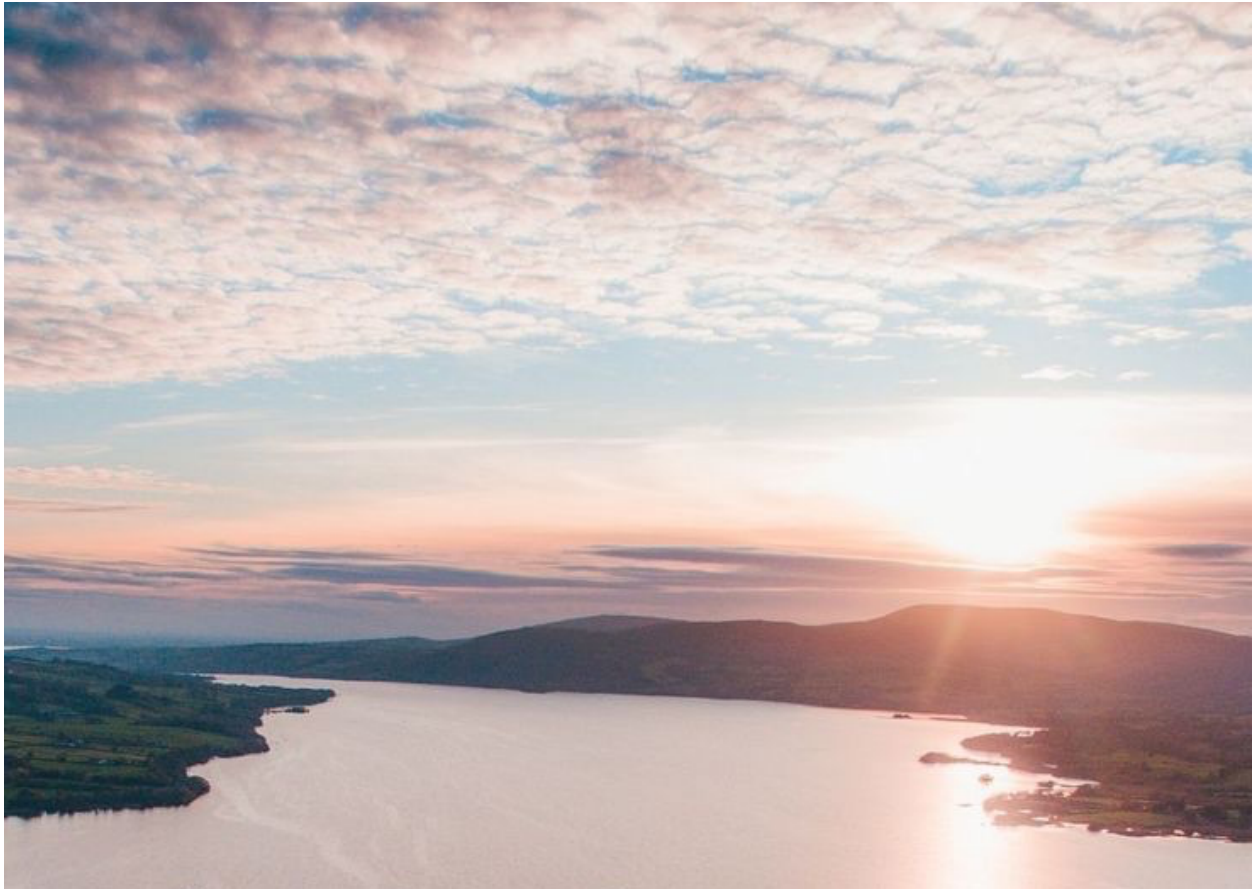




For the Cause of Christ



Two drifters off to see the world,
there's such a lot of world to see.
We're after the same rainbow's end,
waiting 'round the bend,
my huckleberry friend ...

from the song, "Moon River, by Henry Mancini

"Our Story" is dedicated to our children.

