

VISION

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Second Chance

I was born in Hamilton. When I was born my mother had an undiagnosed brain tumour. When I was 6 months old, she collapsed, was taken to hospital for open head surgery. Following the surgery, her right-hand side became very weak. She had to switch to doing things left-handed. She struggled on until she died when I was 7.

Because of my mother's condition, I went to stay with my grandparents a lot. They were both Christian folk, my grandmother, being a real born-again Presbyterian, she really knew Jesus. She used to tell me about her encounters with God. I remember asking her: "How do you know God is real?". She told me that when my father and uncle were serving in the war, Jesus would come and stand by her bed while she was praying. Jesus said to her: "Don't worry about your sons, both will return alive." She told me that from then on she continued to pray for them, but never worried about their safety. They both came back. My grandmother was not the sort of person who told lies, so through staying with her it gave me a very real sense that God was real.

My parents had sent me to Sunday school. I accepted that Jesus had died for the sins of the world, but I never applied that truth to me personally. So, I chugged along through life. My father remarried. In fact, he had got into a relationship while my mother was still alive. He remarried very soon after my mother died. It

turned out that my stepmother was an alcoholic and didn't particularly want three new kids. Life at home was quite dysfunctional.

At the end of my third year of university I worked at Twizel over the summer break. There was a religious nutter from university working there too. On my 21st birthday I went to the pub at night and shouted my work mates. I got up the next morning and thought it would be good to go to church. So I



wandered off to church, came back and sat on the steps outside the staff hostel. This guy from university, who we all thought was a bit extreme, said to me: "Why did you go to church, Dave? I tried to give some reasons, but they were all rather vague. People

were clambering past us as we were talking. I was very conscious that people might be listening in on our conversation. I really didn't want that and felt embarrassed. Then he said to me: "Would you like to become a Christian?". I thought, "How do I shut him up?", so I decided I had better say "Yes." He suggested that we pray. I thought that to be a good idea and suggested we go somewhere quiet to pray. To my horror he said: "Follow me".

He started praying on the steps while there were still people climbing over us. I repeated his prayer and thought that was it. I was quite embarrassed by the whole thing. But the funny thing is, that God

honoured the prayer. While I was not an on-fire Christian or anything, what happened over time was that I noticed changes in me. I had tried to read the bible once earlier on but couldn't. I didn't particularly want to be associated with that guy but he gave me a little Bible. I had a girlfriend in Timaru at the time and used to catch the bus between Twizel and Timaru. I sat down on the bus, and began reading the bible. It made sense. Many things happened through that process. I had accepted Jesus as my Saviour but there was no Lordship there.

I got married in 1977, not to the girl in Timaru but to Irene who I met later. We live in Waiuku now. When first married we were living in Hillsborough and I felt it would be good to acknowledge God and go to church. My wife's parents were Dutch folk and quite "religious". She was a bit reticent but happy to support the concept and go to church with me. So we started going to a little Presbyterian Church in Hillsborough.

There was a guy I had met in university, a real nice guy, who had stepped into Queen Street AOG one day when passing and became a Christian. At a church picnic I asked him if he would like to come along. He agreed and we went out to a beach reserve in Titirangi. The sky got black, the hail came, and the picnic was rained out. On the way back he said, "would you like to come to my church tonight?" Queen Street AOG used to meet in the Town Hall. I had heard about them. – they were a little bit "funny". I thought: "I don't really want to go there" but because he had come to our church in the morning and sat politely through it, I thought: "Well, he put himself out to come to our picnic, we should do the decent thing and return the favour."

So we went along to Queen Street AOG. There were some things that really impacted on me immediately. When we walked in I heard an expectancy and excitement in the air that I had never heard in a church before. That touched me, then they started to sing. Until then the only time I enjoyed singing in churches was at Christmas time because Christmas carols used to be sung with a bit more enthusiasm than the hymns during the rest of the year. But these people got into it and they sang joyfully. There were drums and the whole thing was alive. I loved that. But the thing that really blew me away was the preaching – I had never heard the anointed word of God preached before. Pastor John Watson, was giving the message that night. As he spoke basing his

message on the Bible, I knew this was real. It really touched my spirit. So after that I really made a commitment, and sought the Lord strongly. At that point I started to move to where Jesus became the Lord of my life, not just my Saviour. Over the 40 plus years since, it has been a progressive journey of Jesus, each day, becoming Lord of my life.

