whether We Want Him Or Not

Have you ever considered how little of your life you control? Did you decide when you would be born, who your parents would be, or in what country you would be born? Did you decide what the colour of your skin, your eyes, your hair would be? Or the level of your intelligence, or what gifts and talents you would have? How about your height? Did you determine that? Or your appearance, whether you would be good-looking or plain? The answer to all these questions is, NO. What is more, in every one of these areas and in many more, you have no say in the matter. In actual fact, your vote counts for absolutely nothing!

Then at what point do you exercise control? The Bible tells us that you control a small but important part of your life, namely your WILL. Lordship has to do with your will. It involves surrendering it to Jesus Christ. It means that Jesus is Lord of ALL of you, not just part of you. In making this decision of the will, remember that He has control over most things that concern you anyway, whether you like it or not.

Have you wondered why we do not want to acknowledge Christ as Master and Lord? There could be many reasons but some occur with remarkable frequency; He may ask us to do something we do not want to do. Of course He will. If this were not so, there would be no issues involved. When you make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, you can count on Him asking you to do things you would rather not do. Abraham did not want to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. Moses did not want to go before Pharaoh. Joseph did not want to spend all those years in prison.

Nobody likes to die, but dying is what it is all about. Nobody likes to deny himself, but this is what Lordship is all about. A disciple is a disciplined person; one who says no to what he wants in deference to what the Lord wants. The disciple does not pamper himself by satisfying his wants and desires in a self gratifying fashion.

When Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, every area is under his jurisdiction: your thoughts, your actions, your plans, your vocation, your ambitions, your life goals and even your leisure-time.

We think we know what is best for us
Nothing could be further from the truth. A child left alone would kill himself. He might eat the wrong things, run out in the street, grab hold of a sharp knife or play with something equally dangerous. The parent must keep constant watch over the child; that is, the parent must be lord of the child's life. In fact, the law requires that this be so and when the parent refuses to exercise such lordship, the courts hold him responsible.

When we reach physical maturity, however, we think that things suddenly change. This is where we make our mistake. A child left to himself will probably hurt himself. As mature adults, left to ourselves, we do hurt ourselves. Have you ever thought about the fact that we hire policemen to watch over us, to make sure that we don't do anything wrong? Yet we have the audacity to say that we know what is best for our lives!

We are not sure God has our best interests at heart
If God wanted to make it hard on us, can you imagine what He could do? If He wanted to make us miserable and plague us with difficulties, He could make life absolutely intolerable.

One may argue that God does not want to get involved in our lives, but it is ridiculous to say that He wants to hurt us. However, one cannot say that Jesus Christ is not interested in us. Listen to what He says through the prophet Jeremiah: For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11).

What does it mean to acknowledge Him as Lord? The implications of recognising Jesus Christ as Lord are understood in Matthew 6. Jesus taught his disciples; After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

OUR FATHER; Notice how this prayer begins. Jesus did not instruct us to say, My Father, but, Our Father. We are entitled to call him, Father. What a universe shaking concept that we are reconciled to Him and receive all his love, care and compassion.

The disciple must be able to identify with people where they are, to sit where they sit. A Mexican proverb illustrates this; You understand a man when you have sat one day under his sombrero. The disciple himself is not the one who has arrived. On the contrary, he is a learner, a pilgrim, one who is on a quest to make his life all that God would have it to be. Therefore, he must understand the needs and frailties of people.
HALLOWED BE THY NAME; Jesus did not pray that his name would be exalted, but that the Father's name would be made holy. Acknowledging lordship means surrendering your name.

Are you interested in making a name for yourself? Are you desirous of being recognised by people? Are your life goals self serving? Do you want to do well in business, or be married to an important person? Are you wanting recognition at any price?

To have Jesus Christ as Lord means to desire that his name, not yours, be revered.

THY KINGDOM COME; God's desire is to rule here on earth as He does in heaven.

THY WILL BE DONE; We cannot pray this prayer unless we are actively involved in finding the will of God for our lives and doing it. Begin by doing what you know through the Scriptures to be the will of God. If you can do this, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to make clear those areas which are uncertain.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD; We can truly pray this prayer only if our attitude is; all I have belongs to and comes from Jesus. Otherwise, why ask Him for something that naturally comes to us anyhow? Paul put it this way; What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor 6:19-20).

