

THIN
PLACES



ENCOUNTERS WITH
AND TEACHINGS FROM
JESUS

Marshall E. Quilling

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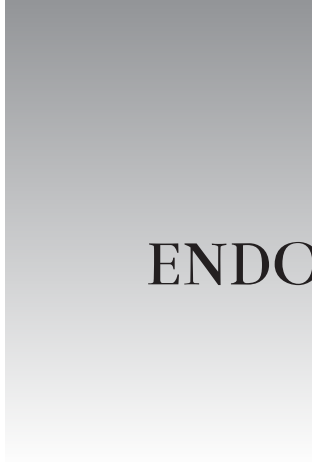
...the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the gateway of the inner court that faces north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provokes to jealousy. And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the valley.

Ezekiel 8:3b-4 (ESV)

C O N T E N T S

Endorsements.....	7
Preface.....	17
Acknowledgements.....	19
What Doing, Where Going, Why	21
To Myself Daily.....	23
The Face of Jesus.....	27
Angel to the Rescue.....	31
God Answers Prayers in Mysterious Ways.....	33
Restoring Stolen Property.....	35
Cars Do Run on the Breath of God.....	37
What is the purpose of prayer?	39
Bizarre Night.....	45
Miracle Night at the State	48
Cameras—A Picture of God.....	52
When God Speaks—Act	54
Swing Sets and Visions	56
Dire Consequences.....	58
God Speaks	60
Breakfast with Al Quie	63
American Express Delivers.....	65
God’s Plan.....	67
How Much Faith is Enough?.....	69
Reflections of the Future	71
God Leads in Mysterious Ways.....	73
Ministry in the Night	76
Spiritual Secret of Power.....	78
Revival in the Church	80
Demons Attack	83

Bringing in the Harvest87
 Warning89
 God Protects92
 The Greatest Miracle.....94
 What Must I Do to Receive Eternal Life?97
 The Vision100



ENDORSEMENTS

Wow! I found Marshall Quilling’s book to be captivating from the beginning to the end and very impactful. Starting with the very first chapter, I did not want to put the book down. His story encourages Christians to resist their fears, and to trust God with all of your heart. Marshall, with humility, shares clear practical examples of how he has brought faith to his work and to his whole life. He shares the importance of discipleship as the purpose of our lives. Marshall also shares how to be bold in the little things, and how to trust God to overcome any fears. His transparency makes his story very compelling to show that a Christian life is not easy, but is remarkably secure knowing the love of God. The book is very encouraging and life-changing. It is a MUST read!!

—Mark Whitacre, Ph.D., COO &
 National Director of Field Ministry,
Christian Business Men’s Connection

Mark Whitacre is an Ivy League Ph.D. and is considered the highest-ranked executive of any Fortune 500 company to become a whistleblower in U.S. history, and was responsible for uncovering the ADM price-fixing scandal in the early 1990s. Effective January



2020, Mark is the Executive Director of the t-factor initiative for Coca Cola Consolidated, Inc. Mark was COO of CBMC from January 2017 to December 2019, which is a 90-year old organization that has impacted his life greatly the past two decades. He was National Director of CBMC from 2013 to 2017. Prior to that, from 2006 to 2013, Mark had been an executive with Cypress Systems, Inc, a California biotech company involved with human clinical trials (cancer research), and he was promoted in 2009 to the position of COO & Chief Science Officer of the company. Mark is still active on Cypress' advisory board today.

His undercover work with the FBI during the ADM scandal was the inspiration for the 2009 major motion picture, "The Informant," starring Matt Damon as Mark Whitacre, and the 2010 Discovery Channel documentary "Undercover" archived on Mark Whitacre's website, www.markwhitacre.com. The recent book, "*Mark Whitacre Against all Odds*", describes the rest of the story about how faith has molded Mark's life since the ADM scandal. **Mark's story is mostly about how God transformed his life, and about redemption and second chances. It is an inspirational story about a family surviving against all odds.**

After completing B.S. and M.S. degrees at Ohio State University, Mark then earned his Ph.D. degree at Cornell University in biochemistry (1983). After he completed his Ph.D., he worked for multiple Fortune 500 companies including Ralston Purina, Degussa (Evonik), and Archer Daniels Midland (ADM). Mark was hired at ADM, the 56th largest company on the Fortune 500 at the time, when he was 32 years of age. As the president of the BioProducts Division from its launch, he was the youngest divisional president in the history of the company. In just six years, his division's fermentation complex became one of the largest in the world. At age 35, he became a corporate vice president of ADM and was the leading candidate to become the next company president. Mark has extensive international business experience, having lived for almost four years in West Germany working for an international company. He has also been involved with two international companies in the Southeast Asia market and traveled the region dozens of times. Mark's more than two decades of

top management experience at Fortune 500 and international companies, as well as his experience with the ADM price-fixing scandal and the FBI, give him a unique, seasoned perspective on leadership in the corporate world.

Today, the four FBI agents involved with Whitacre's case tout him publicly as a "national hero" for his substantial assistance with one of the most important white-collar cases in history. And Douglas Burris, chief of U.S. Federal Probation in the Eastern District of Missouri, has stated publicly, "The story about Mark Whitacre's redemption and second chance is one of the most inspirational stories of our time."

Mark and his wife of 40 years, Ginger, have three grown children. Mark & Ginger travel the country extensively speaking at national events and sharing their faith as witnesses for Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

I have known Marshall Quilling for several years and have sat under his preaching. Marshall is a [^]quite theologian and I enjoy listening to his sermons.

wonderful

—Al Quie, Governor of Minnesota,
United States Congressman

Born on a farm near Nerstrand, Minnesota, Albert Harold Quie was a U.S. Navy pilot during World War II. He graduated from St. Olaf College in political science in 1950, clerked for his local school board (1949–1952), and supervised the Rice County Soil Conservation District (1950–1954). He also owned and operated his family's dairy farm.



In 1954 he won a Minnesota Senate seat. When U.S. Representative August H. Andresen died in office in 1958, Quie won that seat in a tight race. During twenty

years in the House, Quie advocated for and authored bills relating to education, agriculture, anti-poverty, and labor issues. He was a ranking minority member of the House Committee on Education and Labor. His reputation for integrity made President Gerald Ford consider him for the vice-presidency in 1974.

Quie's deep religious beliefs showed in his politics. He supported the International Christian Leadership Connection, and befriended leading figures in evangelical politics. In 1975 President Ford called him "a diligent servant of God and of his fellow men."

In the 1978 gubernatorial race, Quie defeated incumbent Rudy Perpich, part of a wave of Republican victories for statewide offices and legislative seats. Republicans took advantage of divisive politics surrounding the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Governor Wendell Anderson's 1976 decision to appoint himself to the U.S. Senate, and DFL infighting over gun control and abortion.

A severe economic downturn triggered a state budget crisis that defined Quie's gubernatorial years. When the DFL regained control of the state legislature in 1980, finding solutions became more difficult. Facing shortfalls, Quie rejected the deepest budget cuts and approved tax increases. This unpopular decision derived from his commitment to stabilizing state government, which cuts alone threatened. When he left office without seeking re-election, the state sported a budget surplus.

Ronald Reagan appointed Quie to the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations in 1982. In 1986 he became director of the Prison Fellowship Program for Minnesota and North Dakota, later serving as the organization's national vice-president. Quie then retired and returned to live in Minnetonka.

* * * * *

I have had the pleasure and honor over the past several years to spend Saturday mornings with Marshall E. Quilling in our community Bible study group. Marshall is a man of great faith and filled with a sincere caring for others. The personal experiences he relates in "Thin Places"

attest to his faith and are real-life, thought provoking testimonials to that faith. A great read!

—Robert Shadley, retired Army General
and author of *The Game*

Robert D. Shadley graduated from Purdue University and was commissioned in the Ordnance Corps in 1965.

He served until June 1990 in a series of demanding command and staff positions, to include: Training Officer and Commander of the 249th Ordnance Detachment, Unit Training Command, US Army Missile and Munitions Center and School, Redstone Arsenal; Commander of the 86th Ordnance Detachment, Japan; Advisor, US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam; Chief, Administration and Industrial Liaison Office, Army Materiel Command; Maintenance Officer then Chief, Maintenance Branch, Assistant Chief of Staff, G4, III Corps, Fort Hood; Commander, Division Materiel Management Center, 8th Infantry Division, Germany; Commander, 801st Maintenance Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell; and Special Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Headquarters, Department of the Army.



In 1990, Shadley assumed command of the 1st Infantry Division's Support Command at Fort Riley, where he deployed for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and redeployed to Fort Riley. His DISCOM ably supported 22,000 personnel as the Big Red One maneuvered and fought over 250 kilometers in four days. Next, he served from 1992 to 1994 as Executive Officer to the Commanding General, US Army Materiel Command, where he put his organizational skills and field expertise to work improving the information flow and efficiency in that large, complex organization. Then, in 1994 to 1995, he was assigned as Director of Logistics, J4, US Atlantic Command, where he provided flawless logistical support to joint forces in a turbulent time of command reorganization,

domestic and foreign disasters, and crisis actions in Haiti, Cuba, and Europe.

From 1995 to 1997, Shadley served as Chief of Ordnance and Commanding General of the Ordnance Center and School. Under his direction, the Ordnance Corps designed a new Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) organization; made significant advances in EOD technology; introduced the Integrated Family of Test Equipment; established Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 35J, Computer Repairman; and published a vision which identified the potential utility of on-board equipment sensors. During his tenure, the Ordnance Corps also established a tele-maintenance support program and developed standardized strategic configured loads for rapid, flexible ammunition resupply.

Shadley culminated his career as Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM). In this assignment, he was responsible for all of the logistical support for the Army's largest major command, an organization comprised of more than 800,000 active and reserve soldiers and 40,000 civilians. Indicative of his contributions in this assignment, he saved the command over \$50 million by identifying and redistributing excess property and an additional \$34 million through an innovative contract regionalization program that was adopted for use throughout the Army.

MG Shadley retired in 2000 after 35 years of service to the Army and the Ordnance Corps.

* * * * *

Thin Places shares authentic life experiences where God is in all the little details, and there with us all the time! He really cares for us and wants none to perish... We are reminded that God is very real and Eternity is Forever for both the Believer and Unbeliever. Thank you for not only sparking memories of God in my life and celebrating the great, unimaginable mercy of God, but also being a catalyst to "Tell Them" of His love!

—Paul Ridgeway Sr., Evangelist, Radio Host—
Salem Twin Cities, Businessman

Paul R. Ridgeway, Sr. was a Minneapolis Special Events Expert turned Evangelist. He had a favorite saying he shared with audiences, "God is planning something special for you—Eternal life!" On May 13, 2017, Ridgeway, 68, of Plymouth, died from open heart surgery complications, and his desire to live eternally with Jesus was realized. Ridgeway was recognized nationwide for his talents in special events, both in politics and sports. Most recently he was the host of a Christian talk radio program, "On the Way with Ridgeway" on AM 980 KKMS. Paul Robert Ridgeway was born December 29, 1948, in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Dewey R. Ridgeway and Mabel (Stay) Ridgeway, the eighth of eleven children. When his father suddenly passed away in 1955, Paul became a lifelong foster child to Paul and Edee Lundquist, who loved and cared for him.



* * * * *

If you've ever wondered what hearing and following God's voice would be like, read this book. If you're on the fence about whether God is still moving in this world, read this book. If you need a little inspiration, read this book. A story for every person seeking to make sense of it all.

—Robert Willbanks, President and
Founder of Ambassadors for Business

Robert Willbanks served the payroll, tech, and real estate sectors throughout his career with experience in sales, operations, management, and service bureau ownership. He owned multiple successful business ventures and has experience with Fortune 500 companies at senior management levels.



From this career background Robert has a deep foundation from which to draw wisdom and discernment while leading Ambassadors for Business.

