

# VISION

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## He is faithful: He has not forgotten!

My name is Augustine Chen. Born in Malaysia, I came to Dunedin in 1993 as an international student to study at the University of Otago. In this beautiful country I met my wife Jesse. She was born in Malaysia and also came to study at Otago. We met at a basketball court and as they say the rest is history.

When we met, Jesse was an atheist but interested in my Christian faith. I was attending Sunday church out of obligation. The only thing I said to her was; "Ask Jesus to reveal Himself to you". She asked, Jesus revealed himself to her and she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Saviour.



Jesse attended 'Life in the Spirit' and 'Alpha' courses being run at my church. As I "supported" Jesse through the Life in the Spirit course, the Lord started working on issues of un-forgiveness in me. When it came to the Alpha course I had an awakening in my spirit. I still remember, halfway through a video, the words on screen: "*I AM the WAY, the TRUTH and the LIFE, no one can come to the Father except through me,*" jumped out in a way I had never experienced before. It was as if someone turned on a light in the dim room where we were sitting. Since then I continue to have moments when the Holy Spirit reveals things to me through scriptures or worship songs.

During that season, we soaked up everything we could as we learnt about the exciting God we serve. We were on a high; a 'spiritual honeymoon'.

We were soon leading an Alpha course where I met Mike Bunt. He invited me to an FGBMFI camp. During that camp, though miserably cold, I experienced a different dimension of praise and worship and met a group of people on fire for God. A 'knock my socks off' experience! This eventually led me to join the Taieri Chapter of FGBMFI. Some of the friends we met through this time of growth are like family to us now through their care and support.

We were married in 2000. Our son Joshua came into our lives in 2003. When Joshua was 10 months old, Jesse suffered a massive brain haemorrhage as a result of a ruptured blood vessel. The massive bleed also caused a stroke. Her heart stopped at one point, requiring resuscitation. It is a miracle she survived.

The doctors did not rate Jesse's chances. That night, I couldn't stay with her and had to take my son home because Joshua was not allowed in the ICU. It was the loneliest and most heart wrenching night I've ever had to endure. I cried most of that night, not knowing if she would survive the night. I couldn't pray, or read the Bible. All I could do was hang on to a prophetic word given to both Jesse and me independently: 'The Lord would use us both together in ministry to our own people and culture'. I hung on to that promise which enabled me to believe that it was not her time yet.

Jesse's condition was 'touch and go' as she lay in ICU for another three weeks. When her condition worsened, a visiting Australian neurosurgeon, Mr. David McDowell, intervened and operated for seven hours. He removed the front of her skull to alleviate pressure in her brain and removed the offending blood vessel in her brain. Another surgery followed three weeks later to re-attach her skull.

As Jesse's condition gradually improved, she was moved to a stroke rehabilitation centre where she remained for another eight months. She re-learned how to walk, dress, feed herself, and develop a routine. It was heart wrenching to see and she also could not remember who Joshua was.

Healing and recovery was prolonged and continued at home. It certainly felt like being in the eye of a storm that would never stop. It was an emotional rollercoaster for both of us with many tears, sense of loss, grief, doubts, anger and depression. In the midst of it all, many friends continued to pray for us and support us. I was angry at God, not for causing it, but that He allowed it to happen. It was very hard to accept and comprehend.

In life, trials come our way which we do not understand. Though God allows trials, it doesn't mean we are to go through them alone. His word declares: *'It is the Lord who goes before you; He will be with you. He will not fail you or abandon you. Do not fear or be dismayed,' Deut 31:8.* The truth is, our marriage would not have survived had it not been for a cord of three strands. These trials would also bring out hidden things which would not have been revealed otherwise, thus giving us an opportunity to deal with them. We knew we could not deal with them in ours.

During the healing process, Jesse was having to rely on the Lord a lot, due to the loss of many other abilities and the work life she had to leave behind. This included getting tired very quickly,

forgetfulness, not being able to do things she used to do very well. She experienced a period of deep grief and a sense of loss. As her reliance on the Lord grew, her spiritual walk deepened. She learned to accept and overcome some of the deficits caused by the injuries, a process that is still ongoing. As Jesse was healing, so did the bond between her and Joshua. On the other hand, I grew weary and was headed the other way. Jesse knew this and continued praying for me.

I was struggling. What most friends saw as progress during months of visits and time spent with her, was different to what I was living with every day. I found it difficult because Jesse and I were very close before and she was someone I could confide in intimately. But her condition meant that she could not listen for long or remember what I said two minutes earlier. I felt very lonely and frustrated and the miracle healing I hoped for was different from the reality I saw and was willing to accept. I became bitter. It took me to a depressed place. I would vent my anger at the Lord because of the anguish and frustrations I had. For a while, I withdrew from people. I was at an all-time low. From time to time, I would receive invitations to FGBMFI outreach meetings and some of those testimonies I heard showed me there is **hope** during those dark times. I was given a word at one point as I was prayed for: 'He (God) will thaw and warm your heart again'. Although I couldn't see how at the time, it sowed hope.