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PREFACE

A number of people have encouraged us to write “our story”. We were also asked to do so by our children. And we ourselves have very much wanted to leave some form of a “legacy” for our children, although this may not be much like what they may have anticipated, as it is more about ministry than family life. The story of our family is truly His-story – “Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given” (Isaiah 8:18) – all adopted, and all have grown up to be wonderful human beings. That is another amazing story on its own, rich in the depths of God’s love and the wisdom of His ways.

Being one who studies and teaches the scriptures, and not a “story-teller”, I really had not known how to start writing “our story” - what to put in, what to leave out, how to protect the privacy of our children, and the anonymity of others involved in our life, etc. But, recently, when asked to publish a column on our “missionary” experience, I started to write, and saw that the Lord was opening up a way for me to write “our story” as it were. So here we are.

There are “back stories” to Bill and Frances before we were married. But *this* story opens with the first year of our marriage in 1981. What follows is actually a series of brief articles based on

our life and ministry experience of 13 years of living and ministering throughout the nation of South Africa, including a number of missions to Brazil, as well as an additional 27 years of ministering into 20 different nations via the Internet. We have continuing ministry partnerships with friends that go back 40 years. And we continue to develop new friendships with the Lord's people in nations around the world.

We are sharing Spirit-taught lessons and principles, and applicable practices based on Scripture, our personal walk with God, and our ministry experience. You can browse around the various articles according to your personal interest. However, these articles are being presented in a kind of scope and sequence in which one concept builds upon another. This is a “work in progress” – I will be adding additional articles periodically.

The opening article, “BEARING FRUIT”, was written about what we found on our return visit to friends and fellowships in South Africa after being away for 18 years. I believe it is an affirmation of the principles shared in the articles that follow which address various things we have found to be significant for co-laboring with the Lord in His Field around the world.

1. BEARING FRUIT

OBSERVATIONS FROM REVISITING A FIELD AFTER 18 YEARS

Frances and I lived and ministered in South Africa for 13 years. In July-August of 2015, we revisited the whole of the country, ministering and enjoying fellowship with our many friends there. The time could not have been more perfect! God and His people were so faithful to bless us in every way – the fellowship of friends, the ministry of the word, generous material provisions and accommodations, all in the context of the cultural diversity and beautiful scenery which is South Africa. The purpose of our trip was to “Look, Listen & Learn”. Some of what we saw and heard encouraged and inspired us. Some of what we saw and heard challenged us. Some of what we saw and heard made us think and discuss what we were seeing and hearing.

All in all, I believe the purpose was fulfilled – we learned at every turn. As I try to communicate what God communicated to Frances and I during our visit to South Africa, I can only hope that you will understand that my intention is not to talk about ourselves and our ministry, but rather, about God and His work – to simply try to communicate what God communicated to us. We were INCOMPREHENSIBLY blessed by it, as it was affirming and confirming; but it was also instructional and enlightening for us.

It seems the best way to communicate this would be to launch off from these words written by the apostle Paul regarding his understanding of the work of God:

6 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but (it is) only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9 For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward."

1 Corinthians 3:6-14 (NIV)

As we traveled throughout the provinces of South Africa during July and August, visiting and sharing with our friends whom we had not seen for 18 years, we were blessed in a way which God has not guaranteed to those who serve Him – that is, to see the fruit of your labor in His field and building. We may hear later,

“Well done good and faithful servant”; but occasionally one is blessed to be able to see the fruit of their labors here in this life.

I can tell you of a certainty that, when we left South Africa in 1997, I felt like Elijah under the juniper tree (1 Kings 19) – I definitely could not see the fruit of our labors there for 13 years. The Spirit of God told me – people told me – but I could not see it. And that is why I can share what I have to share here with no pride whatsoever – because we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that “(it is) only God, who makes things grow”.

As we had fellowship with our South African friends, two things clearly emerged – that is, two things were repeatedly spoken to us by God’s Spirit, as well as, spoken to us by God’s people: During our years of living in and ministering throughout South Africa 1984 – 1997, we had PLANTED THE SEED and we had LAID A FOUNDATION.

With certain people, it was affirmed that we had PLANTED THE SEED of God’s word, which later sprouted, blossomed, and grew to bear fruit that still remains today.

And with others, it was confirmed that we had LAID A FOUNDATION of Christ, which, having been built upon for decades, still stands today.