* * * * *

We call the two main portions of the Bible The Old Testament and The New Testament which are made of 66 books all testifying to God acting in history. These testimonials from believers have encouraged faith for millions of people over the centuries. This is why testimonials are so important. I was inspired by how God has led Marshall Quilling through his life in very unusual ways. I am sure you will be inspired as well in this easy to read book Thin Places.

—Timothy P. Mahoney, Writer/Director, *Patterns of Evidence*

Patterns of Evidence: Exodus is an award-winning documentary by filmmaker Timothy Mahoney that chronicles an in-depth archaeological investigation in Egypt as his team attempts to corroborate the biblical text. The film explores one fundamental question: Is there evidence that the Exodus story actually happened?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marshall E. Quilling was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has had various careers in many endeavors including paperboy, beekeeping, farming, opera performance, real estate brokerage, seminary training, pastor, and mentor.

Currently, Marshall is a business leader, land developer, manages a Bemer sales organization, storage company, and clothing and embroidery company. He also started Cars for You, an organization that provides cars for missionaries home on furlough and an auto dealership.

Marshall is married and has four children. Much of his time is spent in ministry as a small group leader, discipling men coming out of prison and drug addiction, working with Christian Businessmen's Connection, speaking to groups, and writing.

To contact the author, go to: www.marshallequilling.com

PREFACE

Thin Places—Encounters with and Teachings from Jesus

The idea of the title *Thin Places* came from a women's Bible study held at a Presbyterian church. Thin Places are those occurrences when God reveals Himself to us; when the barrier between God and man becomes thin, close, or where it is apparent that God Himself is present. This book is not only about true experiences that have happened in my life, but also what God has taught me through these experiences. Our lives are journeys that are ultimately very short. The Bible calls our lives "but a vapor" that will soon be gone.

...yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.
James 4:14 (ESV)

Thin places are very important to me personally. We all go through times of trial and tribulation. There are times when we doubt our faith and doubt the existence of God. It is during those times that I think back to thin places and remember how God has intervened in my life. As I remember how God has revealed Himself to me in *Thin Places*, my faith and trust in a real, authentic, and liv-

ing God, who does act in time and space in my life, is renewed and strengthened.

Man is like a breath;
his days are like a passing shadow.
Psalm 144:4 (ESV)

It is my prayer that as you are reading these accounts, you will be encouraged in your faith. Look for thin places in your life. God will reveal Himself to you. If your faith is weak or lacking, may God reveal Himself to you through this book.

Blessings
Marshall E. Quilling

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank the Lord for giving me such a fulfilled life. Many people ask me why God would give me all of these supernatural experiences. I have no idea. I know that I have come to love the Lord more and more, and long for the day when I will be with Him forever.

I want to thank my brothers in the Lord with whom I have met and ministered for many years. I look to them as examples of God's faithful warriors.

I want to acknowledge Christian Businessmen's Connection which has been used by God to grow and mature me from a wimp to a warrior in the faith.

My daily prayer partner, Harold, has encouraged me and prayed me out of many discouraging trials.

My mentees, going through Operation Timothy discipleship training have ministered to me more than I to them.

I also want to especially acknowledge Dr. Francis and Edith Schaeffer, who exemplified the love of Christ in their community in Huemoz, Switzerland. Their community demonstrated the amazing love of Christ that drew me to the Savior.

I also want to thank John Stott, whose book, *Basic Christianity*, was very instrumental to my seeing the truth and proof of the resurrection of Christ.

WHAT DOING, WHERE GOING, WHY

When we were young and recently married, we purchased our first home in South St. Paul, Minnesota. It was a very nice three-bedroom rambler with a tuck-under single-car garage. The basement was finished, and the yard was beautifully landscaped, with a terraced garden in the backyard complete with a statue of Jesus. We paid \$31,000 and had anxiety about how we were going to pay the mortgage payment of \$160 per month.

Our side door was directly across from our neighbor's house twenty feet away. Our neighbors had two little boys around the ages of three and five. They did not let their boys play with any other children, and kept them inside most of the time. Their vocabulary was very limited, and we only heard them say three things. They were, however, very friendly and came running up to me every time I would see them. The first thing they would say was,

“What doing?”

When I told them what I was doing, they would ask,

“Where going?”

When they were satisfied with my answer, the final question was, “Why?”

As I have reflected on these questions over the years, I have come to realize that these are very profound questions. What am I doing, where am I going, and why?

Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

I have never sat down and charted my life, but I have been led and protected by a mysterious force. As you read this book, ask yourself these questions. Is life more than eating, drinking, and being merry—and then you die? Is there someone or something out there in the universe who is watching me? Is there someone wanting to interact with me? Such is the story of my life, my search for truth, and my journey.

I am not an extraordinary person. Some of my adventures may seem a little strange. They were strange for me too. Sometime I identify with Sergeant Joe Friday in *Dagnet*. “Just the facts, ma’am. Just the facts.” I hope that in sharing my life, you too may find answers to these basic questions. I hope that you will find peace and contentment as I have found in my life.

But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.
Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)

“And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.”
1 Chronicles 28:9 (ESV)

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you.
Jeremiah 29:13-14a (ESV)

TO MYSELF DAILY

A number of years ago, I was in a state of deep depression. I had invested over a million dollars into a company that was not doing very well. After the 9-11 attack on the twin towers, the company started a huge downward slide. It was losing money at a horrendous rate. I remember coming home from a morning Bible study meeting in a state of despair.

That night, a strange thing happened. It is extremely rare for me to remember my dreams. This night was even more unusual. It has never happened to me before or since. I woke up from a sound sleep, and there would be a verse of “To Myself Daily” (the poem on the next page) on my mind. I had a tape recorder by my bed, so I turned it on and recited the verse, then went back to sleep. Sometime later, I woke up, and there was another verse on my mind. This kept happening all night long.

In the morning, I played back the tape. It sounded like recorded speech played back at half speed.

God is so good. I needed “To Myself Daily” in a desperate way. God reached down and gave me encouragement for the moment. I keep a copy by my desk. I need to be encouraged every day. The Word of God shouts this thought as well.

MARSHALL E. QUILLING

But exhort one another every day, as long
as it is called “today,” that none of you may
be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 3:13 (ESV)

I myself am satisfied about you, my
brothers, that you yourselves are full
of goodness, filled with all knowledge
and able to instruct one another.
Romans 15:14 (ESV)

It is the truth of the Gospel that needs to be reinforced in our
minds every day. God really cares about us and loves us very much.
If we seek Him, He will be found. He knows the number of hairs
on our heads and our words before they are on our lips. He is seated
at the right hand of the Father God right now, interceding on my
behalf.

But from there you will seek the LORD your
God and you will find him, if you search after
him with all your heart and with all your soul.
Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)

I hope that you will find encouragement in this poem in your
time of need.

TO MYSELF DAILY

I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED
I WILL NOT BE AFRAID
FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY
WILL STAND IN THE FRAY

WHEN BURDENS AND CARES
WEIGH DOWN TO DESPAIR
WHEN I AM ALONE
I KNOW HE IS THERE

HE IS EVER BEFORE ME
BEHIND AND ABOVE
AND SHELTERS ME OVER
WITH UNCEASING LOVE

SO REJOICE IN THE LORD
AND GIVE THANKS IN ALL THINGS
THROUGH PRAYERS NEVER CEASING
GREAT BLESSINGS HE BRINGS

I WILL NOT BE DISCOURAGED
I WILL NOT BE AFRAID
FOR THE LORD GOD ALMIGHTY
WILL STAND IN THE FRAY

SO SHOUT ALLELUIA
ALL YE WHO CAN HEAR
OUR SAVIOR IS COMING
HE SOON WILL APPEAR

IN SPLENDOR AND GLORY
OUR SAVIOR SHALL COME
TO TAKE US TO HEAVEN
WHERE WE WILL BE ONE

FOREVER AND EVER
WITH FATHER AND SON
OUR JOY IS COMPLETED
THE BATTLE IS WON

Marshall E. Quilling

THE FACE OF JESUS

Several years ago, my mother passed away. We had had a wonderful Christmas at her home in West Central Minnesota. It was such a special time with all the nephews and nieces. We thought our mom was the best cook in the world, and we enjoyed her specialties. She made the best rice pudding, freshly baked homemade dinner rolls, watermelon pickles, and we really enjoyed her special popcorn balls.

It was a wonderful time of sharing, singing, and just being together. Several days after the holidays, my brother called to inform us that Mom had had a major heart attack. We immediately went to be with her. We had a wonderful time just being with Mom as she was very alert and comfortable in the hospital. We spent a week with her, but she was not improving as the heart attack had done major damage. The doctors were not optimistic for her long-term survival. They were making her comfortable but were not able to do anything to improve her condition.

Her doctor suggested that perhaps Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, might be able to help her, maybe even with a heart transplant. I asked Mom if she would like to go to Mayo Clinic, and the answer was, "Yes!" We consulted with our cousin who was a doctor at the Mayo Clinic and agreed to get her there as soon as possible.

It was decided to have her airlifted to Mayo if she would agree to the flight. She had never flown on an airplane, and I encouraged her to make the trip. She not only wanted to fly, but also was very

excited about it. We made the arrangements and escorted her to the airport.

Mayo decided to use a helicopter as there were some concerns about the length of the runway for the size of the plane. The helicopter arrived on time, and Mom was bundled up and placed on a stretcher in the back of the helicopter. There were two nurses who sat beside her the whole trip. Mom was disappointed that she could not see out the helicopter as she was strapped in back of the helicopter lying down. As the helicopter took off, I had a sense that this would be the last time I would see her alive.

My brother left for Rochester right away and arrived that night at Rochester. My cousin, niece, and nephew were at the helipad to meet Mom at Mayo.

We returned to the cities that night and were planning to go to Rochester the next day. I was lying in bed that evening just talking to the Lord. I said, "Lord, if you do decide to take Mom, it would really be nice if you would give me a sign that she is okay." I really don't know why I made such a statement. I knew that Mom knew the Lord. Her eternal destiny was secure. The next morning, we received a call from my brother telling us that Mom had had a relapse and that she was probably not going to live. A little later, he called to say that Mom had passed away. The last thing she had said to her grandchildren, Jim and Ann, was that knowing Jesus was the most important thing in life.

That night, as I was ready to doze off to sleep, I suddenly visualized in my mind the most brilliant sky I have ever seen. The sky was completely filled with the most billowy clouds that glistened in the light of the sun. Suddenly, a small oval opened in the clouds, and there was the face of my mother just beaming a radiant smile. She appeared to be about thirty years old and in the prime of her life.

There was a combination of joy, peace, and contentment that seemed to radiate from her. I knew that she was not just okay; she was home.

Then the oval closed, and immediately another oval opened right next to where she had been. The face of Jesus appeared, smiling the most loving, kind smile I have ever seen.

He did not move or speak, but just looked at me with an assuring look. I don't know if I can describe the face of Jesus and the depth and richness of that gaze. He seemed to convey to me, *She is okay with me*. I knew that Mom was in God's hands.

Then the oval closed, and a few seconds later, the vision of the sky disappeared.

I don't know why I asked God to give me a sign. I do know that God answered my prayer in a very unusual way. God is so loving and caring. I think back on this incident often and share it with others. It gives me great confidence that there really is a God. He loves me, He cares for me, and He wants me to know Him.

As I look out on this great creation, the seas, the mountains, the universe, and think that all of this magnificence was created when God spoke, how is it that this mighty God would think of me?