Jesus said: "if any man would come after me, let him take up his cross daily, deny himself and follow me". It's a progressive process. What I've come to realise so strongly is that the Lord wants a personal relationship with us – he is far more interested in us than we really imagine.

In 1977, I became aware of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I was seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit, trying hard but nothing was happening. In the shower one night, I suddenly heard a voice say to me "You could speak in tongues if you wanted to." I opened my mouth and began speaking in tongues. God in a sovereign way had touched me.

I felt I needed to get baptised. We were now attending an AOG church called Shiloh in Mangere. where I got baptised. Irene, my wife, who wasn't a Christian at the time, stood behind me holding a towel. As I went under the water she felt a black cloud leave her. The next day when I got up I had never felt so clean in my life. I had always seen it as a spiritual step of obedience, so the wonderful sense of being clean from top to bottom, was totally unexpected.

A few days later while building something in my basement garage I missed a nail and hit my finger wedging my finger between the piece of wood I was aiming at and the concrete floor. It was sore! I was hopping around the room going ouch, ouch, ouch. Suddenly I realised there was no way I would have only said "ouch, ouch" before that time. I realised that God had transformed me inside.

Irene was still not a Christian. I was working with a Catholic guy in the Ministry of Works. We had a little prayer group at work. He said to me "I became a Christian and my wife was really upset with me, but I prayed for her every day for 7 years and she became a Christian. It's great!" So I thought: "OK, I'll pray every day for Irene until she becomes a Christian." Irene had always slept longer than me so I would be up early in the morning and got into the habit of reading the scriptures, praying, and thinking about things. A year after we were married I was transferred to Wairoa. After I had been praying for Irene for about two and a half

years, Irene became a Christian too. So we have been on a journey together since then.

During the time I had been praying for Irene she was gradually moving towards belief in God. I said to the Presbyterian minister in Wairoa: "I'm not sure if Irene is a Christian or not. She seems to be getting really close." He said to me: "When I have people like that, I ask them a simple question." I asked: "What's that?" He said: "Who is Jesus?" I asked: "Then what?" He responded: "If they say 'He was a good man who lived on earth 2000 years ago etc.' I know that they know about Jesus, but I know that they don't know Jesus. If they can say he is my Lord and Saviour, then you know that they really know Jesus." I thought that was interesting so when I got home I asked Irene: "Who is Jesus?" She said, "He's a good man," so I knew she wasn't there yet. But within the next month she had progressed into coming to know Jesus as Lord.

Here is an example of how God answers prayers unexpectedly. When I was a child we lived in Hamilton and would sometimes go to Mt Manganui. My sisters and I would climb up Mt Manganui for exercise, a spiral track up one way or a spiral track in the other direction. There was also a track where you could go straight up the front

face adjacent to a fence. You had to scramble up the fence, grabbing the Manuka branches as you went. You came to the top of the bush and literally popped out at the summit. When you were climbing up you knew you were going up but you couldn't see where you were going. But from the top you could look around and see where you had been and where you had come from. I think a lot of our Christian life is like that. Quite often we are pushing through, not sure of where we are going but when you get to the top you can look back and see how God has had his hand on a lot of things through your life as you go.

One thing I have learnt is that while I was quite diligent or religious in having a morning prayer time, I wasn't so good at listening. It was a real challenge to stay focussed. Often my mind would start thinking about things, particularly related to work. It was distracting me, but looking back I realised over time that God is interested in my work, and in everything I do. I've come to realise that if I am where God wants me to be at any time then I am in full time ministry and what I do is really important in terms of following him.

Part 2 in the next Vision

David Fraser

Annual Conventions

Several people have expressed how much they have missed not being able to attend convention this year.

The good news is that we have been able to roll over our booking for the Copthorne Solway Park Hotel in Masterton till Queen's Birthday 2021. The 2022 convention will be held in New Plymouth at the Plymouth Hotel.

Many of you may not be aware that video and audio recording of past conventions and many other Christian events are available to watch free of charge on the Faithnet website.