Because Jesus paid a price for you with his blood, you are not your own. You belong to Him. Lordship means recognising this fact and surrendering all that you have and hope to be in Him. Think over the things that you own which you consider to be precious. It may be your favourite crystal or china, your sports equipment, your car or your home. Whatever it is, ask yourself; who owns it? If it truly belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, then of course you will not mind making it available to Jesus to be used as He sees fit.

AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS; Jesus is telling us to pray, Lord I want You to forgive me in just the same way that I forgive other people. Can you say that? Could you settle for God forgiving you in proportion to how you forgive others?

Lordship leads to a mutual commitment, involving not receiving, but giving. Grace is God's willingness to commit Himself totally to us. Lordship is our willingness to commit ourselves totally to God. Everybody wants God to commit Himself totally to him or her, but few are willing to commit themselves totally to Him.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION; Here Jesus is praying that the Father will not lead us into situations where we can be tempted. There are many situations in life that are not wrong in themselves, but they provide opportunities for Satan to overpower us. Jesus did not say, Lead us not into sin. He said, Lead us not into temptation. To pray this prayer means that we are willing to surrender those things that are sin, but we are also willing to surrender all those areas of our lives that tend to lead us into temptation. You yourself know what these areas are. To make Jesus Christ Lord of your life means that you are willing to lay them aside.

BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE; This is the same prayer that the Lord Jesus offered for his disciples on the night of his betrayal. Lordship involves the recognition that there is no way we can fight our own battles. He and He alone must keep us. No one in his own strength can do battle with the enemy and win. Even Jesus Christ defeated Satan only at the price of the Cross.

What does it mean to be a Christian?

The entrance is free, but the annual subscription is everything. That about sums it up; the price is high because the benefits are eternal.

As we are on the move in this great adventure called life, we cannot see around the corner into tomorrow, or over the hill into next week. Consequently we are not sure when it is safe to pass. Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. He knows the end from the beginning.

His willingness to be our Lord reveals his desire to get involved in our lives so He can tell us when it is safe to move ahead and when it is best not to move. Would we not be extremely foolish to turn down such a gracious offer?

Our will, our choice, same difference!

Since the beginning of time, sin has always been a choice. In First Corinthians, the Apostle Paul says, All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any, (1 Cor 6:12).

What Paul is saying here is that all things are lawful for him, but not all things are prudent, so he will keep them under the power of his choice.

In Romans, Paul again says, Servants you are to whom you obey. This simply means that as long as something is under the power of your choice, it is a servant to you, but once you choose it, you become a slave to it.

Profound words of truth for those who have ears to hear.
Epilogue

Clearly the Lord has positioned me here for now, so if you have enjoyed this book, hopefully you will also have read my first book entitled, AUDACITY TO LOVE.

In closing, perhaps I should clarify my understanding of the term missionary.

A Missionary

A missionary is anybody chosen by God, and not ourselves, to fulfill his commission.

- Usually they do not fit any recognized type of person.
- The man or woman must be born again, having had a real conversion experience.
- Whatever else the missionary may be doing, he is, first and foremost, aware of his divine purpose for living, this being to touch and draw everybody by love to the Lord, who taught us to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all else shall be added to us.
- This means that in thoughts, actions, words and deeds we are to be ruled by godly principles.
- Our mission is more important than our lives.
- That is the sign of a missionary.

You will find these people all over the world: in lowly and prominent and frankly ridiculous places, serving the Lord where God has placed them.

Such is the love of God in Jesus Christ to reach out and save the lost, that He chooses to use ordinary people like you and me, taking the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

What a magnificent Master Plan!

TRUST TOTALLY IN CHRIST

Though the fig tree does not bud,
And there are no grapes on the vines,
Though the olive crop fails,
And the fields produce no food,
Though there are no sheep in the pen,
And no cattle in the stalls,
Yet will I rejoice in the Lord.
I will be joyful in God my Saviour,
The Sovereign Lord is my strength.
He makes my feet like the feet of a deer,
He enables me to go on the heights.

(Hab 3:17-19)