O LORD, our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens.
 Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
 you have established strength
 because of your foes,
 to still the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens,
 the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars, which
 you have set in place,
 what is man that you are mindful of him,
 and the son of man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him a little lower
 than the heavenly beings
 and crowned him with glory and honor.
 You have given him dominion over
 the works of your hands;
 you have put all things under his feet,

MARSHALL E. QUILLING

all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
Psalm 8 (ESV)

ANGEL TO THE RESCUE

When I was a young man and had little children, we were traveling from Menomonie, Wisconsin, to visit my in-laws who lived in Minneapolis. About two miles west of Menomonie on Interstate 94, I had a flat tire. I retrieved the tire wrench and started to change the back passenger side tire. Someone must have put the tire on with an impact wrench because, as hard as I tried, I could not get the nuts to loosen. I rummaged through the back of my Suburban and happened on a can of Fix-a-Flat. I was able to pump the tire up, and drove back to Menomonie. It was fairly late in the evening, and I was praying that I could find a service station that could remove the tire. There was a Standard station located on the corner of the main intersection that was open, and I approached the young man attending the station. He informed me that the mechanic has just left, and he was not able to help me. I drove over under a light and took out my tire wrench again to see if I could remove the tire. My wrench was a straight bar with an angle that kept slipping off the nut when I tried to turn it. I even tried to jump on the bar to no avail.

After trying unsuccessfully, I decided to pray and ask God to help me. "Lord, I need to get to Minneapolis tonight. I have small children here, and I need to get this tire fixed." I had driven under a light and parked next to a long fence on the south side of the station. This fence was taller than I was, probably around seven feet high. I was parked in the middle of the fence that was around six hundred

feet long. As I finished praying, a young man leaped over the fence and came walking toward me. He greeted me and asked if I needed help. I explained the situation; he said I needed a T-wrench. I agreed but stated that I did not have one. He said, "I have one," and immediately turned around and walked toward the fence. He put one hand on top of the fence and seemed to float over this high barrier. He had been gone for about five minutes when, *whoosh*, he leaped over the fence and walked over to me carrying a T-wrench. He changed my tire and would not take any money for his effort. He turned around, walked to the fence, and over he went.

How did this man see my car since the fence was taller than he was? How did he seem to so effortlessly jump over the fence? There were no houses on the other side of the fence, only businesses. He was gone for about five minutes, which meant that he was not located next to the fence but had to go a ways to get the T wrench. You make your own analysis, but I believe that this good Samaritan was an angel.

In the day of my trouble I call upon you,
for you answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.

Psalm 86:7-8 (ESV)

GOD ANSWERS PRAYERS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Many years ago, we moved to Wisconsin and bought an old dairy farm. We engaged a herdsman and bought a herd of Holstein cows. The back forty acres was woods and pasture land. I thought it could be cleared and made into good farmland, so I started a firewood company and began to deliver wood. I had an old two-wheeled trailer that my dad and I had built that I used to fill with wood. I would take an old Minneapolis Moline tractor back into the woods, fill the trailer with wood, and transport it to the house. The only problem was one pothole in which I would get stuck almost every other trip.

It was midweek. I was bringing out a load of wood, and sure enough, I got stuck. I would usually have to call my neighbor and ask him to come over to pull me out. This was getting to be way too frequent. I was extremely frustrated and spoke to God in a very demanding way. "Lord, you have given me this order to be delivered on Monday. I am tired of calling on neighbors and bothering them, You get me unstuck! I am not going to ask anyone to help me. This is your work and your responsibility, and this tractor will sit here until you get it unstuck!"

I would not necessarily recommend putting God to the test in this manner, but God was gracious to me.

Days passed and still no response. Then the weekend came, and I was getting a little nervous. Monday morning, we had a men's Bible study, and I considered bringing up my situation, asking my brothers

to pray for me. No! This was between God and me, and I was not going to let the situation be known and have someone help me out.

Monday morning I was walking around the farmyard, and up the drive came a shiny new pickup truck with a cable winch on the front. The young man rolled down the window and said, "I see you have a tractor stuck back in the woods. Can I help you pull it out?"

I said, "Sure!" I hopped in the passenger side and rode out to the woods. I was very curious and asked him how he knew my tractor was stuck since you could not see it from any public road. He said he had been scouting for deer on my neighbor's land and noticed my dilemma. He hooked up the cable, and the tractor came out easily.

A couple of weeks later, we were visiting my neighbor. I happened to ask him who the young man was whom he allowed to go hunting on his land. He looked at me kind of strangely and told me that no one was allowed on his property.

What a mysterious deal. No one ever saw this pickup again. No one ever saw this young man again. Why would he come to my farm at exactly the time I needed help? Why would God help me when I was so belligerent? Oh, how good our God is!

The LORD is good to all,
and his mercy is over all that he has made.
Psalm 145:9 (ESV)

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the LORD has comforted his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted.
Isaiah 49:13 (ESV)

RESTORING STOLEN PROPERTY

In the early 1970s, I was attending a seminary in St. Paul. I lived on campus and in the morning would paddle my canoe to classes. I was taking a full load of classes and working harder than I have ever worked in my life. It would be typical to write two papers every day and read the equivalent of two books each day, plus prepare for class work and lectures. I was usually up in the night until one or two o'clock in the morning.

After attending classes all day, I worked downtown in the evenings selling Triple A Automobile Club memberships over the phone. It was a great job. I started at 7:00 p.m. and worked until 9:00 p.m. all I had to do was to call the list of people, ask them to listen to a short tape by Howard Viken, come back on the line when it was finished, and take the order. I made as much money in two hours as most people made in eight.

One day when I was at church, someone broke into my car and stole my briefcase that I used for work. I contacted the police department. They told me that I was out of luck, and that they never had these things returned. There was nothing in the case that would be of value to anyone except me. I had all of my sales leads and information that I desperately needed to do my job.

It was getting late in the afternoon, and I soon had to go to work. There was only one alternative. There was only one person

who could help. There was only one person who had the power to help me in this situation.

I asked my heavenly father to help me to get my case back before work. I arrived back at my apartment after class and was starting to prepare to go to work. The phone rang, and a lady called to tell me she had found my briefcase in her yard. She had gathered all the materials that had been scattered across her yard, and safely replaced them in my case. She lived right on the way to work, and I was able to stop by, pick up my briefcase, and make it to work on time.

Our heavenly father loves us. He is able to intervene in our lives and help us in our difficulties. We will face many trials and troubles in this world. Let us turn to the one who created us and loves us, and He will have compassion on us.

For the LORD will vindicate his people
and have compassion on his servants.
Psalm 135:14 (ESV)

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!
For the LORD has comforted his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted.
Isaiah 49:13 (ESV)

CARS DO RUN ON THE BREATH OF GOD

John was an interesting man. He was in his seventies and had a doctor's degree in law. He had worked in a law firm with President Eisenhower's son. I owned a real estate company, and John worked for me in the business.

John was a Pentecostal and was very concerned about having enough faith. John was always asking me to go his charismatic gatherings. One evening, I decided to go and check out his church. There was a visiting faith healer coming to town. I was very uneasy about going and did not know what to expect. I listened to the young speaker get very excited, and then he started to call people up for healing. I don't know if people did get healed or not, but I was very uncomfortable. I was more than relieved when the meeting ended. When the meeting finally ended, it was very late.

I had a Ford LTD automobile that was very predictable. When the gas tank read empty, the car gave a sputter and stopped. I know, because unfortunately, it had happened several times before. I happened to look at the gauge, and to my dismay, I saw the needle was just above empty. I started to look for gas stations as I was a long way from home. I started praying, "Lord, I need to find a gas station. Please help me!" Within several minutes, I came upon a gas station that was lit up and drove in. "Thank you, Lord," I prayed. When I started to pump the gas, I discovered that the pump would not work. I walked into the station and the attendant informed me that he was

closing and the pumps were shut off for the evening and he could not turn them on. I explained my situation, and he told me that there was another station about a mile down the road. I drove to the next station, and to my dismay, the station was closed. The situation was getting desperate. I knew that I could not make it home. I started to talk to the Lord something like this. “Lord, what is going on? I went to a meeting to honor you, and I am in trouble. I need to get home and don’t have enough gas. Could you please get me home?”

I kept on driving and sure enough, three miles down the road, my car started to sputter and then died. As I coasted to the side of the road, I cried out, “God, help me.” The engine immediately roared back to life, and the car took off down the road. I drove all the way home and parked in the driveway. The next morning, I drove all the way down to the gas station and filled up. I often wonder, if I wouldn’t have filled up the gas tank, how long God would have kept the car running.

...call upon me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.
Psalm 50:15 (ESV)

When he calls to me, I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.
Psalm 91:15 (ESV)

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PRAYER?

How often should I pray? Does prayer matter? Can my prayers affect other people? Is there a best position in which to pray? How does God answer my prayers? Does God hear my prayers? How can I know for sure my prayers will be answered? Is there more power when more people are gathered? Does God communicate with us or speak to us when we pray? How can I be sure that my prayers will be answered? Does God always answer my prayers the way I want? Does it seem that God answers my prayers sometimes and sometimes not? How can I be sure that I am praying in the will of God?

Are these questions that you sometimes ponder? I remember when God was answering my prayers in miraculous ways. Cars running without gas, fuses working when they were burned in two, etc. Is God answering my prayers now? Yes. Sometimes it seems that God is not answering my prayers.

I remember when my brother and I were out examining a drainage ditch. When we were to leave the pickup wouldn’t start. “No problem,” I told my brother, “We can ask the Lord to start the truck.” We both put our hands on the hood and prayed. Guess what? The pickup didn’t start. I always put the blame on my brother’s lack of faith.

How do we reconcile the Bible when our prayers do not receive immediate fruition?

If you abide in me, and my words
abide in you, ask whatever you wish,
and it will be done for you.

John 15:7 (ESV)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another
and pray for one another, that you may be
healed. The prayer of a righteous person
has great power as it is working.

James 5:16 (ESV)

I believe that the answer lies in the words “remain” and “my words”. Whose words are these? The Lord’s words. So, in essence, are we are praying God’s will or His very mind? We do have the mind of Christ, right? I believe that “remaining” is walking in the Spirit, being controlled by the Spirit and having the Spirit of Christ flowing through our bodies.

For,

who has understood the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?

But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:16 (ESV)

The Word tells us to pray all of the time.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give
thanks in all circumstances; for this is the
will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

Does this mean to be always down on our knees pleading with God? I believe that this means to be in the presence of God always or being aware of God’s presence as we go about our lives.

Do you know that God not only hears our prayers but stores up our prayers and keeps them in golden bowls?

And when he had taken the scroll, the four
living creatures and the twenty-four elders
fell down before the Lamb, each holding
a harp, and golden bowls full of incense,
which are the prayers of the saints.

Revelation 5:8 (ESV)

Prayer is a two-way street. We can praise God and thank God through our prayers. We can also ask God to work in our lives and the lives of others. We are to pray for our government leaders. We are to pray for our friends and those in need. We are to pray for the lost people who don’t know Christ.

We are also to listen for God to speak to us.

Be still, and know that I am God.

I will be exalted among the nations,

I will be exalted in the earth!

Psalms 46:10 (ESV)

Several of my chapters have related to when God has spoken to me. Sometimes in dreams, sometimes an audible voice, and sometimes in my spirit. He has also taught me through difficult experiences that it is very important to act immediately when God wants you to act out His plan.

Paul talks about the importance of praying together as the body of Christ. There seems to be a certain power that happens when the body of Christ comes together in prayer.

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father’s wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.
1 Corinthians 5:1-5 (ESV)

Another important consideration is that we need to be right with God and walking in the Spirit for us to have an effective prayer life. If we are not inclining our hearts to God, but instead are walking in sin, God will not hear our prayers. Our actions or lack thereof do affect our walk with the Lord.

Come and hear, all you who fear God,
and I will tell what he has
done for my soul.
I cried to him with my mouth,
and high praise was on my tongue.
If I had cherished iniquity in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened.
But truly God has listened;
he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God,
because he has not rejected my prayer
or removed his steadfast love from me!
Psalm 66:18-19 (ESV)

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they

are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.
1 Peter 3:7 (ESV)

Why do our churches in America not obey the word of God?
Why do we not make disciples in our own congregations?
Why do we not gather daily to commune with the creator of the universe?