So, that is what our friends repeatedly communicated. And that is what the Holy Spirit repeated showed us in ways that are not “unbelievable”, but INCOMPREHENSIBLE, because we know this is not something we could accomplish, but “(it is) only God who makes things grow”.

We feel enlightened by God regarding His work, as well as, instructed regarding apostolic ministry and spiritual parenting – lessons, which are also timely for us in the parenting of our natural adult children as well.

This is the “takeaway” from our recent travels in South Africa: “Keep saying what I have given you to say – keep doing what I have given you to do. With those whom I have given you for it is bearing fruit which remains.”

23 “Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.” John 12:23-26

“Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his.” 2 Timothy 2:19

It was affirmed once again “the words that Jesus has spoken are spirit and they are life”. (John 6:63 NKJV) “The word that God speaks is living and active”. (Hebrews 4:12 AMP) “He is watching over His word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:12 NASB) – “it shall not return to Him void [without producing any effect, useless], but it shall accomplish that which He pleases and purposes, and it shall prosper in the thing for which He sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11 AMP)

But it was also confirmed to us once again that it is not our words but our lives which have the greatest and most lasting impact on others. And we realize that it is a God-given responsibility for us “to run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12:1-2) – to have a faithful testimony from beginning to end (Hebrews 3:5-6, 14; 10:35-36) – as an example and encouragement to others – particularly our children and our spiritual children. Truly, the work of God extends to even the third and the fourth generations.

2. “SILOAM” (Sent)

“INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EVANGELISM & DISCIPLESHIP”

To begin sharing about ourselves – our call, preparation, sending, and ministry, I would like to share a few scripture verses foundational to future articles.

These are “life verses” which the Holy Spirit used more than 40 years ago to guide my wife, Frances, and I into His work of Overseas Mission and Cross-Cultural Ministry.

“You have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us a kingdom of priests to our God.” (Revelation 5:9-10) I realized that in order to experience the fulness of God’s Kingdom, we need to experience it together with those from **“every tribe and tongue and people and nation”**.

“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.” (Daniel 12:4 NKJV)

I understood that a “missionary” was “apostolic” – that is, “a sent one”. I was drawn to John 9:7 & 11 – “Siloam (which is translated ‘sent’).” We adopted the name *“Siloam Ministries”* for the first 13 years of our overseas ministry.

And accompanying these verses came the phrase: *“International Partnership for Evangelism and Discipleship”* – that is “The Great Commission”. (Matthew 28:18-20)

3. THE CALL

“And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him.” Mark 3:13

The “call” is to always be with Him, for He will always be with you, as you co-labor with Him in His field. (1 Corinthians 3:9)

In his book *“So I Send You”* in a chapter entitled, *Workmen of God: Recognizing and Answering God’s Call to Service*, Oswald Chambers writes: *“The call is the expression of the nature from which the call comes and can only be heard by those who are attuned to that nature. The call of God is not an echo of my nature, but expressive of God’s nature.”*

Mark 3:14 gives the “wide lens” perspective of the call: *“so that they might be with him, and he might send them out to preach”* The call is to be in relationship with Christ, to go out, and co-labor with Christ in His field. Christ calls us to *Himself*, *His* life, and *His* work. This is NOT a situation of asking the Lord to come with you, and bless your life and ministry. In fact, neither is the call to meet some need calling out for our service. The call is a conscription into *His* plans and purposes. We must understand these things in order to answer the call properly.

This was God's call to Abram (Abraham) in Genesis 12:1-2: ***"Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.'"***

There is another call recorded in Psalm 45:10-11: ***"Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your father's house, and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him."***

Christ calls us out of that realm which has been fashioned by ourselves, and fashioned for us by family and culture – our world, our comfort zone, business as usual, life as we know it. The Call is to "come in" to the realm of our Heavenly Father and His Christ. The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9: ***"But, as it is written (Isaiah 64:4), 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him.'"***

Some of us will be called out of our land into a foreign land, and out of our culture into a foreign culture; and some not. But whether or not the call entails missions and cross-cultural ministry, those who are called are universally called to be "strangers and exiles on the earth" (Hebrews 11:13), "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13-16), "witnesses" of the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 24:14), "citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem"