Although I did have a sense that the Lord was there with us, I sulked in my own corner most times.

When Jesse got sick, I had to stop my PhD study. It already was a long and drawn out PhD, fraught with challenges and frustrating delays, which I thought I would never see an end to. A month earlier, I was given the approval to write up my work and was just beginning to feel hopeful until the unimaginable happened to Jesse. The enemy (Satan) chose a time when he would hit me the hardest and made me felt like a failure. After almost two years, I got a letter from the university encouraging me to come back and finish where I left off, and gave me a year to complete my PhD. By then, I was tired, unmotivated and a spent force. But the Lord would not have me give up either. That was the beginning of a turning point. I had to set a goal and climb out of the hole I had got myself into, if I wanted to finish. One day, on a rare occasion when I picked up my Bible, He gave me a verse and I knew it was from Him: *'Commit your work unto the Lord that your plans may be*

*successful*'. Thereafter, most days I would pray this word and commit my work to him. As I learn to partner with Him, I got wind in my sails again, but still had times when I felt I was floundering in the doldrums. Months later, while feeling down and stressed, I was invited along to an FGBMFI fellowship meeting. One of the men, Seph, came up to me and said, "Augustine I have a word for you... *Proverbs 16:3 Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.*" I knew it was a



reminder to partner with Him once more. At times, I wished a thesis would just turn up when I woke up in the morning. Later I was invited to hear a testimony by a visiting scientist. Afterwards, when I spoke to him, he told me one thing that stuck 'You just have to grit your teeth and do it'. Sometimes in life some things don't come easy. As I partnered with the Lord, I did finish within the year and graduated. Furthermore, there was a job waiting for me after I finished. The following year, our second son Joseph entered our lives.

Despite having cleared a big hurdle, it was still very hard for me to accept Jesse as she now was, compared to before the brain injury. Some of her inabilities to do things did not change and it did not take much to trigger an outburst from me. The stress from work didn't help either. In the years after our marriage (before Jesse's injury), I thought I was making lots of improvement in the love I had for her, so I thought. However, after her brain injury, I began to see how little love I really have. Jesse bought a poster and put it up in the room: '1

*Cor 13: 4-7: Love is patient Love is kind; Love does not brag, love does not take into account a wrong suffered; love is not jealous, love is not rude; love rejoices with the truth, love does not rejoice in wrong doing, Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things, love never fails*'. It annoyed me as I lack those qualities. In fact, my efforts fell short many times and I struggled with myself, but the Lord would remind me that He loves me still, just as I am. He says 'My grace is sufficient for you for My power is being perfected in your weakness' 2 Cor 12:9. If I'm honest, I can't say I really comprehend the love He has for me. That is because He sees me differently than I see myself. When I looked at myself, I felt disqualified. It took quite a while before I realized: He was teaching me to not look at myself but look to Him, to learn to forgive in all situations, keep forgiving without counting the cost and to learn to love at all times just as He loves me. But in everything, I'm not to do it alone but ask Him for help and trust in Him. He also used another person to bring a word to remind me that: 'He has not forgotten me'. In the last few years, I began to see more clearly how the Lord's hand helped us through that long hard season, in ways I was blind to when I was in it. And we now know that 'God causes all things to

*work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to His plan and purpose. Rom 8:28*'.

On my 41<sup>st</sup> Birthday, Jesse bought me a CD by a Christian music artist, Michael W. Smith. One song entitled 'Sovereign Over Us' spoke profoundly to me about our situation and of who our faithful God is. Now, almost 14 years later, with our two delightful boys, Joshua and Joseph, things are looking up in our family. There are still battles and I don't know what's ahead but I know He is always with us. I am now at a place where I am looking forward in greater hope and believing the best is yet to come! Watch this space.

If you are struggling wherever you are, keep getting encouraged. It can be so very hard, but there is **hope**, even when there seems no hope! He will find a way even when there seems no way. God is sovereign, **He has not forgotten you, He loves you so much and He is mighty to save.**

**Augustine Chen, Dunedin Chapter**

# National Convention – Palmerston North 2018



Plan NOW to attend the 2018 Convention at the Distinction Palmerston North Hotel over Queen's Birthday weekend, starting 10am on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and winding up at 11am on Monday the 4<sup>th</sup> of June. This is for all people; men, women, family members, members and non-members.