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
Hebrews 3:13 (ESV)

I believe that the measure of an individual and a church rest in three areas. Prayer, discipleship and evangelism. We are not doing very well at any of these in America.

We have also lost our vision, intentionality and accountability in our country. Do we have the vision to make disciples of all nations? Do we desire to reach the world for Christ and have the resolve or intentionality to do so? Finally, are we working as a team with other brothers and sisters to regularly come together in prayer to seek the will of God in this great commission?

Will the Christians in our country wake up and seek the Lord with all our hearts, souls, and minds? Or is our nation doomed to die a slow death? Will you be part of the answer?

You will seek me and find me, when
you seek me with all your heart.
Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV)

If my people who are called by my name
humble themselves, and pray and seek
my face and turn from their wicked ways,

then I will hear from heaven and will
forgive their sin and heal their land.
2 Chronicles 7:14 (ESV)

Let us therefore make every effort to work heartily for the Lord
and remain in His presence both now and forever more.

But according to his promise we are
waiting for new heavens and a new
earth in which righteousness dwells.
Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting
for these, be diligent to be found by him
without spot or blemish, and at peace. And
count the patience of our Lord as salvation,
just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to
you according to the wisdom given him,...
2 Peter 3:13-15 (ESV)

Let us strive to someday hear the Lord say to us, “Well done
thou good and faithful servant.”

BIZARRE NIGHT

Back in the early seventies, I was living in Milan, Italy. I was studying
Voice and planning to become a professional opera singer. One night
I was walking down the street, and a crowd was entering a soccer
stadium. I had nothing to do, so I joined the crowd to see what was
happening.

There was a large platform set up in the middle of the field
with huge speakers and an elaborate sound system. Soon, young peo-
ple were climbing over the fence that separated the stadium from
the field, and were sitting next to the stage. I joined them. Soon, a
young woman came out onto the stage and started singing. I did not
know it at the time, but it was Joan Baez, a famous folk singer. The
concert started rather uneventfully, but soon I started to get a very
uneasy feeling. There was tension building in the air. It continued to
become stronger as the concert continued. The crowd started to get
restless, and a huge summer storm began to approach the stadium.
The tension became almost unbearable, and I sensed that something
was going to happen.

There was a bolt of lightning and a huge clap of thunder.
Immediately the crowd rushed the stage and started to push Joan
around. Someone wrestled her guitar out of her hands. I jumped up
on the stage and threw a few Italians off the stage and grabbed Joan. I
put my arm around her neck and started moving stage right. Another
man, probably her manager, ran up and put his arm around her neck

from the other side. Together we pushed our way through the crowd and went down the stairs to the side of the stage. It was as though someone had poured buckets of water on us. It was pouring so hard that we could only see a few feet in front of us.

We made our way to a small-sized box van parked close to the stage. Her manager opened the driver's door, pushed Joan inside, and told her to lock the door. He vanished into the night, and I was all alone. The crowd had dissipated to shelter, and I was being pelted by rain. I ran around to the back to the van. The door was open, and I jumped inside to get out of the rain.

The truck was filled about two feet deep with heavy coils of electrical wires for the sound system. There was no one in the back of the truck, and as soon as I landed on the electrical wires, they started to spark madly all over the place. The buzzing and electrical sparks were all around me as close as two feet. I froze and didn't dare move.

Suddenly, an Italian man appeared from nowhere at the front of the truck. "Via, via," he shouted, and waved his hand furiously for me to get out of the truck immediately. I jumped clear of the van and started running to find shelter. I lost my sandals in the melee and was soaked to the bone. I eventually made my way home, but it was some night to remember!

How could a man appear from nowhere? Why did God want me at that location? What was all the fighting about? Why were people so angry? Why did God spare my life? Why was I at that place at that time? Is there a purpose in life? Is there a God who cares for me? What is truth? I believe that this event may have been a catalyst to start me on a quest to find the creator God.

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

Psalm 139:5 (ESV)

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.

He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

Psalm 23 (ESV)

MIRACLE NIGHT AT THE STATE

It was October 26, 2016, and Joan Baez was going to perform at the State Theatre in Minneapolis, Minnesota. God put on my heart that I needed to meet with her and give her a copy of a chapter of my book, *Bizarre Night*.

In the early 1970s, I had been studying in Milan, Italy, for a career in opera. I was able to help rescue Joan from an angry crowd when the concert ended in a riot. God rescued Joan from the crowd and sent an angel to rescue me from being electrocuted.

I arrived at the State Theatre early and waited in the lobby. Suddenly, nine security guards walked out of the theatre with wands for detecting weapons. I did not realize that security was going to be an issue at the theatre. I had some items in my pocket that were going to be a huge problem.

I saw a Minneapolis uniformed policeman walk into the lobby. I walked slowly over to him and engaged him in conversation. We talked for at least a half an hour. We talked about his job (undercover detective in the sex trafficking division), shooting, our families, etc. I explained to him that I needed to get a letter to Joan. It included the print up of the chapter on the Milan, Italy concert, and also a personal letter to her. He said he would try to help me, and let me know when and where she might be exiting the theatre. He also suggested that I try the stage door located by the side of the building next to her tour bus. He shook my hand, and we parted.

I walked around the side of the theatre to the stage door, which was unlocked. Inside, I explained my situation to a woman at a desk. She suggested that I leave the letter with her, and she would try to get it to Joan, but she could not guarantee delivery.

That was not good enough, so I kept the letter and walked back to my car. I left my pocket items in the car and drove back to the theatre. I found one parking spot directly across the street from the stage door.

I walked through the stage door, and the woman I had met before jumped up from her seat and seemed to be very angry that I had returned. She said that I had no authorization to be here and I needed to leave immediately.

I walked around to the lobby and met my new friend Michael, the policeman. We had a brief conversation, and he said he would try to get me more information.

I was left alone with one security person and usher in the lobby. I decided to approach the usher and explain my predicament. He listened patiently, reached into his pocket, and pulled out a ticket to the performance. "Here, use this," he said, "and good luck." I was patted down by the security guard and in I went. I was directed to the front entrance of the theatre and stood watching the performance. Another usher suggested that I find a seat in the theatre, as there was no intermission.

I walked down the side aisle and about twenty-five feet from the stage was a small alcove with a freestanding chair. I pulled it out a little, and had a ringside seat. When the concert ended, I walked up to the door leading to the stage. Of course, there was a security guard blocking the door. I explained my situation, and she offered to give the letter to Joan. Just then, Joan came back on stage for an encore. I had to go back to my seat. When it was over, I went back to the guard and pleaded with her to let me go with her, just for a minute, to give the letter personally to Joan. "Absolutely not," was her answer.

I walked back to the anteroom at the rear of the auditorium, and there was Michael, my police friend. I asked him if he had any further information. He indicated that there was a private meeting

after the show with around thirty guests who had special blue passes. I asked him if he knew where the meeting was going to take place. He asked me why I wanted to know. I asked if there were any way I could sneak into the meeting. He informed me that security was too high, and there was no way possible. Michael did tell me that the special group was meeting down by the stage on the left-hand side, waiting to be escorted to the party.

I worked my way down to the stage, and a man was standing on the side by an open door. I asked him if he were part of the Baez team. He informed me that he was the manager of the tour. I explained my situation to him. Soon the selected people were coming to the door. I stepped to the side, and my friend policeman, Michael, came toward me from the stage. He walked right up to me and said, "Here," and shoved a blue pass into my hand. I astonishingly asked, "How did you get this pass?" He told me that Joan had personally authorized it.

Michael must have gone to Joan and shared my story with her. Her general manager then walked over to me and told me that he was directed to escort me to see Joan. We walked through the door, and the security guard whom I had met earlier stepped in front of me to block my path. I flashed my blue pass, and the manager pointed his finger at her and said, "He is with me!" We walked by the stage door entrance, and I received a scowling look from the gal behind the desk. I just gave her a sweet smile, more likely a cocky grin, and kept on walking. We took the elevator down to the basement and waited for Joan to come out. Soon she was talking with the leaders of the group of what appeared to be friends and relatives. I was sitting in a chair about halfway in line but across the room from the fans. When she was parallel to me, her stage manager, said to her, "Here he is," and brought her over to me. I stood up, and she wrapped her arms around my neck and gave me a tremendous hug. We talked for about five minutes while the rest of the line was waiting. I shared with her the evening in Milan from my perspective. I gave her the letter and asked if I could have a picture taken with her. She readily agreed.

What a night, and what a God we have who can open impossible doors! My prayer is that Joan will contact me, and I would have an opportunity to share my testimony with her. I also pray for my friend, Michael, the policeman, and Joan's tour manager. Who knows what our God is going to do?

Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
 whose right hand I have grasped,
 to subdue nations before him
 and to loose the belts of kings,
 to **open doors** before him
 that gates may not be closed:
 Isaiah 45:1 (ESV)

He restores my soul.
 He leads me in **paths** of righteousness
 for his name's sake.
 Psalm 23:3 (ESV)

In all your ways acknowledge him,
 and he will make straight your **paths**.
 Proverbs 3:6 (ESV)

CAMERAS—A PICTURE OF GOD

My son was going to graduate from a master's program at Rice University in Houston, Texas. John was offered a full scholarship and given money in addition to live on. The head of the music program selected John to be his student. This was a great honor as he only accepted two or three students a year to teach. John was majoring in opera performance, and every year, a major opera would be staged, complete with set and orchestra. My wife and I traveled to Houston to attend his performances.

John had the lead role of the Don in the opera, Don Giovanni. We attended the performance, and he did an unbelievable job of singing and acting out his role. He excelled in the acting of his character, and his voice was incredible. John has the vocal range of a bass and extending to the high range of a tenor.

Rice University has a gorgeous campus. Its stately buildings are laid out in an orderly manner. The history of Rice reads like a murder mystery. I believe it would be a good plot for a movie.

Located a few blocks from the campus is a small shopping village. We would visit this village when we were in Houston. My favorite store was a small gift shop that specialized in custom handmade knives. I am a knife collector, and these knives were not only handmade but were also pieces of art. Some had fossilized mastodon handles and other unique materials used in their composition. The prices also were unique. Some were priced as high as thirty-five thou-

sand dollars. I did a lot of drooling, but needless to say, I was not going to spend that kind of money on a knife.

The camera we had purchased for the trip had a motorized zoom lens. When we tried the camera, the lens would not extend. There was a camera shop in the campus village, and we had them take a look at the camera. It was repairable, but it would take a week to get the repair complete. As we would be back in Minneapolis in a week, this was not workable. Also, the estimated cost of the repair would be almost equal to the cost of the camera.

As we sat in the car outside the camera shop, discussing what we should do, I had an urging that we should pray. I prayed asking God to heal our camera. When we finished, I felt prompted to bang the camera hard on the steering wheel. The camera began to work perfectly, and we never had another problem with it.

Does God care about little problems as well as big ones? If God created that universe, can He prompt us to act to solve our trials? Do we want to bother God with minute issues?

God already knows our thoughts. He knows the number of hairs on our heads. He knows the words we are going to speak before they are on our lips. He has all power and authority in heaven and earth. Yes, He wants us to have a relationship with Him because He created us and loves us so much. He wants us to consider Him to be our best friend.

...casting all your anxieties on him,
because he cares for you.

1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give
thanks in all circumstances; for this is the
will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)

WHEN GOD SPEAKS—ACT

When I didn't obey the voice of the Lord.