(Hebrews 12:23; Cf. Philippians 3:20), as “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:20)

In the Introduction of his book, *“Following Jesus in the Real World”*, Richard C. Lamb had this to say: *“Today, Jesus says to us, ‘I chose you and appointed you to give your life for something that will last forever.’ There is no cause, no corporation, no movement that can promise its adherents that what they accomplish with their lives will last forever. None, that is, except the movement that Jesus proclaimed, the kingdom of God.”*

4. ANSWERING THE CALL

OUR PERSONAL STORY

Frances

My wife, Frances, has her own unique and beautiful story of Answering the Call. In lieu of relating all the details of her personal experience, I will give a brief overview of the Call in her life:

Before we met and married, Frances was gainfully self-employed as a hair stylist. As a single woman, she adopted a Spanish-speaking daughter from an orphanage in Costa Rica. She also had a house built in the suburbs. Except for not knowing if she was ever going to find someone she wanted to marry, in a manner of speaking, she had basically achieved the rest of her life aspirations. When we met and were later engaged, she knew I was called to the work of ministry. During the first three years of our marriage, the Lord prepared us in various ways for overseas ministry. The preparation was multi-faceted, but maybe we could give two broad categories: “Living by faith” and “Living out your faith in a foreign culture”. This season of preparation was particularly “life-changing” for Frances: The Spirit of the Lord impressed on me during a time of prayer that Frances should stop working. Although it seemed questionable, she submitted to the

idea, and whittled down her self-employment incrementally. This presented a challenge of faith with regards to the material provision for our family. The Lord also had us experiment in various ways of “living off the grid” – for example, using a wood-burning fireplace instead of the furnace for heat, using oil lamps instead of electric lights, and cooking our meals on a camping stove. In a word, Frances was being “weaned” from the life of her family, her hometown, her occupation, etc. It was a process. During this season, the Holy Spirit impressed upon her heart two passages of scripture which worked powerfully in calling her into the Cause of Christ:

“My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me: “Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.” Song of Solomon 2:9-10

“I slept, but my heart was awake. A sound! My beloved is knocking. “Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfect one, for my head is wet with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.” I had put off my garment; how could I put it on? I had bathed my feet; how could I soil them? My beloved put his hand to the latch, and my heart was thrilled within me. I arose to open to my beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh, my fingers with liquid myrrh, on the handles of the bolt. I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but found him

not; I called him, but he gave no answer.” Song of Solomon 5:2-6

Christ calls us to “**come away**” – out of our life into His life – out of our self-made spheres, into the realm of His Kingdom. And Frances knew that God was calling her to work in a different field in His Kingdom beyond our local church. She was free to choose to remain in the life she had made for herself. But the Lord was going somewhere. She could stay behind, or go with Him. By the end of that three-year period, Frances was willing and able to sell the house and almost all of the household goods, leave family, friends, occupation, local church, and answer the call to go live and labor in a field overseas – South Africa.

Bill

It was about 50 years ago that I surrendered myself and my life to the Lord. During the very first year, something was established in my heart that has very much governed the major decisions in my life ever since – namely, embracing the idea of being *called out* of the world system and *called into* God’s Kingdom, as well as being called to a vocation, as opposed to “making a living” through an occupation. For the next 50 years, this served to govern where I lived, where I fellowshiped, and touched on all the details that go into making a life.

I remember while reflecting specifically on my occupation at the time as a teacher in public schools, I purposed in my heart that I would rather choose to invest my time and talents into serving the Kingdom of God with my life. The Holy Spirit made particular Scriptures very clear to me:

- From the apostle Paul: **“No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.” 2 Timothy 2:4**
- From the apostle John: **“... the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” 1 John 5:19 And: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17**
- From the apostle Peter: **“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new**

heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.” 2 Peter 3:10-13

“David served the purpose of God in his own generation.”

