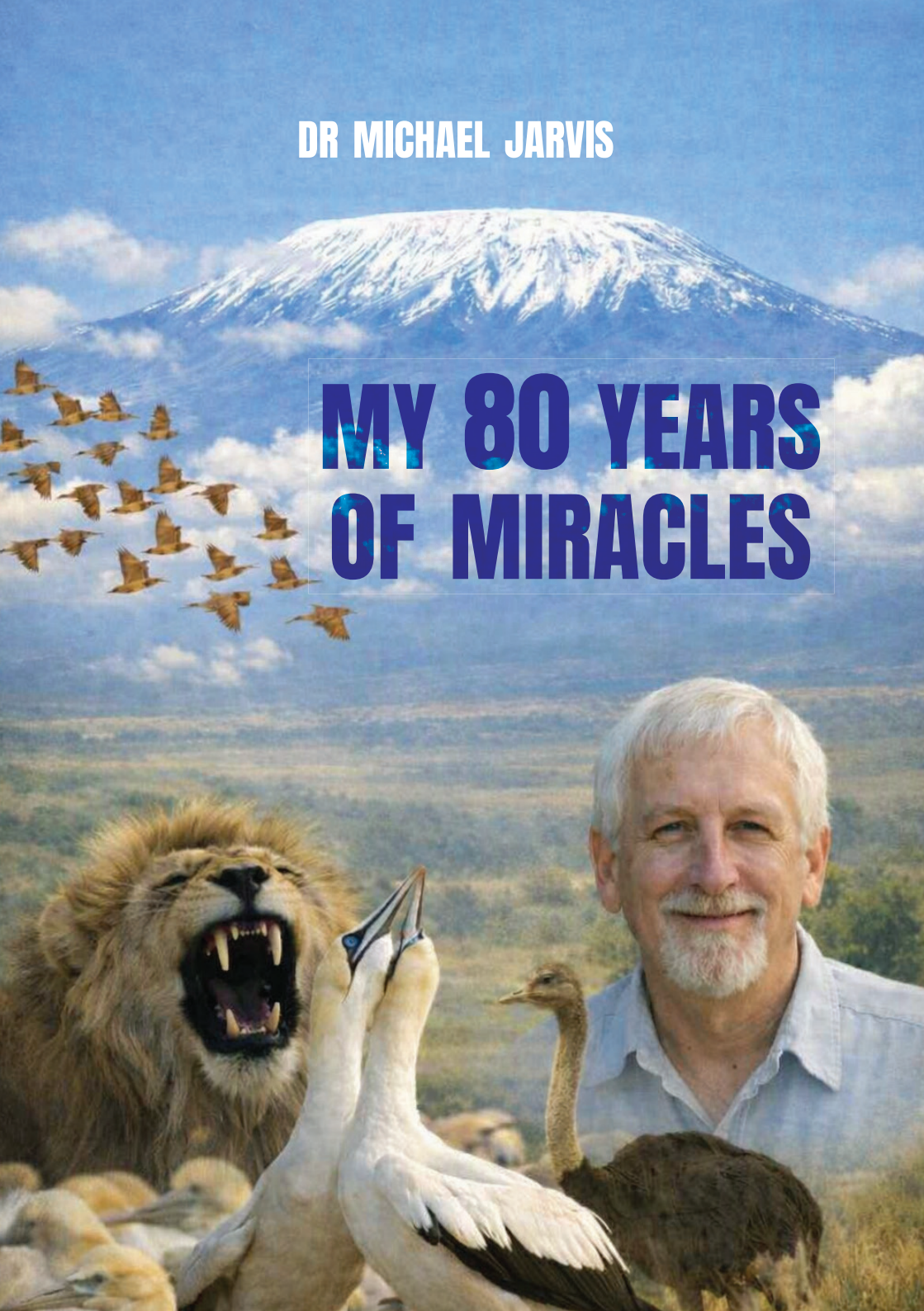


DR MICHAEL JARVIS

**MY 80 YEARS
OF MIRACLES**



“My university training in biological sciences led me to question some of the beliefs I inherited from my parents. I had been raised with a strong belief in God but had not experienced the reality of God in my personal life.

This book is my account of the experiences I went through in the ‘bush war’ in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), and during the following years, that convinced me God was interacting miraculously in my life situations.

I present details of miraculous events that I have been so blessed to experience and which showed me that God is willing and able to interact with individual human lives that have a strong desire to discover his reality.

As you read this book I believe you will come to agree with me that I was privileged to experience truly amazing demonstrations of the reality of God.”

– Dr Michael Jarvis



MY 80 YEARS OF MIRACLES

My 80 years of miracles

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Set by Red Mouse Publications, Wellington
(www.redmouse.co.za)

Cover design by Microsoft Copilot prompted using pictures supplied by the author.

Printed and bound by Bidvest Data, Cape Town

First print, 2026

ISBN: 978-1-0483-3052-6

MY 80 YEARS OF MIRACLES

An autobiography

DR MICHAEL JARVIS

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Why this book

My motivation for writing this autobiography is primarily to share personal experiences of miraculous God interventions, so as to convince my readers that it is possible for all people to discover the reality of God in their personal lives.