## Guest Speakers are:

### **Carl Butler**

Carl was born in Hawera, New Zealand. He received Jesus as his saviour at age seven. At sixteen he had an encounter with the Holy Spirit that transformed his life. He emigrated to Australia in 1988.

He entered into full-time ministry in 1990, initially working with young people, conducting outreach concerts into Queensland high schools. He preached to many thousands of students and saw many turn to the Lord during these years.

After graduating from Ministry Training, Carl undertook pastoral ministry in City Church Brisbane. He received ordination with Australian Christian Churches (AOC in Australia) at this time.

Early in 1997 God began to lead Carl into an itinerant ministry. Later that year, he pioneered and developed 'Fan the Flame' Ministries.

Carl is a zealous preacher and stirs the Church into action. He has now travelled to more than fifty countries, spoken in

hundreds of churches, as well as many conferences and outreaches, and he has seen tens of thousands



give their lives to Jesus. He is a relevant and dynamic communicator.

He has a strong passion for the presence and power of God and is eager to bring people into a dynamic encounter with the Holy Spirit. Being a man who imparts great faith in God's provision and healing power, Carl has seen God perform many exciting miracles.

He is eager to see men and women saved, healed, set free and filled with the Holy Spirit, Churches impacting their community, and God being glorified.

### **Julie Calvert**

Julie Calvert is the New Zealand National Director for the International Association of Healing Rooms (IAHR) headquartered in Spokane Washington, United States. She has served in this role for nine years and is also an ordained minister with the IAHR. Julie has helped establish and pioneer over fifty healing rooms throughout New Zealand.

Her desire to see God's love and healing power in the lives of others is what motivates Julie to take Jesus to those who are in desperate need of Him. With her passion and unbridled love for Jesus she ministers in a way that ignites more hunger for Him.



Julie desires to see all generations step into their God-given destinies and take nations for Jesus. She moves in the prophetic releasing God's love, peace, rest, life, hope and the fire of God. Her heart is for the nations, in particular New Zealand, and is

often called a mother in the Body of Christ.

Julie and her husband Mac have been married for 53 years this year. They live in Warkworth and have 3 wonderful children, and 13 grandchildren.

## Ross Monk

Ross has been a passionate minister of the gospel since the time of his encounter with Christ in 1970 and soon after entering into full time ministry.

Although having pastored churches, he has travelled extensively and still travels by invitation.

He has a passion for revival and lives like the best is yet to come.

God has graciously anointed him with a gift of faith to inspire others to believe God for miracles, signs and wonders.



**Register for the convention by going to the events page on our website at; [www.fgbmfi.org.nz](http://www.fgbmfi.org.nz)**

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## The Perfect Husband

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Several men are in the locker room of a golf club. A cell phone on a bench rings and a man engages the hands-free speaker function and begins to talk. Everyone else in the room stops to listen.

MAN: "Hello"

WOMAN: "Hi Honey, it's me. Are you at the club?"

MAN: "Yes."

WOMAN: "I'm at the shops now and found this beautiful leather coat. It's only \$4,000; is it OK if I buy it?"

MAN: "Why not - go ahead if you like it that much."

WOMAN: "I also stopped by the Lexus dealership and saw the new models. I saw one I really liked."

MAN: "How much?"

WOMAN: "\$160,000."

MAN: "OK, but for that price it must come with all the options."

WOMAN: "Great! Oh, and one more thing... I was just talking to Janie and found out that the house I wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking \$2,550,000 for it."

MAN: "Well, then go ahead and make an offer of \$2,500,000. They'll probably take it. If not, you can go the extra fifty thousand if it's what you really want."

WOMAN: "OK. I'll see you later! I love you so much!"

MAN: "Bye!"

The man hangs up.

The other men in the locker room are staring at him in astonishment, mouths wide open.

He turns and asks, "Anyone know who's phone this is?"

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## Lower NI Regional Camp



About forty men attended this weekend at Highland Christian Camp and were very much blessed through the teaching and ministry of Jimmy Njino from Toowoomba, Australia.

Jimmy touched on many things over the weekend, including:

“The safest place to be is in the will of God.”

You become fruitful by “doing, not hearing.”

Many revivals of the past were started by men but soon died away. However, “it’s God’s responsibility to start a revival.”

Having a kingly mind-set like Moses, not a slave mind-set, so we can win this world for Christ.

Not accusing people who might not behave as they ought. The Devil is the ‘accuser of the brethren’ and not us. Our role is to intercede for these people.

Fasting and praying with his church to step into the glory of God.

Jimmy prayed for each man at the camp, with many receiving healing or as Jimmy called it, “an upgrade”.



Our thanks go to Jack Davey and Wayne Stokes for organising this timely event.

**Trevor Hook, Field Representative**