Acts 13:36

It was clear to me that if scriptures like these were not shaping our view of life, then the Christianity we practice was different than that which the apostles received from Christ. I had purposed in my heart that I would not spend my life pursuing something in the world system which is both in opposition to God and passing away; but rather, I would give my life for the Kingdom of Heaven and the eternal purposes of God. It was about 10 years later in South Africa that I first heard the words of this song:

*“I want to serve the purpose of God in my generation.
I want to serve the purpose of God while I am alive.
I want to give my life for something that will last forever.
Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will.”* (“I Want to Serve the Purpose of God in My Generation”, Mark Altrogge)

Extraordinary Things in the Lives of Ordinary People

Answering the Call of Christ dramatically changed the lives of the apostles we see in the gospels. It allowed God to do extraordinary things with the surrendered lives of ordinary people: Peter, Andrew James, and John, as well as Thomas, and most likely Thaddaeus the son of James, were all fishermen by

occupation. In fact, it is quite likely that all the apostles, with the exception of Matthew, who was a tax collector, and maybe Simon the Zealot, were fishermen by occupation. But in answering the Call of Christ all of them, except Judas, traveled the whole of the known world as missionaries.^[1] Now, it's not my intention to belittle any occupation, nor unduly exalt the ministry of missionaries. My intention is two-fold: Firstly, I simply want to point out the dramatic change that took place when the apostles – the “sent ones” – answered the Call. And secondly to communicate that God is in the business of doing extraordinary things with the surrendered lives of ordinary people.^[2] Frances and I have had a very rich life, but no season – before or after – can compare with the 13 years we spent in South Africa. Our season on the mission field was the apex of our lives. I have to say, God did many extraordinary things!

ENDNOTES:

^[1] If you are interested in learning more about what may have happened to the apostles after the events recorded in the Gospels and Acts – where they traveled and what kind of impact they had on the world, I suggest reading: [“The Search for the Twelve Apostles” by William Steuart McBirnie](#). Visiting biblical sites and researching ancient documents, legends, and local traditions, McBirnie developed overviews of their lives after answering the Call of Christ.

^[2] Cf., [“Twelve Ordinary Men” by John MacArthur](#).

5. THE SENDING

“GO THERE FOR”

There are different types of missionaries in the sense of their being sent out in different ways. Some – probably most – are sent through the agency of some mission organization. There is no scriptural example of this, but it is the modern norm for missionaries to be sent out by para-church mission organizations. Some missionaries are sent out by a local church, as there seems to be more evidence of that in the New Testament. (I hesitate to call someone a “missionary” who has gone on a “short-term mission” unless they have gone on many short-term missions.) And there are also some labeled “independent missionaries”, who are sent by the Spirit of God, as Paul and Barnabas were in Acts 13. I understand this passage depicting some prophets and teachers who had gathered together confirming the call which the Holy Spirit had already put into the hearts of Paul and Barnabas. I think our story includes all three of these categories.

Before I get to the “sending”, just a word about our preparation for the work of ministry: It is a long story in itself, but suffice to say here that our preparation was extensive – that is, it took place over a period of 10 years, and was quite varied in the sense of learning spiritual truths through both teachings and learning

experiences. God graced us with much excellent teaching which we received through books and radio ministries. We had very good local church experiences, yet there were also some “bad” experiences, which “God was at work in for good”. These things happened for our instruction, and for being conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:28-29). The Lord also opened doors for various local ministry opportunities. All this before being “sent out”.

Our “sending church”, which was non-denominational, had three elders: an excellent teaching elder, a missions-focused evangelist, and a Christian businessman. I worked with the teaching elder as a worship leader and adult Sunday School teacher. We worked with the evangelist, who was from Africa, in generally assisting him in the formative years of his mission organization. (We were his first overseas missionaries, so to speak.)

The African evangelist elder had some other African preachers from overseas come as guest speakers to our local church, and during one of these times, the Holy Spirit moved powerfully on our hearts – we were called to go somewhere for something! A little later, a South African pastor friend of the African evangelist elder came to visit, and we were asked to host him. During this time,

the Holy Spirit sovereignly and clearly made know to us He intended for us to accept this pastor's invitation to go to South Africa. God provided many affirmations and confirmations through the Scriptures, some dreams, the local elders, and some prophetic words.