I was born in Dar-es-Salaam in June 1942 and schooled in Nairobi, Kenya before enrolling in the Science Faculty at Cape Town University, majoring in Biological Sciences. My parents could be called “tent maker missionaries” because they financed themselves through my father being a highly trained doctor who graduated from King’s College London as both a physician and surgeon. They undertook extensive Christian missionary work in what would usually be called their “leisure time”.

My parents believed it was **miraculous that I survived a double infection of amoebic and bacillary dysentery when I was only two years old**. My father did not think I would make it through the night.

When I was seven, my parents moved to Nairobi and all my schooling was there. Right through my school years I lacked motivation to study. This was partly because the amoebic dysentery infection still lingered on in my liver until I was about twelve. In the Prince of Wales Secondary School, there were four grades in each year. The “A” students were considered to be the bright guys, and the least bright were in the “D” class. I was in the “D” group and normally close to bottom of the class!

I can’t precisely remember what changed in my final year. I somehow became motivated and to the amazement of teachers and family I passed the Cambridge University based examinations with high enough grades to enable enrolment at the University of Cape Town, although I had to first spend a year to upgrade my mathematics and second language (French) qualification.

I was still a “laid back” kid and although my parents wanted me to study one of the scientific disciplines, I really had no clear idea

what to study. My sister Jennifer prompted me with a question; “*You like working with animals, don’t you?*” Yes, I admitted that was true. Well, she said, how about majoring in a study of zoology (now called biology).

I somehow survived my first year at university but really became motivated when in my second year of zoology.

I arrived at university as a convinced believer in Jesus Christ. However, I soon found that the scientific and biological information that I was exposed to had the potential to challenge aspects of my Christian faith. Fortunately I decided not to discard any scientific information that might appear to add to my accumulating intellectual questions. I had a “teachable spirit”. However, I kept these questions largely to myself.

One night I ventured onto a deserted rugby field under a brilliant full moon and spoke aloud to God. I believed he could hear me. I said “*God, I really know intellectually that you exist but I have never had any personal experience of your reality. Can you please reveal yourself to me supernaturally? How about sending me an angel to talk to me?*”

No angel appeared but I know God heard my prayer because after graduating with my PhD in Zoology and getting married, we immigrated to Zimbabwe (then known as Rhodesia) in 1975. It was here that dramatic and miraculous events started to take place.

My PhD: Jumping past Master’s degree

After completing my Honours degree in Zoology at Cape Town University, I decided to register for a Master’s degree. It happened that Professor GJ Broekhuysen had been offered money to employ a research assistant to study the Cape Gannet sea bird. The assistant could use the research as his study for a Master’s degree. The study was meant to investigate to what extent the thousands of gannets had adversely affected the commercial fishing industry. In addition, the study should investigate

the behaviour of gannets, including their complex sign and vocal language.

Prof Broekhuysen wanted a particular student to fill this role but that student declined the offer. He then asked me if I was interested. This

sounded ideal since I would be paid to do my study. I spent much of three years on an island where gannets breed in thousands, together with other sea birds.

I think the professor realised that I was very motivated and so, after initially accompanying me to a Cape Gannet breeding colony, he then largely left me alone to work out the details of the study. In fact I gathered so much information that I personally believed it could merit being a Doctorate thesis rather than a Master's thesis.

After a couple of years I mentioned this to Professor Broekhuysen but he said there was no chance. Fortunately for me, a tradition at the university had recently been broken. A Masters student had managed to convert his thesis into a Doctorate. I duly analysed my data and bound my thesis for presentation at the end of 1969. I put it on the professor's desk when he was not there.

Unknown to me, a close friend of the professor also had him as supervisor and he had just completed his PhD thesis and placed it on his desk. I later looked at that thesis and realised that it was, in my opinion, less meriting for a PhD than mine was. I think this reality also helped swing the professor's decision in my favour, regarding my request to change my Master's thesis into a Doctorate thesis.



The next day after I placed my thesis on his desk, he phoned me. He said he never realised how much research and analysis I had done, including aspects he never asked me to study, He said he was now prepared to convert my thesis into a Doctorate.

I thanked him as best I could and then rushed out of the house and ran flat out around the block, to let out my excitement.

As I now look back over the years, I realise how important it proved to be that I could avoid extra years of study to obtain a Masters before making another study to obtain a Doctorate.

I suspected that this was all God organised but my big experiences of the miraculous were still to come, as detailed in this book.

My next six years

I am skipping details of my employment over the following six years. In summary, I was employed for a year by the Percy Fitzpatrick Institute of African Ornithology to help run the bird ringing scheme studying bird migrations.

Then I was employed for five years as ornithologist with the Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation based near Stellenbosch. Details of my research activities during that time and afterwards can be seen in my publication *My Wildlife Research in Africa*. This can be downloaded free from my webpage.

I got married to Claire in 1971 and during 1974 we visited Rhodesia. We fell in love with the country, its wildlife and how friendly all the people were. We asked a friend to keep an ear open for any wildlife related job that I might be able to apply for.