I was going into Opera and was studying in Milan, Italy. I spent many nights at the La Scala Opera house in the nose-bleed seats or standing by the back wall. One day something strange happened. It was noon, the sun was shining brightly, and I was sitting on a rock wall ready to eat my lunch. For some strange reason I had purchased two sandwiches instead of the usual one. I was enjoying my first sandwich, and as I looked to my right, there was an old man sitting about twenty-five feet from me.

The Lord spoke to me, and told me to give one of my sandwiches to the old man. I didn't want to do it. I lowered my head and started to argue with the Lord. "These are my sandwiches, I bought them. I don't know even this old man!" I came up with every excuse I could think of to not part with my sandwich.

I was arguing with the Lord for no more than twenty seconds. I looked up to see the old man. He was gone. There was no way that he could have walked off in that short amount of time. I believe that I missed an opportunity to feed an angel. Needless to say, I did not enjoy my second sandwich.

Why did God put this old man in my life? What was the purpose of this encounter? What was God trying to teach me? What would have happened if I had offered the old man my sandwich?

Trust and obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

So go the lyrics of the old hymn, "Trust and Obey." The other critical component is to listen first, then trust and obey.

To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep
hear his voice, and he calls his own
sheep by name and leads them out.
John 10:3 (ESV)

I am the good shepherd. I know my
own and my own know me, just as the
Father knows me and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for the sheep.
John 10:14-15 (ESV)

As it is said,
"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as in the rebellion."
Hebrews 3:15 (ESV)

But he answered them, "My mother
and my brothers are those who hear
the word of God and do it."
Luke 8:21 (ESV)

SWING SETS AND VISIONS

A number of years ago, we attended a picnic at our pastor's home. I was sitting on the patio enjoying the nice summer day. I was looking at the neighbor's home and backyard when, all of a sudden, it was like a movie was playing in my head. I saw my young daughter swinging on a swing set. She got off the swing and turned to her right and started talking with another young girl. A little boy came up from behind her and got into the swing and started swinging. Linda turned around and walked in front of the swing. She was hit by the swing and knocked to the ground. The vision ended.

What was that all about? I turned to my left and looked in my pastor's backyard. There was my daughter swinging on the swing as I had seen in the vision, except that it was real life. She got off the swing, turned to her right, talked to the girl, turned around, and got knocked to the ground.

I ran over to her and picked her up. She was crying but not seriously hurt. I dusted her off, and she ran off to continue playing. As I got back to my chair on the patio, I asked the Lord, "What was that all about?"

The Lord said to me, "When I tell you to do something, I want you to do it right away."

The next day, I had invited a friend to go to a Christian businessmen's luncheon. We had a nice lunch and program and were driving home. I was on Cedar Avenue, going south by the Mall of

America. There was no curve in the road, but for some reason, the painted road lines curved over one lane to the right. A car was driving right beside me on the passenger side of my car. His front bumper was even with my passenger.

I heard the Lord say to me, "Don't follow the lines to move over one lane to the right, because the car next to you is not going to follow lines. Go straight ahead." I listened to the Lord and drove straight ahead. Sure enough, the car next to me did not turn, and we probably would have collided if I had followed the markings on the road.

I have had many experiences in which the Lord has spoken to me. I wish that I could say I have always listened to the Lord. Sometimes I have obeyed, and sometimes I have not, with disastrous results. I encourage you to listen for the voice of the Lord. As the Lord speaks to you, you will more and more recognize His voice.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know
them, and they follow me.

John 10:27 (ESV)

And he said, "Hear my words: If there
is a prophet among you, I the LORD
make myself known to him in a vision;
I speak with him in a dream.

Numbers 12:6 (ESV)

But he said, "Blessed rather are those who
hear the word of God and keep it!"

Luke 11:28 (ESV)

DIRE CONSEQUENCES

Another incident was much more serious. This event happened only a few years ago. I was at a Bible study in Wayzata, Saturday morning. George was an old man in his eighties. He rarely came to the Bible study, maybe once every three to four months. I did not know him very well but had talked with him several times. George was one of the wealthiest men in the country. He sat down beside me and we started the Bible study. I could tell that something was bothering him. He soon revealed to us that his wife was divorcing him and he was living in a hotel. Some of the guys joked good naturally with him that they were surprised that his wife had not kicked him out earlier. They did not realize how hurt George was, and they regret their comments to this day.

As I was sitting next to George, God prompted me and gave me two thoughts. The first was to ask him out for lunch the next week. The second thought was to offer to have him come and stay with my wife and me at our house. I knew that he was lonely, being all alone was not a healthy situation. I had to check with my wife to get her approval to have George live with us, so I did not act immediately.

I, of course, failed. I got busy and forgot to contact him and confer with my wife. I learned later on that week that George had committed suicide. I will never, with God's grace, fail to listen to the Lord and to act immediately to do what He desires me to do. I keep a photo of George on my desk to remind me that it is important to

listen to the Lord and to act on His directives, because they matter. I don't know if I had acted that George would be still alive. I do know that I did not obey the Lord, not out of defiance, but out of lack of discipline. Lord, help me to be attentive and to be faithful!

Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."
Exodus 24:7 (ESV)

"Go near and hear all that the LORD our God will say, and speak to us all that the LORD our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it."
Deuteronomy 5:27 (ESV)

But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"
Luke 11:28 (ESV)

GOD SPEAKS

Almost forty years ago, I was lying in my bed one Sunday afternoon just praying and talking to God. I almost jumped out of bed when a big voice said very clearly, “Mike, I want you to drive east on Interstate 94 for no more than an hour. You will come to a crossroad. There will be a real estate sign on the corner, and a lake nearby, and I want you to move there.”

I said, “WHAT?” The voice came again exactly the same and said the same thing. I said, “Lord, if this is you, I will go.” I didn’t tell anyone, but got in my car and drove east to Wisconsin. I looked at my watch, and it had been fifty-nine minutes. I thought I had better schedule an appointment with a psychiatrist. Within the next minute, I came to the exit for Menomonie, Wisconsin. I drove up the ramp, and to my amazement, there was a real estate sign on the corner and a lake nearby. I asked, “Lord, what is going on? I have never been here before and don’t know anyone in this town. Why in the world do you want me to move here?”

I drove home and asked my wife to schedule a babysitter for Wednesday afternoon, to go for a drive. We drove east to Wisconsin and exited at Menomonie. My wife suggested that we should see if there was a Wednesday night church service in the community. The Christian and Missionary Alliance had one, which we attended. It felt as though we were home. No one wanted to leave, and people

just stayed and chatted after the service for over an hour. The janitor finally had to flick the lights and to encourage us to leave.

I eventually told my wife what had happened, and made a list of many things that would have to happen for us to move to Menomonie. The first one, and the biggest, was finding a manager to run my real estate business.

The next week, one of my salespeople came into my office, sat down, and asked to speak with me. The first thing she said was, “I want to manage your company for you.” I was so shocked that I just about fell off my chair.

God took care of each item on my list in just a short time. We did move to Menomonie and lived there for seven years. We bought a dairy farm and engaged a herdsman to manage the herd. I started a real estate company and also worked in the financial and investment arena. Milk prices went from twenty-two dollars per hundred weight to six or seven. The cost of production was in the ten to eleven dollar range. We were losing big money every week. The government finally came up with a dairy herd buyout program to reduce the supply of milk and raise the prices. I sold the herd under this program, and we moved back to the Twin Cities.

I still did not know why God had moved us there until several years ago. It has to do with a vision of the work that God has given me to do. I will share that vision later on in this book. I have never since had God speak to me audibly. Menomonie was a very special place and a wonderful setting in which to raise our young children. We still consider Menomonie home and visit our church often and keep in contact with our friends.

And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.
Genesis 18:33 (ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses, “Thus you shall say to the people of Israel: ‘You have seen for yourselves that I have talked with you from heaven.’”
Exodus 20:22 (ESV)

If the LORD delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey.
Numbers 14:8 (ESV)

BREAKFAST WITH AL QUIE

A number of years ago, I was meeting with a friend at Perkins. We had a nice breakfast and were enjoying each other's company. About halfway through our meal, an older man came in and sat in the booth behind ours. I was facing him and could see a worried look on his face. As I observed him, the Lord prompted me to share my testimony with him.

This presented a huge problem. How in the world was that going to happen? I didn't know this guy from Adam. You just don't walk up to a stranger and engage a person in that level of intimacy unless God really is very clearly putting a burden on your heart. But God was putting a burden on my heart!

My friend had to go to an appointment, and I was left sitting alone looking at this man. I continued to pray about the situation. “Lord, how am I going to engage this man?”

As I was pondering the situation, Al Quie walked by me with a young couple and took the booth on the other side of the old man. Al is a former United States congressman and governor of the State of Minnesota. I didn't know him well at the time, but I had met him and had attended his Governor's Inaugural Ball years before.

Al was facing me, and as I considered the situation, God prompted me to go over and speak with him. I introduced myself, and Al introduced me to his family. The other man's head was right next to me as I was standing in the aisle, talking with Al.

We spoke for a while, and the conversation moved to a spiritual nature. I ended up sharing how I came to a relationship with Jesus. I could tell that the old man was listening very intently although I was speaking to the back of his head.

He waited until I was done telling my story and immediately got up and walked out of the restaurant.

Who knows what God accomplished in this experience? Was this old man searching for truth? We may never know the effect we have had in this world until we reach heaven. I believe that God will lead us and show us what to do each day. He has our days planned in advance and will lead and direct us if we abide in Him.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.
1 Corinthians 8:6 (ESV)

AMERICAN EXPRESS DELIVERS

When I was a young man, I attended Bethel Seminary.

Although my financial needs were moderate, I was just getting by with the part-time job. My older car would break down, and I would try to fix it myself. It is amazing what you can fix if you have no other choice.

One day, one of my professors approached me about buying a car. He worked part-time at a used car dealership. I thought he was crazy when he showed me a beautiful Ford Crown Victoria. It was perfect, but how could I afford any car? When he told me the price, I just about fell off of my chair. I am sure that he must have subsidized the car, or the owner had a special deal for seminary students. The dealership even had a payment plan that I could afford.

One day, I was desperately out of money. I needed twenty dollars that day, and I did not even have one dollar. The only place that I could go was to the Lord in prayer.

“Lord, I need twenty dollars today. I need you to provide this money. I have no other hope.” This may seem like a small sum today, but at that time, it seemed like a fortune and an impossible situation. I got up from my prayer and went to my desk. I was rummaging through my things and saw a small piece of paper sticking out of one of my books. I opened the book, and the paper was an American Express check that I had purchased years ago when I went to Italy. I had gone to Italy with \$100 in traveler’s checks and a roundtrip air-

line ticket in my pocket. You guessed it; the amount was for twenty dollars.

Is God interested in little things? This week, a man became irate when I shared one of my stories in a class. He wondered why God would be doing little things when there is such great evil in the world. I don't look at life that way. God is interested in the minute details of my life as well as huge issues that come my way. In this life, we will have many trials.

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials,
1 Peter 1:6 (ESV)

When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
Psalm 34:17 (ESV)

...who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
2 Corinthians 1:4 (ESV)

GOD'S PLAN

We lived in an old farmhouse in Menomonie, Wisconsin that was built with huge virgin white pine logs. We had three white pines in our front yard that sang in the winter wind. They were so large that it took three and a half arm lengths to span the circumference of the trunk, approximately twenty-one feet. The branches were like large trees.

Our farmhouse had way more space than we needed. One night, my wife and I were out for dinner. God had put the thought in my mind that we should have someone live with us. My wife said that if we were to have someone live with us, they would have to be like a certain young couple in our church whom we enjoyed a lot. I said, "Well, let's go visit them and see if they would be interested in living with us."

They invited us in, and when we shared the idea with them, they looked at each other with a peculiar gaze. They smiled, and told us that they had been praying for someone to live with, and had been writing a note about it for the church newsletter when we called.