The African evangelist elder and the South African pastor both had their own personal "plans" (agendas) for us to help them accomplish in South Africa. The teaching elder would have rather had us stay and continue serving in his local church, but submitted to the plan to send us to South Africa. The Christian businessman elder also agreed but specified that we could not solicit financial support from the local church. The plan was we were to be hosted by and supported by the South African pastor's local church.

After arriving in South Africa, we found that the pastor had never secured that arrangement for our support with his local elders. And, within a few months, that pastor left the work of ministry for secular work. The local elders then informed the South African Department of Home Affairs their church was no longer responsible for us, and that we should be deported. (But the Lord graciously provided another government-recognized South

African ministry which acted as our “covering” for 5 years until we obtained the visa classification of “Permanent Residence”.)

I must add that the Lord did use the good people of that first local church to “unofficially and informally” find us a place to live, supply us with household furniture, and “gifts”, which left at our front door. As the Lord would have it, years later, those same local elders who had “disowned” us became pastors and invited us to minister in their churches.

But there we were. The Lord used the *“The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.”* (from Scottish poet, Robert Burns, quoted in a John Steinbeck’s novel “Of Mice and Men”) But the Lord used those things to simply get us to South Africa. However, were we really supposed to stay there? On a spiritual retreat, I sought the Lord, and His Spirit impressed upon me the following scripture passage indicating to me THAT HE HAD SENT US THERE TO DO:

And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had made a good number of disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, establishing the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, “It is through many tribulations that we must enter the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:21-22

GOD'S PLAN in getting us to South Africa was that we would have a traveling teaching ministry for discipleship and establishing churches. This type of ministry actually started the first few days after arriving in the country, as we were invited to minister into churches all over the Western Cape Province. This itinerant was affirmed and confirmed with a number of prophetic words, and spread into the various provinces all over the country for the whole of the 13 years we were in South Africa. We lived in 6 different places in South Africa, and always had a home Bible study, as well as ministered into home groups and churches in the particular region where we were living at the time.

According to the terms of our visas, we were not allowed to do secular work. This itinerant ministry was financially supported by South African churches we ministered into, South African individuals we had befriended, and a few individuals back in the USA. For 13 years, we always had a roof over our heads and food to eat.

Along with the testimony to God's provision, I'll briefly share just one of many stories of God's providence. I will inform you in advance that it is an "unconventional" Christian testimony: In 1992, incumbent president, F.W. de Klerk, held a Referendum in

which only White South Africans were allowed to participate in, for their pro or con vote on a negotiated constitution proposing power-sharing between the Nationalist Party and the Nelson Mandela-led African National Congress (<https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/1992-whites-only-referendum-or-against-negotiated-constitution>).

Just prior to this Referendum, letters were sent out offering immediate citizenship to all foreign Whites living in South Africa. Frances and I were totally apolitical. (We didn't and never have voted.) But in this situation, we did consider whether or not we wanted to obtain dual citizenships. I decided against it, as I did not want to risk a possible draft into the South African military. But we didn't see any reason why Frances should not. So, she took the opportunity to have dual citizenship, although we did not have specific reason in mind for doing so.

After being in the country 2 years, we took in and raised from infancy a boy who was born to an American woman and a South African father. And 7 years later, we did the same with an infant girl. Both times, we did this at the request of the mother, but with no legal recognition by the South African government. After 11 years of raising these children, we decided to return to the States. These children needed to have both South African and American

birth certificates, American passports, and be legally adopted in order to leave the country. Only then – after 11 years - did we learn that in order to adopt them, at least one of us had to hold South African citizenship. 5 years earlier (during the Referendum), totally without our foresight, God had planned ahead to enable our legal adoption of these two children who today, back in the States, as adults are faithfully and lovingly “honoring their parents” in our old age.

In all honesty, I was ambivalent as to whether or not to share those stories, because they seemed to be very unconventional Christian testimonies. But I was reminded of how Jesus used spit to bring healing. (Mark 7:32-36, 8:22-26; John 9:1-7); and how God used a prostitute to help His servants (Hebrews 11:31), and appear in the lineage of the Messiah. (Matthew 1:5)

And I realized that regardless of anyone’s impression or opinion, we have absolutely no doubt that God accomplished His will in our lives and ministry through these things. These testimonies do, in fact, glorify Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives, as well as the Lord of all the lords, and the King of all the kings.