A job did become available as ornithologist. I applied and was given the job, starting in May 1975.

Move to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)

In Rhodesia I was employed by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management, to undertake research on various wildlife related projects. However, the country was moving into what some called a “bush war”.

What was previously known as the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, had unilaterally declared independence from Britain on 11 November 1965 and called the country Rhodesia. By 1975, two main “liberation armies”, one led by Robert Mugabe and the other by Joshua Nkomo, were fighting to overthrow the mainly white controlled Rhodesian government headed up by Ian Smith.

I soon discovered that nearly all able bodied Rhodesian men became involved in the war effort and it was not long before I was enrolled in the Police Reserve. Initially it was thought that I would mainly be a back up to police activities. However, as the war escalated, we were deployed to a variety of more dangerous situations.

It was during these Police Reserve activities, that comprised of two to three week periods interspersed with returning to my wildlife research activities, that I experienced a series of amazing events. I will briefly detail some of them in order to explain how I ended up totally convinced that God was interacting with me and those with me, personally and miraculously.

Missing a land mine and ambush

On 28 May 1977, I was deployed to a fortified base called Beveke, north of the town of Mount Darwin. Jerry Ziebell and I were responsible for a group of newly recruited Department of Home Affairs soldiers who had received very little training. Our main responsibility was to supply five other so-called ‘Protected Villages’ (PV’s) with supplies that we collected from Mount Darwin. The roads from Beveke to these protected villages were soil tracks through the

bush, with no signposts. We had to memorise how to go.

Army and police instructions said that no cameras were allowed, but on this occasion I had one with me and could take the following pictures. My sketch may help the reader to picture the situation.



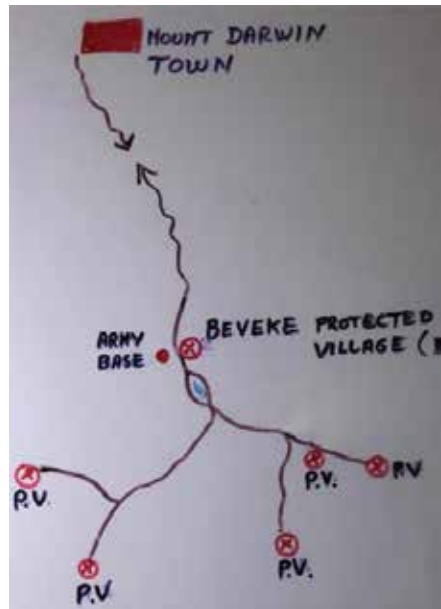
I arrived at the Beveke base before Jerry, but was still unsure of how to reach some of the PV's.

On 9th June we received a radio call from the sergeant on Mutera-vendi PV saying he had a very sick soldier needing to be taken to Mount Darwin. We arranged to collect the sick soldier early the next morning.

Later in this account it will become clear that such information frequently was leaked to some of Mugabe's soldiers operating in the area.

As we were about to leave for the PV early in the morning, we received a call from Mount Darwin saying we must first go there to collect supplies urgently needed by another base. I tried to protest that we needed to go first to collect the sick soldier, but I was overruled by a superior in Mount Darwin.

By the time we returned from Mount Darwin it was already early afternoon. We organised two mine-proofed vehicles and planned to



head for the Mutravendi PV to overnight. I had two soldiers with me and we drove in front because I had previously travelled this road whereas Jerry had only recently arrived at the base.

I drove confidently down the dusty road until a fork in the road. Here, without any conscious doubt as to my choice, I took the left road. I only realised I had made a mistake when I saw a small dam on my right and remembered that this should be on my left side. I was about to swallow my pride and tell Jerry that I had taken a wrong turn when I saw a vehicle track going along the dam wall and this would take me back to the correct road. I confidently took this track onto the dam wall. However, there was a soft patch in the road and the right rear wheel sank into it. The heavy armoured vehicle was in danger of rolling down the bank.

Here I am standing in my blue Police Reserve uniform thinking what an idiot I had been. Jerry was behind and did not seem too concerned. He pointed out that we were still close to our base so he and I could drive back there in



his vehicle and bring a truck to pull my vehicle back off the dam wall. We could leave the soldiers to guard the vehicle.

Jerry said “*jump in*”. He was driving an old model mine-proofed Land Rover without doors and the gear stick was attached to a ball at its base flush with the floor (like in picture). Jerry then tried to engage first gear but the gear stick broke



off flush with the ball. The vehicle was in neutral and neither of us was mechanically trained so we failed to find a way to engage a gear. I remember saying to Jerry *“It looks like we are not meant to reach our desired destination”*.

Jerry and two soldiers walked back to base and fetched the truck and quickly extracted the stuck vehicles. However, as we drove back into camp, after retrieving the vehicles, I heard excited communications on the radio and the sergeant at the base we were supposed to have reached was saying they were under attack. Fortunately the attack did not last long. For some reason the enemy withdrew and the sergeant reported no casualties but a bullet did go through the dust cover of his rifle.