They came out to our place that weekend, and prepared delicious homemade egg rolls with our young sons. We talked together and prayed about the adventure. Later on that week, they called and informed us that they would be delighted to live with us. Little did they know what it was like to live with energetic little boys. It was a learning experience for all of us. We went through trials and times of great blessing. We learned to work through differences and pray through misunderstandings. All in all, it was a great experience for all of us.

The husband and I would hunt and fish together. One day we went to a trout stream on another farm that I owned. I don't think the stream had ever been fished before. We had earthworms for bait and would throw them in the stream. Almost every time, we had a nice brook trout on the line. As we were walking back to the car with our stringer of trout, I noticed a morel mushroom. We picked a whole bagful and had a wonderful dinner that evening of trout and fresh mushrooms.

We became dear friends, and when they moved, it was very sad to see them leave. I believe that it was a wonderful experience for our children as well.

Does God plan our lives? Does God put thoughts in our minds and bring people together? Can we trust God to lead us and direct our lives? Does God really care about our lives and love us so much as to watch over us?

The steps of a man are established by the LORD,
when he delights in his way;

Psalm 37:23 (ESV)

The LORD—knows the thoughts of man,
that they are but a breath.

Psalm 94:11 (ESV)

But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matthew 10:30 (ESV)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not lean on your
own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (ESV)

Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Psalm 34:19 (ESV)

HOW MUCH FAITH IS ENOUGH?

When I was running my real estate company, I had a very interesting man work for me named John. He had a doctor's degree in law and was very charismatic in nature. He often told me that a person had to have enough faith. I would ask him how he acquired his faith and how much was necessary for God to work. Was it a thimble-full, glass-full, a bucket full, or did you need a whole truck full?

One day he was talking about faith, and I had had enough. I said, "My car is parked outside, and the signal light does not work. I would like the Lord to heal that signal light right now. I don't know if I have enough faith, myself, to believe the light will be healed, but I would like you to pray with me that God will heal the signal light." John was stunned. He finally said he did not have enough faith to pray that prayer. I said that was fine, but that I was going to ask the Lord to heal the signal light anyway. John left the room, and I prayed, asking God to heal the light. I went out to the car and drove around the block. The signal light functioned perfectly. I walked back into the office and said, "Hey, John!"

"Yes, I know," he responded sheepishly, hanging his head, "the light works, doesn't it?" I said that it worked perfectly. I went in my office and was thinking about what God had done. I decided to walk out to the car to check the fuse box. When I crawled under the dash and pulled out the fuse and examined it, I saw that the metal strip was melted and had an eighth of an inch gap where it was burned

through. There was no possible way that electricity could flow and make the signal light work. But it did work. Only God could make it function. I carried that fuse around with me for many years to remind me of the power of God, and that He has the power to do impossible things.

Why did God answer my prayer? Was it to teach John and me some lessons? John learned it didn't depend on man's faith but on God's power and His imparting of faith to me. I learned that God answers prayer, does miracles, and is concerned with minute details. God is not a tame lion. God can and will do anything that He wants to do because He has all power in heaven and earth.

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells
bodily, and you have been filled in him,
who is the head of all rule and authority.
Colossians 2:9-10 (ESV)

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority
in heaven and on earth has been given to me."
Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

REFLECTIONS OF THE FUTURE

Does God give us, at times, a glimpse of the future? In chapter twelve, "Swing Sets and Visions," God gave me a glimpse of the future through a vision. Does God give us premonitions or feelings in our mind of what is about to happen? It would be nice if we could know the future all the time, but maybe not. If we knew all the time what was going to happen, it could be terrible to know the future. The Lord tells us that the trouble of today is enough for us to handle, and to not worry about the future.

I was at a meeting, saw a man who had disciplined me. He was walking toward me, and God gave me a clear sense that he was involved in a specific sinful situation. When he arrived, he started up a conversation. Sure enough, he soon was confessing to me what was going on in his life.

The question I have is why God would give me that foreknowledge? Was it to break the shock of the oncoming revelation? Was it to prepare me for what to say in this situation? I believe that God will give us what is necessary in every situation that we encounter to the work He wants us to do. The Lord tell us in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Do we really believe that God has a specific plan for us each day that He has prepared for us before the day even starts? I believe that we would have a lot more excitement in our lives if each morning we

would realize that something of significance is going to happen that day. It would be like having Christmas every day, and waiting with anticipation of what exciting new present God will bring.

If God has the plan, are we willing to listen to God to hear what it is? Are we abiding in Christ and walking in the new creation that He has made us to be? Do we really believe that God is going to use us for His purposes today?

The steps of a man are established by the LORD,
when he delights in his way;
Psalm 37:23 (ESV)

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Psalm 139:5 (ESV)

GOD LEADS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

One day I was walking across campus and wandered through the music complex. I heard music coming out of one of the lecture halls. I poked my head in and saw my third son sitting in the auditorium. I ducked inside and listened. Don Cash, a professional opera singer, was conducting a master's class in vocal performance. He was amazing. In five minutes, he was able to transform a student into singing in the right position and increase the ease and volume of their voice.

After the class, I went down and congratulated him on his ability to not only know the voice but also to be able to transfer that knowledge to the student. We talked about opera and discovered that he had sung the previous week in Berlin with Lenius Carlson, a friend of mine with whom I had performed several times. Lenius has been the principal baritone at the Berlin Opera house for the past thirty years.

Kathy, Don's wife, joined us, and during our conversation, I mentioned that my second son had a professional voice. Kathy was a voice teacher at the Lamont School of Music at Denver University in Colorado. She indicated that they were looking for baritones, and Michael should come out and audition for scholarships and teaching assistant positions.

I spoke with Michael, and he was not interested in pursuing this opportunity at that time.

Five years later, we were invited to the Presidents Conference at Glen Erye by the Navigators organization. We flew into Denver and rented a car to go to Colorado Springs. The conference was great, and we had a whole day to ourselves as our plane left late that evening. My wife suggested that it would be a good idea to visit the Denver University and speak with Kathy. The school was right on our way to the airport and our plane didn't leave until evening. I called up Kathy and, she was free at noon and was delighted to show us around. After a short tour, we ended up in her office. During the conversation, I indicated that Michael might be ready to get serious about his singing career. She informed us that the auditions for the next year were just completed. She suggested that Michael could maybe try the following year. She did offer to audition Michael, however, even though the auditions were complete.

I spoke with Michael when we arrived back home. I told him that if he were serious and wanted to dedicate himself to a singing career, I would pay for his audition trip. He decided to audition and flew out to Denver.

When he got back to the cities, he received a call from Kathy. "Michael, you definitely have a career voice, we have a scholarship for you this year and a teaching assistantship position, and your dad was right." I was very excited for Michael and off he went to Denver.

After a year, Michael received a call from Rice University. Rice is one of the very best schools in music in the country. The head of the music department had heard Michael sing and offered him a full scholarship and a stipend to boot. Stephen King only took two or three students a year personally and selected Michael for his student.

Does God direct our paths? Was it a coincidence that I happened to walk across campus that day? Why were we invited to Glen Erye? What if Kathy had not been available to see us? What if she had not offered to audition that year?

Some people have described life as a tapestry. On one side there are knots, and it's not a pretty picture. Turn that tapestry over and you see a beautiful planned pattern of created order. God has His plan for us. We make our plans but He directs our paths.

May he grant you your heart's desire
and fulfill all your plans!

Psalm 20:4

Commit your work to the LORD,
and your plans will be established.

Proverbs 16:3 (ESV)

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the
LORD that will stand.

Proverbs 19:21 (ESV)

MINISTRY IN THE NIGHT

Every year, five to six hundred men gather for a men's retreat in northern Minnesota. Trout Lake camp is located on the Whitefish chain of lakes about a half an hour north of Brainerd, Minnesota. The camp is situated on a peninsula between Big Trout Lake and the main body of water. It is huge, and one of the finest lakes in Minnesota.

The camp is amazing and includes the usual boating and water activities but also has a ski slope, miniature foosball stadium, paintball arena, zip line, archery, trap shooting, pistol and rifle range, trail riding, human foosball, miniature golf course, ball fields, craft shop, and most important of all, a soda shop.

The retreat starts on a Friday night and ends on Sunday noon. Saturday night is the famed steak fry where we grill our own steaks on huge grills located on top of the hill next to the dining hall.

I had gone to bed after the steak fry, and for some reason, I woke up at around 2:00 a.m. I had this deep urge to get up and something important was going to happen. I dressed and went up to the main area next to the dining hall and sat down on a bench.

It was a few minutes later that a man came walking across the parking area toward me. I could tell that he was in deep distress. I invited him to sit down with me. We started a conversation. He was waiting for his friend to take him to the emergency room because he was in much pain and had a history of bleeding in his brain.

I was able to share scripture with him and offered the assurance that the Gospel gives us in dire circumstances. We ended up praying together, and I saw the change from fear to confidence take place on his face. His ride arrived and off he rode in the middle of the night.

I saw him the next day, and things turned out all right. He was feeling much better and thanked me profusely for being there to encourage and comfort him.

Does God move through you in your life? Are we listening for the still small voice that whispers to us in the middle of the night and day? Do we have scripture imbedded in our soul that has the power to comfort and save those who God brings in our path?

My sheep hear my voice, and I know
them, and they follow me.
John 10:27 (ESV)

“For I know the plans I have for you,”
declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not
for evil, to give you a future and a hope.”
Jeremiah 29:11-13 (ESV)

SPIRITUAL SECRET OF POWER

I have always pondered the dichotomy and seeming contradiction that the Bible reveals to us concerning power. On one hand, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” On the other hand, “I am the vine and you are the branches, without me you can do nothing.”

Some people I have met think that it is an issue of faith. The Word also tells us that if we have the faith of a mustard seed, we can move mountains, and nothing will be impossible. So then the question is, “How can I get this faith?” Ephesians 2:8–9 states, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, **it is the gift of God**—not by works, so that no one can boast.”

So what can I do if faith is a gift? I suppose that I could ask God for more faith. You have not because you ask not. I do believe that we need to ask God for gifts, but we need to ask in the right way. What is our motivation? Do we want power for our own sake? Do I want to be God?

Do I trust God to give me the power that I need to accomplish the work that He has prepared for me to do each day.

I was attending a Bible study that was led by an old, crusty marine officer a number of years ago. Mike was a hard-hitting no-nonsense kind of guy. I don’t remember the study or what the topic was, but one thing he said burned into my heart. The secret of

spiritual power is not what I can do for Christ, but the secret is that the very God of the universe lives in me. It is the Lord who flows through me and accomplishes His work. I don’t do the work; I am just the vessel through whom God flows. My job is to walk with the Lord, walk in the Spirit, or abide in Christ; however, you wish to term this close relationship with Christ.

The prayer that I ask of God is the goal of the church and each person. I want to be filled to the fullness of God. I want to abide in Christ so that I will bear much fruit. I want to know Christ and the power of His salvation. These desires are the heart of God. Someday I want to stand before God and hear Him say, “Well done thou good and faithful servant.”

Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
John 16:24 (ESV)

He said to them, “Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.”
Matthew 17:20 (ESV)

...until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
Ephesians 4:13 (ESV)

REVIVAL IN THE CHURCH

I have been very fortunate to meet, and become best friends with, Paul Ridgeway. Paul had more energy than the energizer bunny. He also had a passion for seeing others come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and was an evangelist extraordinaire.

My son and I were going to a men's retreat at Trout Lake Camp located on the Whitefish chain of lakes in northern Minnesota. I asked Paul if he were doing anything that weekend. He said no, and I invited him to come with us. I called John Wickland, the head of the camp, and asked him if he would like Paul to speak to the men. He agreed, and Paul agreed to do a breakout session. Paul was an event planner and worked with Super Bowls, Pro Bowls and also planned the Russian former general secretary of the communist party of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Minnesota.