6. SIGNS

“CONFIRMING THE WORD ... “

Probably beginning with Gideon (Judges 6:11-24, 36-40), we human beings are always looking for “signs” from God to confirm and affirm things in our lives. My wife and I have learned a few things about signs from God: 1) God DOES give us signs – when we need them – not necessarily whenever we want them. 2) The signs are much more convincing to the ones receiving them than to other people you are relating them to.

The Lord graciously gave us signs to confirm and affirm that He truly was sending us to South Africa – both before we left, and then again once we initially arrived: One night (while we were still in the States), Frances woke me up from sleep to relate a dream she had just had: A man was “supernaturally” carrying cows from one side of a riverbed to the other. And in the sky was written the words: “Santa Gertrudis”. Neither one of us knew what “Santa Gertrudis” meant, except I thought I might be of Latin origin. So, I got an encyclopedia to look up those words. (This was in 1980, before we had the Internet and Google). This is what I found under “Santa Gertrudis”: *“A hearty bred of cattle developed on the King’s Ranch (Texas) that can live on very little.”* We understood this to be saying essentially, “Don’t worry. The Lord will supply all your

needs.” Fast-forward about one year later: Our plane landed early evening in Johannesburg, South Africa. Two pastors had come to fetch us and drive us to a conference which was being held at a retreat center called CYARA (“Come ye aside and rest awhile”, Mark 6:31). They showed us our cabin, and we went to sleep. The next morning, one of the pastors asked us if we would like to ride with him, as he was going into a nearby small town to buy something he needed. This was the first we saw of South Africa in the daylight. As we traveled down a county road, we looked out the car window, and saw a sign posted at the beginning of a long dirt driveway which read: “Santa Gertrudis Cattle”. We asked the pastor, and he said that meant that was the particular breed of cattle being raised on that ranch. The dream had been a confirmation, and this was an affirmation that God had indeed sent us to South Africa!

Earlier in section 5. *The Sending*, I explained that “*The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry*”, as the plans for our support in South Africa fell through. We were obviously distressed, bordering on depressed. Should we pack our bags and just return to the States? One day, we heard a knock at our front door. As we opened the door, a lady was energetically saying, “Unpack your bags, the Lord says you’re staying.” This husband and wife were seasoned missionaries in Africa. The Lord used them to

encourage us, and also to “open doors” for us in a traveling ministry to groups they also ministered into all over the country. As I had related earlier in 5. *The Sending*, the scriptures the Holy Spirit had impressed on me concerning our ministry in South Africa were affirmed by this precious couple.

So, we stayed, but our adversities had by no means ended. Just briefly: There was an affiliation of pastors and churches in the Western Cape. I attended their “pastor gatherings”. However, I felt led of the Lord to not “join” any organization, but to rather be open and available to minister into all groups. We had a visit from the “overseers” of this affiliation to inform us that because we were “non-affiliated” our ministry would not be recognized. We were actually “blacklisted”, and their sheep were not allowed to come to our home. I was young and inexperienced in this type of “tribalism”, and I have to admit I started having chest pains, and one morning I was taken to the hospital after passing out. To say the least, these brethren were succeeding at intimidating me. One night, I woke up with this passage in my heart: **9**“And the Lord said to Paul by a vision at night, “Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; **10**for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city.” **11**And he settled *there* for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:9-11)

Once again, we stayed in that province initially. Just in that one province, we helped plant churches in an African township and three different Coloured townships. We held Bible studies in our home, and with other home groups. Many churches in the region (outside the aforementioned affiliation) received our ministry. With the assistance of a Christian hotel manager, we held a number of multi-ethnic gatherings of African, Coloured, Afrikaans, and English Christians in the banquet room of a local hotel, which was quite rare in South Africa in the mid-1980s. We later moved home five more times and ministered cross-culturally and inter-denominationally in home groups and churches throughout seven of the nine provinces in South Africa. After a number of years, we returned to the Western Cape and planted a house church and ministered throughout that region once again before returning to the States. Today, 50 years later, we still have many friends through the nation of South Africa - even some who were part of the aforementioned affiliation.