As I heard the radio communications, I also heard what sounded like a voice saying in my head *“Your times are in my hands”*. I felt sure those words came from the Bible so I later located it in my Bible. It reads: *“But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, ‘You are my God’. My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me.”* (Psalm 31:14-15). The words I heard in my mind had been personalised to *“Your times are in my hands”*.

However, **it was only the next day that the full story emerged.** We were situated close to an army base and the commanding officer volunteered to travel ahead of us towards the PV we were meant to have reached the previous day.

The army group in front of us found there had been a landmine placed in the left side vehicle track (see the hole on the picture overleaf where it was situated) and on the right hand side the vegetation had been flattened in places indicating that an ambush was waiting to open fire after the land mine was detonated.

Now the full picture became clear. The armed group had received intelligence from an informer in the PV that we would be coming in the morning to pick up the sick soldier. They planted the landmine and



waited in ambush. However, we never arrived because of the events already described.

When it was approaching evening and the ambush soldiers realised that we were not coming, they then decided to open fire on the PV that was quite close to the ambush site.

Jerry and I now put together the events of the past two days.

- Clearly the opposition had known we intended to visit Mutravendi on 10 June.
- Our intention was delayed because of the urgent command to collect supplies from Mount Darwin.
- We still tried to get to Mutravendi to collect the sick soldier.
- Things went further wrong when I somehow got confused and took the left fork instead of the right. I got my vehicle stuck on the dam wall.
- We still tried to salvage our plan by driving back in the second vehicle.
- This was further frustrated when the gear lever broke off in a most amazing way.
- We still hoped to salvage the situation, but by now it was again too late to travel to Mutravendi. All these events added up to us missing possible death in the ambush.

As we were analysing all this, we both came to the conclusion that there certainly seemed to be **“someone up there on our side”**. We did not analyse how this “someone” had organised events. However, it seemed to involve influencing thoughts and decisions of several people, and also using soft patches on roads and broken vehicles. Overall, there had to be careful timing of events to ensure that we missed that ambush. The “someone” seemed to be aware of the intricate details of our situation and for some reason decided to protect us from the landmine and ambush.

That night I looked through a Bible to find where those words in my mind had come from. *“My times are in your hands”*. As I thought about this I **was suddenly reminded of that prayer I prayed years before as a student**. “God, I really know intellectually that you exist but I have never had any personal experience of your reality. Can you please reveal yourself to me supernaturally? How about sending me an angel to talk to me?”

In an instant it was like that “voice” in my head said, **“You asked for a vision of angels. You have just received it”**. Well, I thought, I never saw an angel, but it certainly seemed as if there was at least one organising events for us. I then became excited and my next prayer was something along these lines: *“God, yes, it really does seem that you were behind all this. Thanks a lot and I am really grateful. I hope you do not mind but I would be really pleased if you could do this sort of thing again.”*

So it happened that, after another couple of years, my section Commander Alastair Kitto said to me one day; *“How come, whenever some of our section gets into an ambush or a dangerous situation you seem to be there?”* I did not tell him but I do believe it was because God took my prayer seriously. He showed me again and again that he really does intervene in real life situations and even in individual lives.

Ambushed on the way to Renco gold mine

On 28 February 1978, I was put in charge of a group of five men, tasked with escorting commercial vehicles from Fort Victoria (Masvingo) to Renco gold mine. This was a particularly dangerous task because nearly every convoy to the mine during the preceding few months had been ambushed. On one occasion five elite Selous Scouts were killed. The insurgent group operating in the area was led by a self-styled General Nylon, who was trained in the best of Rhodesia's army, but had defected to the other side. It was with some trepidation that we faced our task. Police Reserve units normally did not have automatic weapons, only semi-automatic FN rifles. We expected to be ambushed with machine guns and anti-tank rockets.

We were meant to escort the convoy with one mine-proofed Land Rover and a Bedford truck, covered with sand bags to help protect us against land mines. However, the truck had engine trouble and no replacement was available. **We waited three days for the vehicle to be fixed**, but in the end I pestered the mechanic so much that he gave us another truck, which he said was his best vehicle. At last we headed for Ungundu Halt and intended continuing from there to Renco mine on the same day.

Before leaving Fort Victoria I was approached with a request to take two MAG machine guns to a Selous Scout group at Renco mine. None of us had been given training with these weapons but we had no problem taking them with us.

We were hardly 50 km along our route when the so-called "best truck" started jerking and showing signs of serious problems. We finally reached Ungundu Halt but realised the vehicle was in no state to make the rest of the trip to Renco mine. **We were now stuck at the Ungundu Halt army base until an alternative vehicle became available.**

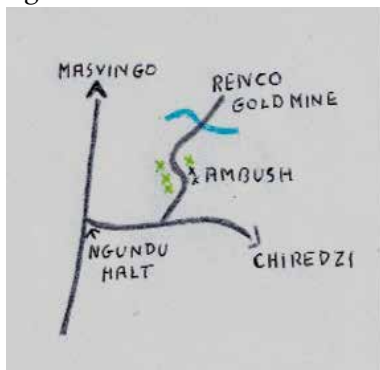
Since we were immobilised, I asked the army lieutenant at Ungundu Halt if one of his chaps could instruct two of us in the use of MAG

machine guns. This was duly done. The other chaps with me, according to my note book, were Wesley Chambers, Derrick Robinson, Daniel Rossouw and John Urie. If I remember correctly John Urie was the other pupil for MAG training.