Check them out at <http://www.faithnet.co.nz/>

Thanks to Noel Morris for his generosity in making these inspiring messages available to us.



Weekly Business Bible Studies

In our December 2019 Vision Newsletter we had an article on the Blenheim Chapter. Outlining how a group of business owners and others have been meeting weekly for prayer and fellowship

together. They have found real encouragement and blessing in having a place where they can share their business struggles and get advice.

To support this group in Blenheim and encourage other chapters or members with a desire to set up a similar group, the board has commenced sending out by email a weekly devotional study specifically written for people in business.

If you do not have email but would like to receive this study, please talk to your chapter executive and see if someone can print a copy off for you.

Lockdown Mussing's from Rod Bent

The first thing I want to say is that April and I had God's peace through the lockdown. More time to re-evaluate life and enjoy a simple walk with the Lord.



Out for a walk to a nearby stream

We were blessed with zoom prayer meetings and zoom church services on Sundays. I had the privilege of recording a communion message for our church, and also giving a message for our congregation.

We were also blessed with a good reserve of food in our fridge, pantry and freezer. A neighbour, and later one of our sons brought us needed groceries.



Chicory growing on the roadside

The only thing we lacked was fresh greens, with little in the garden due to the drought in the Waikato. God provided our need in an unexpected way. We spotted some chicory plants growing on the roadside outside our property. Normally they would be mowed with the roadside mower, but they were also in lockdown. We enjoyed steaming and then eating the chicory for about a month. It was similar to spinach.

I had lots of time to work on some home projects, especially repainting two sets of French doors along with other bits and pieces. Another project was cutting up a large tree stump in the corner of our garden which was partly rotted, but also had a lot of heart timber in the centre.



Cutting up the tree stump

April and I enjoyed quality time together, rather than frequently going out to meetings separately. More glue time to bond us together!

Altogether we had a blessed time during lockdown, and we give God all the glory!

Rod Bent

Te Awamutu Chapter

JESUS 75 ... A time of challenge

It was back in 1972, during the Charismatic Renewal, when I invited Jesus into my life to become my personal Lord and Saviour. Shortly after that I heard of an organisation called Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, (FGBMFI). They were having a dinner meeting. George Otis from America was the speaker. I attended, not knowing what to expect and was made very welcome. I joined up with the West Auckland Chapter and started regularly attending their meetings.

Two years later, in July 1974, I was invited to a prayer meeting of FGBMFI Members held at St Paul's Anglican Church in Symonds St, chaired by Bob Horton, the International Director for FGBMFI in New Zealand. Our chapter president and myself turned up not knowing what to expect. About 16 men from all the chapters in Auckland were seated in a circle. Bob Horton told us that somehow he sensed that God was wanting to do something special in Auckland. He invited us men to spend time praying for further understanding of what God wanted to reveal to us. After two hours of prayer Bob asked us whether God was saying anything to anyone, but no one was getting any clear direction. The anointing was very strong so we decided to come back the following week and pray again. This we did. After several hours of prayer Bob again asked if God was saying anything to anyone. The answer was still nothing but we sensed a heavy presence of anointing in the room so we all anticipated that God was going to do something special. We decided to come back a fortnight later to pray some more.

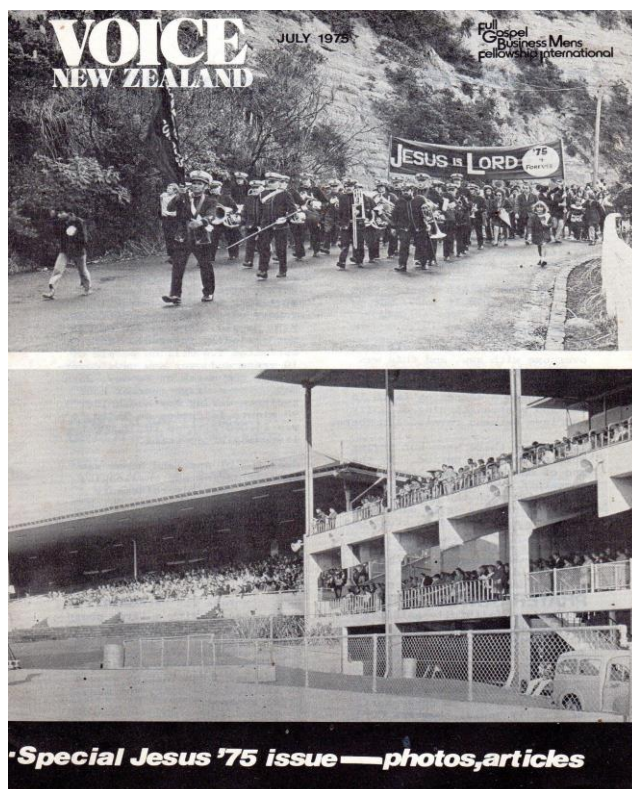
This we did. At the next prayer meeting most of us were sensing and spoke aloud what God wanted to speak to us. The theme of those prophetic words was that God was wanting to do something big and Auckland was where He wanted to do it. We were to plan an event, an outreach rather than