Saturday morning, I went down for breakfast, and there was a man sitting all alone. I invited myself to sit with him, and we had a wonderful conversation. He was the Baptist minister from Kerkhoven, and when I left, he gave me one of his business cards which I slipped into my billfold.

Later that morning, he attended Paul's breakout session. Paul was not planning to share the Gospel message as he thought all Baptists were saved. What a miscalculation! God convicted Paul to share the good news, and six men accepted Christ.

Every fall, we have a harvest festival gathering at my brother's home in West Central Minnesota. We gather to thank God for the harvest and have a time of celebration. I asked Paul if he were free to come, and he indicated that he was. I invited him and suggested that he speak in my brother's church in Kerkhoven, Minnesota. It just did not work out. I was asking the Lord what was going on. Paul would be coming with no place to speak. Later that day, I happened to go through my billfold and came across the business card that the Baptist minister gave me. Why not call him? The pastor was overjoyed that Paul would be coming. Paul would be coming and Paul would not care at which church he spoke.

I walked into the sanctuary Sunday morning. I have never experienced this before, but the Holy Spirit was alive in the room. The only way that I can describe it was that the room seemed alive with crackling electricity. It was not audible, but you could feel the movement of the air.

Paul spoke and quite a few people accepted the Lord. The pastor called the next week and told us that he had been praying for God to move in his church for seven years. There was a rift in the church between the old and young people. This rift was also healed.

The next week, that pastor called and told us that one of his Sunday school teachers was so emboldened by our coming that she had led seven of her students to the Lord. Several years later, I met the pastor again, and he told us that the church was reaching out to the community, and many were coming to the Lord. They were baptizing thirteen new converts the next week. What is the catalyst for revival? Can we ask the Lord to work in powerful ways? Does God want all people to be saved?

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.
James 5:16 (ESV)

This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:3-5 (ESV)

DEMONS ATTACK

Several years ago, I was relaxing at home. My wife had gone to a retreat, and my oldest son was visiting to use the computer. The Lord spoke to me and said, “Go down to the University of Minnesota. I want you to play chess with someone and share the good news with them.” I asked my son where I should go, as I was unfamiliar with the university. He suggested the Purple Onion, which was a coffee shop in Dinky town. Dinky town is an area close to the university with kind of avant-garde shops and eating places. I asked my son if he wanted to go with me, but he was not feeling well. I asked him to print out a sign that said, “Anyone for chess?” I started looking for my chess set but couldn’t find it. I told the Lord that if He wanted me to go and play chess, I needed to find my chess set. I asked Him specifically where it was located. Immediately He told me that it was in the drawer of the desk in the living room.

I went to the desk and collected my chess set, and then downstairs to get the sign. Unfortunately, the printer would not function, so I wrote out the sign by hand: “Anyone for Chess?” I called up a friend of mine, Greg, who worked with the Navigators, and told him my plans and asked him if he would like to join me. He told me that he was really tired and that he would not be able to join me.

As I started to drive to the university, I immediately started to get all kinds of doubts. Satan started putting all kinds of negative thoughts in my mind, “*Why are you going to the university, you*

don't know anyone there? You don't know where the Purple Onion is. It is getting dark. No one is willing to go with you. What a silly idea." Immediately I asked the Lord to take away these doubts, which He immediately did.

I was driving toward the university when I saw a young woman walking with her back toward me. She was short, and I would estimate in her twenties. When I was about thirty feet behind her, she suddenly wheeled around, put her hands on her hips, squatted, looked directly at me, clenched her teeth, opened her lips, and looked like she was hissing at me. A blue beam of light about six feet in diameter shot from her body and totally enveloped me. It was like I was trapped and chained in this light. I couldn't breathe or move. It was like a paralyzing ray. I cried out in my mind, "God, help me!"

I kept on driving, and was released from whatever evil power had tried to thwart me from God's purpose.

I arrived in Dinky town and was looking for the Purple Onion and trying to find a parking place, which was almost impossible. As I drove through an intersection, I saw a parking spot available in front of a store. I looked back and saw that it was the Purple Onion. "God, please save the spot for me," I prayed as I drove around the block. When I arrived, the space was still vacant, and I parked the car and walked in. I ordered a cup of coffee, and set up my chess board, and put up my sign, "Anyone for chess?"

I was reading a paper waiting for a player when who walked in the door but Greg! He came over to the table and proceeded to tell me how God had convicted him for not coming with me to evangelize. I assured him that it was no problem, and I was glad that God had prompted him to come. We played several games of chess when two young men, one Black and one Caucasian, approached our table. The Black man (I'll call him Sydney) asked if he could take on the winner. I happened to win, Greg moved over and we started to play. The White man had an aura of evil on him and was very distracting. I asked the Lord to remove him, and immediately Sydney turned to him and told him he was going to play a few games and suggested that his friend come back and get him later. We played several games and had a chance to talk about a lot of things. Sydney was the son of

an evangelical pastor and was into a lot of bad things. He had money problems, drug problems, women problems and problems with the law.

After we had played a couple of games, a young Black man, David, from our church walked through the door. When he saw us, he came over and chatted. He had just gotten a job with a professional orchestra and was excited about his future. I believe it was important for Sydney to see that we had a genuine love for our Black friend and brother in Christ. David left, and we played some more. We got on the subject of God, and I was able to share my testimony. When I finished, Sydney asked if we could pray together to receive the Lord. We did, and what a joy it was to see the power of God manifested through my obedience to His promptings. Almost immediately after we were done praying, Sydney's friend returned. God's perfect timing. They took off, and Greg and I stayed for a few minutes. When we left, David was sitting on the sidewalk talking to about ten students.

Two weeks later in church, I saw David and shared what had happened that evening. He got all excited and told me he had been sharing the Lord with the students on the sidewalk when we were leaving. There was another group of Christians who were praying all night long for God to move and work in Dinky town. The power of prayer has a great effect.

I saw David about two months later in church. He came up to me and wouldn't let me go. He had run into Sydney several times. Sydney had indicated to him that he had given up his drugs and drinking and was looking for a church to attend. Praise the Lord!

As I was thinking about that evening, I think there are some important lessons to be learned.

1. When God orchestrates things, they turn out perfectly.
2. God weaves many people to come together for His purposes.
3. We need to hear God's voice and obey.

4. Satan will try to thwart (not being able to find chess set, printer not working).
5. Satan will try to discourage (negative thoughts about going).
6. Satan will try to attack (demonic).
7. Prayer will overcome Satan (4, 5, and 6).
8. God will provide for His work (parking spot).
9. God will bring help (Greg and David).
10. God will bring the people whom He has chosen (Sydney).
11. God will put a hedge around His work (friend departing).
12. God will speak through us.
13. God will bring the harvest.
14. A blanket of prayer was over the area which I believe is the key to attacking Satan's domain.

I wonder sometimes if Christians would gather together and pray fervently over specific geographic areas, if the powers of darkness would be rolled back.

BRINGING IN THE HARVEST

I believe that there are so many people in churches and out of churches that are searching for truth. A good example of this is the time I spent with my good friend Paul Ridgeway. Our venture started at Trout Lake Camp when I asked Paul to come and speak. God moved, and six men accepted Christ. It then expanded to Kerkhoven, which I explained in the chapter "Revival in the Church." It seemed to explode from there, and we were getting invitations to speak in churches, universities, and organizations such as Teen Challenge. Over the next six years, I went with Paul, and over 1,500 people came forward to accept a new life in Christ.

One such experience happened in Milaca, Minnesota. Six churches came together to plan an evangelistic event to reach their community for Christ. Paul and I and a few friends arrived on Sunday morning. Paul spoke in two services, and people were saved. Paul also went to the men and women's prison, with prisoners making lifesaving decisions. That afternoon, we put on a training session to teach people how to lead others to the Lord.

The main event was a rally that night at the high school. We brought in a music team from the Twin Cities to lead in the music. The gym was packed to the gills. Some people had to stand for lack of room. When Paul asked people to come forward to either accept Christ or rededicate their lives to serve the Lord, about half of the

audience came forward. What a night to see the Lord work in such a powerful way.

I think that the highlight of the evening was one woman who had attended the training session. She was floating on cloud nine. She said, "I can't believe it, I can't believe it. I have never shared the Lord with anyone in my life. I just lead this other lady to the Lord." Yes, and the Word says that all heaven rejoices when a sinner repents and turns to the Lord. Have you had the excitement of leading someone to the Lord? There is no experience like it. On top of it all, there are amazing rewards for those who are in the battle. Unfortunately, there are few people that are actively sharing the good news with others.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few."
Matthew 9:37 (ESV)

...and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.
Philemon 1:6 (ESV)

And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.
Daniel 12:3 (ESV)

WARNING

Does God deal in our lives before we have been saved and come into a personal relationship with Him? Some people believe that we cannot speak to God before we have become a Christian. I don't believe this. I can only relate to this topic through personal experience and the Word of God.

The Bible tells us that we can come to Christ only when God draws us to Him. This would imply that God is involved with us before we yield to His sovereignty. He also knows the hairs on our heads, the sands of the sea, and knows the words before they are on our lips. If He knows all of the information about us before we know Him, I believe that He is very concerned about His beloved creation.

When I was very young, maybe six or eight years old, I was riding with my parents in their 1949 Ford sedan. Those cars were pretty reliable, but had very poor wipers, headlights, and no air-conditioning. We were driving at night on a gravel road out in the country. The night had a heavy cloud cover, and it was pitch black.

All of a sudden, this feeling of impending doom swept over my mind. I didn't know what the problem was, but I knew that we were in trouble. "Stop the car!" I cried out. My dad must have sensed my fear and urgency and slammed on the breaks. We got out of the car and looked around. Ten feet ahead of the car, the rain had washed out a culvert and created a huge, deep hole in the road. If we had not

stopped, we would have had a terrible accident and destroyed the car. Who knows what personal injuries might have been a result of this impending disaster.

Is God protecting us even though we don't know Him? Does God know the future as well as the past? Is God all powerful? Does God send His angels to protect us? Do we have guardian angels walking and guarding our lives as we walk through this perilous life?

O LORD, you have searched me and known me!
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.
 You search out my path and my lying down
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
 Even before a word is on my tongue,
 behold, O LORD, you know it altogether.
 You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is high; I cannot attain it.

Where shall I go from your Spirit?
 Or where shall I flee from your presence?
 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
 If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and the light about me be night,"
 even the darkness is not dark to you;
 the night is bright as the day,
 for darkness is as light with you.

For you formed my inward parts;
 you knitted me together in
 my mother's womb.
 I praise you, for I am fearfully
 and wonderfully made.
 Wonderful are your works;
 my soul knows it very well.
 My frame was not hidden from you,
 when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
 Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
 in your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there was none of them.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
 How vast is the sum of them!
 If I would count them, they
 are more than the sand.
 I awake, and I am still with you.

Oh that you would slay the wicked, O God!
 O men of blood, depart from me!
 They speak against you with malicious intent;
 your enemies take your name in vain.
 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD?
 And do I not loathe those
 who rise up against you?
 I hate them with complete hatred;
 I count them my enemies.

Search me, O God, and know my heart!
 Try me and know my thoughts!
 And see if there be any grievous way in me,
 and lead me in the way everlasting!

Psalm 139 (ESV)

GOD PROTECTS

When I was a young man in high school and college, I was a crazy kid. I had a Plymouth automobile that had a big V8 engine. I had many close calls and should have died several times.

One incident happened when I was leaving my hometown to travel to live with my brother and work in a cement factory for the summer. I had just left my town when a fellow classmate shot around me with his '49 Ford. Not wanting to be outdone, I put my gas pedal to the metal. My car leapt into life, and I was soon bearing down on him at over one hundred miles per hour. Suddenly he turned broadside to me without signaling.