On 5th March, the Lieutenant took pity on us and volunteered to send one of his army trucks together with six troops, to escort us to the border of the tribal area. The instructions were that this truck would turn back at the border and we would continue on the back of one of the commercial vehicles. However, when we reached the tribal border, there were definite signs of trouble ahead. There was nobody in sight and we knew this was the usual sign that an ambush was ahead. The leader of the army group tried to radio through for permission to continue with us to Renco mine, but there were no radio comms. **He then took his own decision and decided to go with us.**

As we approached a wooded area, **that “voice” spoke clearly in my head**, *“Fear not, I am with you even to the end of the age”*. It was amazing the peace these words gave me. We then rounded a corner and started going up a hill. The Land Rover was in front and two commercial trucks followed the vehicle I was on. I was on the back of the truck, seated on the left side, with the MAG machine gun ready to fire. Suddenly the ambush opened up from close range and I just saw blue smoke as everyone on both sides of the truck opened fire. We did not know which side the firing was coming from.

However, **the ambush was probably taken by surprise when our two machine guns, and two others with the army group, returned fire.** Probably because of this, the ambush did not direct fire as accurately as usual. **The Land Rover was hit with rifle fire and a bullet passed 10 cm behind the driver’s**



seat, but no one was injured. When we got past the firing we found that our truck was not even hit once.

After getting through the ambush we encountered another problem. Heavy rain had caused a river to flow so strongly that we could not cross. The Selous Scout group at Renco mine drove towards us, intending to give us support, but were blocked by the swollen river.

As the Selous Scouts drove back towards Renco mine, it was getting dark. We were lying under trees and realising that we would be here all night. As they drove away we heard bursts of fire, interspersed several times with explosions of mortar bombs. I thought they must have been ambushed.

After two nights sleeping under bushes with no food, we were finally reached by the Selous Scouts. When we arrived at Renco mine I discovered that the firing and mortars we had heard were not due to an ambush. They were from the Selous Scout group initiating what was called “Clear by firing”. This practice originated with the USA forces during the Vietnam War. As they drove along a road they would fire ahead at any place they suspected an ambush might be. This practice not only used up a lot of costly ammunition but also inevitable led to civilian human casualties because in most places there were people living close to the roads.

This practice was foreign to the Rhodesian army but had been initiated by whoever was in charge of this Selous Scout group. One of the young army chaps who had come with us from Ungundu Halt must have reported this to his superiors at Ungundu Halt because **the next day a directive came from central command in Salisbury banning “Clear by firing”.**

The reporting of this use of “Clear by Firing” would probably not have taken place unless it had been experienced by the army group who accompanied us from Ungundu Halt. Thus, without realising it, these events saved civilian lives who would have been killed had this practice

not been banned. **I believe this was part of the God intervention we were experiencing.**

At one meal time I overheard one of the Selous Scouts telling another one; *“If anyone goes through an ambush and claims he was not afraid, then he is lying”*.

This made me realise that I had just gone through an ambush without any fear in my heart. **This was supernatural** and I know it was confirmation of those words I “heard” in my mind before we entered the ambush, *“Fear not, for I am with you always, even to the end of the age”*. These words are a combination of two Bible verses (Isaiah 41:10 and Matthew 28:20).

So, why tell this real-life story? It is because these events again illustrate a pattern that I saw repeated over and over. Events occurred that frustrated us, yet they all worked together to ensure that we came out of the situation alive.

- Our wait at Fort Victoria for three days, because of vehicle problems, resulted in our getting two machine guns in addition to our normal rifles.
- Our further delay at Ungundu Halt meant that we were given instruction in their use.
- The further failure to obtain a replacement vehicle led to the army Lieutenant taking pity on us and sending us on our way with an escort.
- When we reached the tribal area we should have lost the army escort, but a lack of radio communications led to their decision to go ahead with us. This meant far more fire power than the ambush was expecting.
- The fact that the army unit experienced the “Clear by Firing”, led to directives that banned this practice, so saving an unknown number of non-combatant civilian lives.

Are all of these circumstances pure chance? This was now the second time that all the chaps with me said, *“There was someone up there organising events”*.

Escorting group of German bird watchers

When not on Police Reserve duties, my research projects took me to places considered to be war zones. I often reflected on this illogical situation since **on many occasions I drove alone through areas that normally required people to travel in convoy** with an armed escort vehicle, as shown here.

During 1978 I was asked to escort a group of thirteen German bird enthusiasts who wanted to visit areas rich in birds. As part of our tour I took them to Fothergill Island in Lake Kariba. This group was led by Walter Thiel.

On Fothergill Island we had a friendly encounter with a hippo who wandered into the camp.