One evening, I was ministering in a particular church in KwaZulu Natal. Just before I began to teach, I received a brief vision and words to speak out prophetically:

There is a solitary man, alone in a great expanse of desert. His bearded face is set like a flint, facing a certain direction, from which a gale wind is blowing. And as it blows upon him, he turns to a purse hung upon his

shoulder - a worn, weather-beaten purse. And as he opens it, he takes out a morsel of bread. It has been stored away as a provision - an apparent small storehouse, yet totally sufficient – hidden away, yes, even as hidden manna.

This solitary figure of a man serves in a unified army, arrayed but scattered over the face of the earth. And as we were to look, we would not see any of his troops, for he walks in this wasteland alone. Though this army is scattered throughout the earth, each one is a soldier of strength - each one having a great resolve in heart, and each one possessing the hidden manna in their purse.

He is on a mission. He knows the direction in which he is to walk, and so he has set his face like a flint and takes notice that he is walking against the winds – the winds of tribulation. And he knows that at the given time he will reach his destination; and upon arriving, he will know what his mission was. He will perform it swiftly, with strength and power, and then be released into his next mission as he receives from the Spirit the command and direction.

As he walks alone, he thinks to himself: In years gone by, he never would have imagined himself in such a calling, and in such an atmosphere and environment. And though he senses the great challenge within his heart, and the great importance of his mission - battle upon battle, victory upon victory - he longs for the end. And silently from his innermost being, comes the cry: "Come Lord Jesus, that I may eat and drink at Your table in abundance. But thank You for the morsel of hidden manna which is my strength at this time." (A Solitary Man, 1987)

After the meeting, as one of the elders drove to where I was spending the night, I asked him what he thought of the prophetic word. He said, “I sure it was meant for someone.” I immediately realized it was meant for me! That had never happened before, and hasn’t happened since. Signs are real, but relatively rare.

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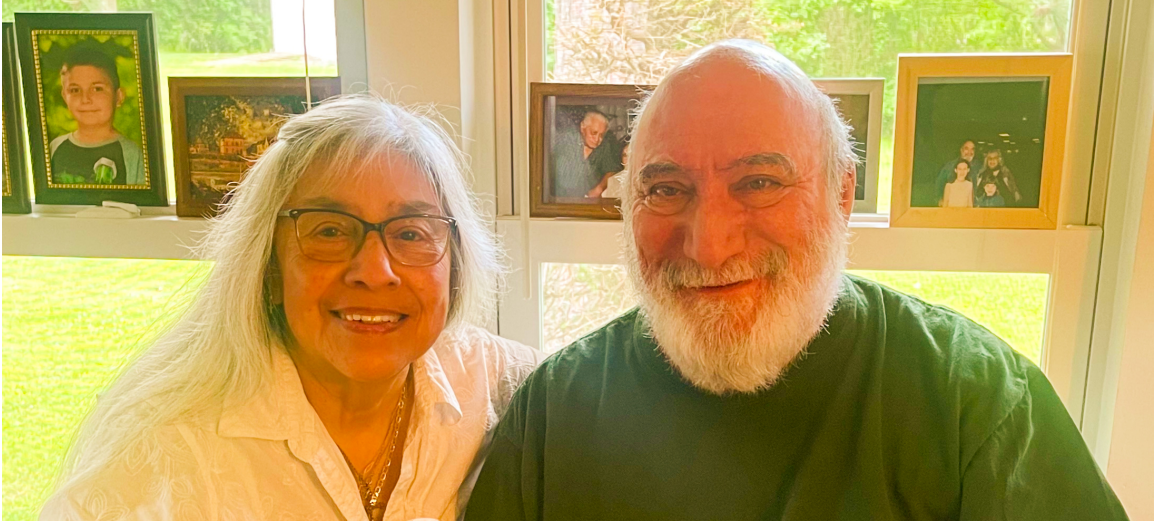
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Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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