I had two choices, either to hit him broadside or to hit the ditch. I chose the ditch. I slammed through the ditch, came up on the other side, and coasted into a gas station right up to the pump, as if to get gas. I got out of the car to inspect my vehicle. I had large clumps of grass all over the hood of my car. The trunk was flipped open, and the back tires were flat. I did not have my seatbelt on, and it was a miracle that nothing serious happened to me, not even a scratch. The sheriff came by, looked at my car, looked at me, and shook his head in disbelief. I got my tires pumped up and continued on my journey.

Another incident took place in college. I was driving alone on a stretch of blacktop cruising around ninety when up ahead was a curve. The road was wet from a recent rain, and I was accelerating

around the curve. The only problem was that the curve wasn't consistent, and the road turned back to a straightaway before the end of the arch. I knew that I was in trouble, and the car started to weave all over the road. Thank God that there was no one coming. I made three complete circles and was going down the road backwards. I tried to keep in on the road but eventually slid into the ditch backward. I was really shaken up and sat for quite a spell in shock. I eventually started up my car. I drove down to a farm approach, and was still so traumatized that I drove off the approach and got stuck.

I walked down the road about a half mile to a farmhouse. The farmer was home, and he was kind enough to bring his tractor to pull me out of the ditch. The farmer saw the two hundred feet of skid marks and just shook his head. I looked at where I went in the ditch, and I had missed a huge road sign by no more than three feet.

I could have been killed in either of these incidents or many others growing up. Thank goodness the Lord spared my life. His kindness has been so evident in my journey.

I'm now an excellent, defensive driver, according to my wife.

We know that everyone who has been
born of God does not keep on sinning,
but he who was born of God protects him,
and the evil one does not touch him.
1 John 5:18 (ESV)

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.
Psalm 23:6 (ESV)

THE GREATEST MIRACLE

When I was a young man, I went to an evangelical church mainly because of my godly mother. We moved every two years as my father was a project engineer for the Minnesota State Highway department. I attended quite a few denominations, but without exception, they preached the Word of God.

There was one problem, I hated church and I hated Christians. I thought that they were the biggest hypocrites, backbiters, and people who were not sincere about their beliefs and did not incorporate them in their daily lives.

When I went off to college, I became hostile to Christians and would challenge their beliefs. I was a good debater, and no one could defend my challenges.

Prove to me that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Not one person I challenged could give me a satisfactory answer.

When I was ending my college career, I went off to Milan, Italy. My voice teacher in college, a professional operatic singer from Spain, arranged for me to study with his voice teacher. It is very lonely living in a foreign country, not being able to speak the language and not being familiar with the culture. It was fortunate that I met an American who lived in Milan. Dr. Harvey Woodson was quite a bit older than me but was an expert tennis player. I had participated in the State High School tournament, and we soon became good friends, spending many hours on the red clay courts of Milan.

Harvey was part of the L'Abri Fellowship, which was started by Dr. Francis Schaeffer. Dr. Schaeffer was an author, Presbyterian pastor, and world-class philosopher. Harvey was in Milan to start and lead a small fellowship of believers. One day, Harvey suggested that I go up to Switzerland and visit Dr. Schaeffer. Harvey kept working on me, and I finally capitulated and decided to go. It was the event that would change my life forever.

What a view overlooking the valley and seeing the magnificent Alps rising to scrape the sky. As I walked up to the main chalet, an elderly lady came out to greet me. She threw her arms around my neck and escorted me into the chalet. "Come on in, have some lunch with us," she said, "Dr. Francis is speaking in the dining room." Before me was a beautiful lunch that was incredible and presented in the beautiful manner for which Edith Schaeffer was known.

The dining hall was a very large room that had many large round tables. People were there from all over the world, searching for answers. Dr. Schaeffer was walking around the room and taking and answering questions for several hours. The discussions were lively and of a depth of thought that I rarely had experienced.

While I went to many lectures over the next days, it was really the love that I experienced at L'Abri that touched my heart. I have never experienced such powerful love that permeated this community.

I remember walking out of the community the day I left. As I walked down the mountain, I prayed, "Lord, if you are really there, please show yourself to me." This prayer sincerely made will always be answered. The Lord wants us to know Him and will gladly draw us to Himself.

But from there you will seek the LORD your
God and you will find him, if you search after
him with all your heart and with all your soul.
Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)

It was shortly after that I read the book, *Basic Christianity* by John Stott, a British pastor. I knew that Christianity depended on the

resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul stated that if Christ did not rise from the dead your faith is in vain. How can a person know for sure that Christ is risen? Stott stated that after the crucifixion, the disciples were hiding behind locked doors, fearful for their lives. What caused all of them to turn from being cowards to be willing to die to tell the world that Jesus Christ is risen, and He is the Messiah?

I knew that cowards do not become martyrs if they do not believe one hundred per cent in their cause. What could have caused the one hundred and eighty degree turn-around? I believe that they saw the risen Lord, just as scripture states. I knew at that moment that Christ is real and asked Him to come into my life, take control of me, and be my Savior. My life was totally changed, and Christ has become real to me and is my companion as I journey through life.

WHAT MUST I DO TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE?

Is it true that I don't have to do anything to receive eternal life? The answer to that question determines where you are going to spend eternal life. The Bible is very clear that there are two options. A person is going to go to one of two destinations: Heaven, to be with Christ forever in eternal bliss, or Hell, and endure eternal torment and punishment.

My desire is that everyone would come to a saving knowledge of Christ and join me in an eternity of unimaginable pleasure and fulfillment. The question is: How can this eternal life with Christ be obtained?

The Bible tells us very concisely the way we can be saved and have eternal life with Christ.

...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus
is Lord and believe in your heart that God
raised him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9 (ESV)

This sounds pretty straightforward and concise, but what does this mean?

1. *Confessing that Jesus is Lord.* Is Jesus the Lord or ruler of your life?

I believe that this is the greatest barrier to a person coming to Christ. In our unregenerate hearts, we all want to be God. This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Satan told Eve, you can be like God.

We want our way and occasionally go to God when we have troubles or problems in our lives. But do we really want to have God rule in our lives, to follow Him and seek to please Him rather than our selfish desires?

2. *Believing in your heart that God raised Christ from the dead.*

The apostle Paul said that if Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is in vain. In fact, if Christ did not rise from the dead, Christianity is the biggest hoax that was perpetrated on mankind. Did Christ really rise from the dead? I struggled with that for years. How can we possibly know whether Christ came back from the dead after being in the tomb for three days?

I believe that the strongest proof of the resurrection was the behavior of the disciples. After the crucifixion, they were hiding for their lives behind locked doors. They were afraid that they were next to be crucified. What changed them from cowards to mighty men of God who were willing to die to proclaim that they had seen and touched the resurrected Christ and that He truly was the promised Messiah, son of the creator God? If you believe these two criteria, ask Christ to come and make you His son or daughter. If you do, you are destined to be in heaven with Christ forever.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
Romans 8:11 (ESV)

But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!
Luke 12:5 (ESV)

In my Father's house are many rooms.
If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?
John 14:2 (ESV)

THE VISION

Back in the chapter, “God Speaks,” I told about how God spoke to me and led me to Menomonie, WI. I did not know the reason the Lord did what He did.

Now I know. Menomonie, WI, Stout University, along with Cornell University on the east coast, are two of the top training schools for the hotel and hospitality industries.

When God moved our family back to the Twin Cities, God lead me to become involved in CBMC (Christian Businessmen’s Connection). I was part to the Golden Valley Committee which was comprised of around 20 men. We met weekly for breakfast, fellowship, and prayer.

Once a month, we had an outreach luncheon and invited men who did not know the Lord. Someone shared their testimony as to how they came to know Jesus.

Once a month, we went on visitation two by two, to visit our guests. We called this visitation, “Operation Shoe Leather.” We would share the good news of the gospel and have, on average, 65 guys a year accept Christ and invite Christ into their hearts.

These men would typically go through a discipleship program called Operation Timothy.

We used a book that was written by one of our team leaders called The Real You from God’s Perspective along with our discipleship book, Operation Timothy. We would meet once a week for one and a half to two years to complete this material.

Our national president didn’t like the Real You book and forbade us to use it. The author left the ministry along with many of the other leaders. The committees dropped from 21 to 4 in a matter of months. Only one committee was doing outreach luncheons.

I was devastated. Such a wonderful organization was crippled in such a short time.

One day I was crying out to the Lord. “Lord, how can we reach this country for you?” The Lord spoke to me and gave me three principles:

1. Have the people come to you rather than you go to them.
2. Have the people come to you when they have time to interact.
3. Have a ministry that is profitable so that you can help other ministries.

I said, “Lord, what does that look like?” He said, “Hotels.”

So here is the Vision.

You have a large hotel where people can come every day with nothing to do and time to interact. You also have a theme village where you have old world shops: cheese shops, meat shops, vegetable shops. a candy store, fish shops, restaurants, a gas station etc. This village would have the staff dressed in costume, with musicians bringing live music to be enjoyed. It would be an attraction, like a mini Disneyland.

The church would interact with the hotel guests every night using games, crafts, movies with discussions, etc. to engage the guests. Every day would be an outreach of sharing the love of Christ with word and deed, an example of the community of Christ and His love in action. This would be putting God’s revelation into practice.

The community would also have a convention center that would be designed to be used as a church on Sunday and be able to be rented out during the week. In essence, you would have a free church.

The church would have at its heart the desire to follow Christ’s command, “Go and make disciples of all nations.”

The church of the book of Acts was the church that changed the world. What did that church look like?

They came together daily, worshiped daily, ate together daily, prayed together daily, went into the marketplace and worked daily, people were saved daily, and they loved each other more than their possessions.

The hotel church is really the Church of the book of Acts combined with an economic model; I believe that a community like this would save the people 50 to 75% of the cost of living and also free up 50 to 75% more time to serve the Lord.

This church would need strong leadership, an active prayer life, participation in long term discipleship, and hearts focused on Christ and evangelism.

There are so many ways to reduce cost of living. Everything would be purchased at wholesale cost rather than retail. This would be a 50% savings to start with. The community would have its own medical and dental teams. A large catastrophic medical policy would save millions of dollars versus individual policies. The church would have its own taxi service which would provide service to congregants. This could reduce thousands of vehicles, saving money on parking, taxes, maintenance, and provide times of being together to and from work.

Some people could live and work at the hotel, but it would be a gathering place daily to connect with the body.

I take very seriously the command to “encourage one another daily.”

The word also says that if you don’t have love, you are a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal to the world.

How can I love you if I don’t know you?

How could I know you if I don’t spend time with you? How can I pray for your needs if I don’t know what they are?

The hotel would be a hub of work and activity in which members can share life together and develop great love as of the church as described in the book of Acts. I do know the community has the potential to be a disaster, but I know that community also has the greatest potential for good. I have seen community in action where

the love of Christ has permeated the community. It is so wonderful and is such a glorious experience. It was through my visiting Dr. Francis Schaeffer at his Labri community in Huemoz, Switzerland that I began to know the love of Christ in a visible way. I knew that I had been in the presence of God and shortly thereafter came to a personal relationship with Christ.

I know that this is a big vision and it is impossible for me to accomplish, yet I believe that this is the heart of God and He can, and will, accomplish this task. I can envision these communities all over the country and world.

How about helping the hurting? Come live with us. You will have a job and all of your needs will be cared for. How about having a training center with every business you have? The auto repair shop will have a master mechanic where trainees can learn skill sets and will make them employable in the marketplace. Waiters and chefs can be trained in the restaurants and people trained in operations and management.

There are so many ways in which God can use people. The purpose of the church is to prepare God’s people for works of service. The purpose of the Church is to go and make disciples of all nations. Let’s do this together and use the strength of community to encourage, strengthen and propel us to accomplish all that God has prepared in advance for us to do. Let us truly come to know and love each other and encourage each other as we seek to know God and make Him known to the world.