The next day we were dropped off on the lake shore far from any civilisation, only to be collected again in the evening after wandering about looking at the bird life.

Because we were actually in a war zone, I always carried an FN rifle, much to the surprise of the Germans since they had not realised the security situation when they booked their bird viewing trip to Africa.

We enjoyed our lunch and rested a while on a convenient log. However, it was then decided to wander further along the shoreline to try and add some more bird species to the list of “seen” birds.

Suddenly a lone buffalo stood up only about 40 meters away. It stared at us for a moment and then ran full speed straight in our direction. I knew that my rifle was not a calibre to shoot a buffalo and I knew that lone buffaloes like this can be very dangerous. Amazingly, as it nearly reached us, it slightly changed course and rushed past us into

the distant vegetation. I realised that we had been saved from a really nasty situation that could have been prominent news in various papers: Another miracle?

Our tour group then proceeded by bus to Wankie National Park where I left them to enjoy the animals and birds before they left for Germany. After their return to Germany Walter Thiel sent me a book on European birds, *A field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe*, with a letter of thanks signed by all of the group.



Deployment to Malapati

On 25 October 1978, I and Phil Johnston were deployed to Chiredzi town and from there given the job of driving a Bedford flatbed truck 186 km along an untarred road to Malapati army camp near the Mozambique border. Amazingly we were not given an escort and it became apparent that our deployment was actually contrary to established policy because this journey turned out to be extremely dangerous. We should have been sent in convoy.

As we drove along the long dusty and corrugated road, we came to one section where there were many craters in the road, caused by exploded mines. In one place we had difficulty finding usable road between the craters. Mercifully we did not hit a mine.

I was on the back of the truck, just behind the cab and Phil was the driver. It would have been a very one sided war if we had been ambushed. Just myself available to return fire! It would have been even more problematic if we also hit a landmine. The only protection against a landmine blast was a layer of sand bags on the truck floor. Normally anyone on these sandbags would have been thrown upwards.



The map on the left is recently formulated. Google Maps estimates a drive of 3.35 hours. We left Chiredzi late morning and arrived at Malapati just before dark and when we tried to move the truck to a different parking place we discovered that it was totally out of fuel. **We had only just made it!**

We were so grateful that we had missed a landmine and that we had managed to reach

Malapati. If we had run out of fuel a few minutes earlier then the two of us would have had to walk to camp in the late evening, through very active enemy territory. Even if we had not been ambushed we would probably have lost anything left on the truck.

At the camp we met Gron Pritchard and Dave McConnel who had travelled in convoy along the same road two weeks previously and had hit a landmine. They were in a Puma mine-proofed vehicle and were not injured.

The next day I decided to clean my rifle and when it was dismantled a man asked if I could move outside so that he could clean the accommodation. I carried my rifle parts outside in a folded towel. However, when I opened up the towel on a table I discovered that a very small spring was missing. It was a vital part of the rifle.

I realised that without that spring my rifle would not function so I slowly walked back towards the accommodation, looking between the path pebbles and small tufts of grass. Miraculously I found it hidden within a tuft of grass. What a major relief!

During our two weeks at Malapati we realised that this really was a very dangerous area. One six man army patrol that ventured out of camp was ambushed and pinned down by enemy fire and three of the group were wounded before they were rescued by a follow-up group.

One of the chaps in that patrol came up to me and said he and one of the others in the six man patrol were committed Christians and he quoted to me Psalm 91: *“A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.”* He said that neither he nor his friend were wounded but three of the others were. **He believed God had miraculously protected them.**

By the time we were due to end our deployment at Malapati, it was at last realised by those in charge of organising deployments, that exiting by road was too risky so we were uplifted in a Dakota plane.

Phil and I now fully realised that our deployment by road in a single truck and without backup, was reckless, to say the least. **I believe we were supernaturally protected.**

These events at Malapati reminded me again that God was answering my prayer to experience his supernatural activity and protection in my personal life.

Ambushed while escorting heavy vehicle convoy

On 29 January 1979 we were based at Umtali in eastern Rhodesia and our task was to escort convoys of heavy commercial vehicles between Umtali and Chipinga. The escort consisted of two Mazda pick-up one-ton trucks with a Browning machine gun mounted on the back. These machine guns were the same as used in the Second World War Spitfire fighter planes. The guns were mounted on a rotating turret and the gunner was partly shielded by armour plating. Each vehicle had a gunner on the back, a driver, and one person in the passenger seat. One escort vehicle led the convoy and one brought up the rear.

On the way south I was manning the machine gun on the lead vehicle. The driver and companion both had their FN rifles pointing out of the windows ready to fire. As we reached the turnoff to Cashel, I noticed **a circular mark on the tarred road** in front of us. This looked like a typical situation where a circle of tarred road is removed by rotating a cut metal drum that had been heated in a fire. A landmine is then placed in the hole and the circle of tar replaced.

This dangerous looking circle passed right under our vehicle between the wheels. I then signalled to the commercial truck behind us to swerve around this mark. We had strict instructions not to stop. I was pleased to see that each truck behind us followed the same detour.