a convention, which would affect the whole city and move down the country of NZ. A suggestion was made to hold the event at Queen's Birthday weekend 1975. It was also suggested that the name of Jesus was to be the only name highlighted in order to give all glory to Jesus. Those suggestions were unanimously approved with Bob Horton being elected chairman. Albert Charlton was elected secretary and myself treasurer. I had only been born again for 2 years and didn't know what I was letting myself into. I had never been in such a place where the presence of God was so strong. I knew that the Holy Spirit was guiding us every step of the way even if we had no idea at that point of time of what God was wanting to do.

We decided to call the crusade 'Jesus 75' to lift up the name of Jesus and so that no person was to get the glory. Our vision was big. We were looking for a big outdoor venue as there were no indoor venues at that time to take the crowd we believed would come. After much discussion someone suggested Alexandra Park raceway as having all the facilities we needed. We visited the raceway. While we were there God confirmed through further prophetic words and by sensing God's peace and unity in our spirit, that this was the place to hold our meetings. We faced a

problem. Alexandra Park wanted a guarantee to cover payment for the venue. As a result, several of us put our houses up as collateral. This is something I would not recommend normally but we were so sure that God was in this and was going to do something special in those meetings and that all finances expended would be recovered. As it happened all costs were covered.

Speakers were a problem. Many names were suggested, including Pat Boone, Charles and Frances Hunter, Ronald Reagan, Kathryn Kulman, etc. but none of these were forthcoming. We came to the conclusion that it was the name of Jesus that



was to be lifted up and that God would provide the speakers when we needed them, which He did.

As we started to share the vision of the Jesus 75 crusade, people began to get excited. As a result, we started to plan 'Jesus marches' to be held up and down the country. We approached many denominations to become involved and many participated. They included mainline churches such as Anglicans, Catholics, Salvation Army, Methodists, Presbyterians, along with many evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Prayer was organised in all the prayer groups around the city including The Baptist Tabernacle and a lot of other churches. Christians gathered on all the volcanic mountain tops to pray on Saturday the 25th May. All our FGBMFI Chapters throughout the country were catching the vision of marches and organising their own marches in their local regions. Prayer groups up and down the country were praying for the Jesus 75 crusade and marches.

Despite heavy rain over 10,000 Christians responded to the challenge to stand up and march for Jesus. Many banners were displayed with representations from all church backgrounds. Churches had display posters and arranged buses for the marchers. It certainly was an amazing time

and it dovetailed with the 'Jesus 75' Crusade at Alexandra Park.

God supernaturally arranged the speakers for us. Jack Hayford, who was visiting at the time, recommended an evangelist in his church named Ray Mossholder. He also recommended Dick Mills in Australia who just happened to be available at the time. Both speakers were unheard of in NZ but God used them mightily. The icing on the cake, so to speak, were Demos Shakarian and Tommy Ashcroft who both agreed to be part of the crusade and flew out from America especially.

The meetings exceeded expectations, numbers for the Saturday and Sunday nights exceeded 6000. Large numbers of people came from all denominations and were born again, baptised in the Holy Spirit, healed and set free. They took those benefits back to their own churches along with the anointing that was on them.

The crusades carried on for the next few years. Eventually our FGBMFI annual conventions in various cities throughout NZ replaced them. It certainly was an exciting time and I believe God is ready to move again. The point is, are we?

David Edgar

Mt Albert Chapter