On arrival at Chipinga I discussed this episode with Dick Salt and Geoff Sanderson who were in my vehicle and with the other escort vehicle. Dick mentioned that he also saw a circular patch, but at a

point about 250 m from where I saw mine. We decided that, on the return trip our vehicle would bring up the rear and when we got to these suspicious looking spots we would stop and investigate while the convoy continued without stopping.

On this return trip I was driving, Dick was next to me and Geoff was manning the machine gun. When we got to the spot where Dick had seen the mark, we stopped briefly, but amazingly could not find the mark

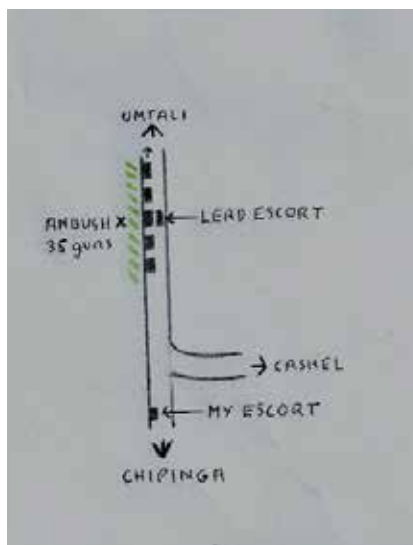
he had previously seen. It seemed to have totally disappeared. We then checked out the mark I had seen but again it was no longer visible. Meanwhile the long line of commercial vehicles moved slowly ahead, up a steep slope, at 5 to 10 km per hour.

I decided it was time to catch up with the convoy that now disappeared over the top of the rise. Because of this I was travelling much faster than would normally have been the case.

When half way up the slope we suddenly were under heavy fire from a high embankment on the left side. I started firing out of my window while driving in case there were also enemy on the right.

However, my rifle suddenly jammed and instinctively I took my hand off the steering wheel to cock the rifle action. As I did this, **the vehicle swerved violently to the right**. At that very instant there was a loud “whoosh” and flash of light immediately to our left.

This flash was in fact a rifle grenade being fired and I am sure it **missed us only because I had swerved at that instant**. Meanwhile all of us continued firing as we accelerated up the slope. None of us were hit and the only casualty was a soldier to whom we had given a lift. He had



apparently been told by a sangoma (tribal medium) that he would die today. When the firing started he threw himself on the floor with such violence that he cut his hand. Needless to say the sangoma was wrong in his prediction of death.

We were given radio instructions to continue with the convoy and another reaction group would follow up on the ambush. **This follow-up found 35 firing positions on the embankment**, hundreds of spent bullet cases and remains of one M60 rifle grenade that had been fired at us. **So, why were we not hit?**

Another amazing event came to light when we got back to camp. Don Mclean and Peter Haddon from the lead escort crew told us that, as the convoy was going slowly up the steep slope, the escort vehicle driver saw in his rear mirror that one commercial truck was overtaking another. This was against convoy rules. The escort vehicle doubled back on the right-hand side of the road and very briefly pulled the driver to a standstill to tell him off.

Without realising it, they had stopped immediately opposite the ambush position that was on the left side of the road. However, the heavy commercial vehicle was between them and the ambush. Presumably the ambush did not open fire because the escort vehicle was shielded by the truck, and because they knew our follow-up escort vehicle was still to arrive.

We assume that the leader of the ambush had decided to attack the tail vehicle, because there would be less chance of the lead vehicle offering assistance.

Our analysis of these events showed **very precise timing** that all added up to an escape from any injury.

- Were there really marks on the road or did we both “see” something that was not actually there?
- The decision to investigate on the return trip. This meant that we

caught up with the convoy at far greater speed than normal and so were much harder targets.

- My rifle jamming, leading to me swerving at the precise moment that the grenade was fired at us.
- Why did 35 firing positions fail to hit our vehicle?
- Why did the lead escort vehicle happen to stop exactly where it did?

All these events fall into my classification of miracles.

Near firefight with own side

17 September 1979: One of my duties, when not on military call-up, was to help protect cereal crops from literally millions of small finch-like birds called Quelea. The official policy was to wait until these birds collected in large groups and actually threatened agricultural crops. A million Quelea can eat and waste more than a ton of wheat in a day.

Throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa vast flocks of these birds, often in excess of a million, have caused severe losses to grain crops such as wheat, sorghum and millet. This is just one small flock in a wheat land and characteristically many such flocks can be feeding in the crop at the same time.

The procedure was to identify the bushes or reeds where these birds congregate in a dense mass to sleep at night. We then called in a specially trained pilot with a crop spraying aircraft, such as a Thrush Commando.



We would fly over the area earlier in the day to help the pilot pinpoint the site and then direct him in by radio just before dark. He then released a fine spray of Fenthion organophosphate poison over the roosting birds. A survey the next morning would sometimes reveal several million dead Queleas. It was an unpleasant task, but at the time this was the only approved way of protecting crops from potentially disastrous damage. Fenthion was very toxic to birds but much less toxic to other creatures.

On this occasion I flew to the Mid-Sabi irrigation scheme with Mike La Grange and with the pilot of a small one engine plane. That afternoon four of us went on horseback down the Sabi River looking for the reed bed where the Quelea were roosting. You could tell this from the carpet of white droppings on the reeds and sandbanks. We failed to locate the exact site that afternoon.



However, from watching the direction of flight taken by vast “clouds” of Quelea towards dusk, we were able to approximately pinpoint the roost.



Towards dusk we passed through a village of huts used by workers on the irrigation scheme. We asked them if they knew where the Quelea roosted but nobody was able to answer accurately. The next morning one of the workers came and told us that a group of opposition troops entered the village that night and asked the workers what we were doing in the area. This meant that we now knew **there were enemy forces close by.**

On the 18th September we managed to identify the roost from the air. We arranged to conduct the spray that evening and we also asked a local group of police for protection of the operation. We arranged to meet with the police group at 17h00 at one of the farm houses. However, there were delays due to having to fill the aircraft with fuel.

On arrival at the rendezvous at 17h30 there was no sign of the police group and we thought for some reason they had been prevented from meeting us.

Mike La Grange and I now drove to the riverbank and **walked down the riverbed, between two rows of tall reeds.** We intended to pinpoint the Quelea roost more accurately since we still had about half an hour before the aircraft was due to start the operation. After a while we heard the aircraft starting up in the distance. We were not yet quite up to the Quelea roost. If we had arrived at the river ten minutes earlier we could have reached the roost before the aircraft started up.

Mike said we must run back to the land rover, because this had our only radio to communicate with the pilot. I was at this point furthest from the land rover and about to follow Mike, when **firing opened up just ahead of us at the Quelea roost we had been heading for.** We could see tracer bullets bouncing off the riverbank.

Mike came up to where I was standing. Our first instinct was to return fire, because we believed it must come from the opposition forces. We presumed they could not see us due to the reeds, but probably thought they knew where we were. Mike La Grange said, "Let's rather

dash back to the Land Rover and warn the aircraft to abort the Quelea spray.”

We ran back under cover of the reeds, called off the operation and returned to camp. Here we discovered that **the firing had in fact come from the police group.** They had gone on their own to the river bank without thinking of informing us and had thought they saw people moving through the bush on the opposite bank of the river. They believed these were opposition forces because there was a curfew in the area. The bullets we saw hitting the bank close to us were in fact “friendly fire”.

If we had returned the fire it would have resulted in a very nasty battle between us and our police protection unit.

On reconstructing the events of the day, Mike and I realised how close we had come to a very nasty firefight with our own side. We would have been very vulnerable, because we were in the bottom of a flat riverbed.

We realised that we had fortunately been delayed, by refuelling the aircraft and then by waiting ten minutes at the planned rendezvous with the police. **If we had arrived at the river ten minutes earlier we would have reached the Quelea roost at the time that the police group opened fire** on the people moving on the opposite bank. The police would not have realised our presence because we were shielded by tall reeds. We would therefore have been in direct line of fire and would almost certainly have returned fire.

Once again, we saw how **pinpoint timing of events led to us escaping a very nasty situation and possibly loss of life.** Clearly, the “someone” who was in overall control of the events, was aware of the minute details of our lives and circumstance. **Another supernatural miracle!**

When we flew back to Salisbury (Harare) in the small single engine plane, at one moment while we were flying over enemy territory, the plane engine faltered. Our pilot gave no indication of concern but when

we landed he asked a mechanic to check the plane because there clearly was a problem. **Was getting back safely another miracle?**

Close encounter with lion

When the war officially ended in December 1979, my family and Fred and Kathy Davies decided to visit Mana Pools. As we were driving and game viewing on a very hot day Fred suggested we stop and stretch our legs. He chose a place to stop near a shady tree.

We were driving in a twin cab vehicle with a canopy and roof viewing port at the back. I was in the back and so, when we stopped I made ready to take our cool box and drinks out of the back of the vehicle. I was **just about to open the back door from inside when one of the children said “what about the lion?”**

I looked at his face and saw **he was staring at a scarcely visible lion crouched behind some tall grass not more than 10 meters away.** The lion raised its front and gave us a “warning snarl”. We then saw in bushes on the other side of the road was a kudu antelope. The lion had clearly been stalking it until we parked between him and his prey. **This was a very close encounter with serious danger from a hungry lion.**

I have only outlined some of the more dramatic Rhodesia events that convinced me that God was, for some reason, not willing that I should die at that time.

His intervention revealed itself through the precise timing of events, the breakdown of vehicles, and through influencing the decisions made by people. There were many other Rhodesian situations where I felt I had been supernaturally protected.



Potential danger with leopard

This encounter with a leopard actually took place before the family moved to Rhodesia. However, I include it here because it is a similar wildlife event to my close call with the lion.

We visited the Kalahari National Park in South Africa. At that time I took a lot of photographs of wildlife and this was facilitated by setting up my camera in the back of our Volkswagen Panel van. I could photograph through the open sliding door.

One very hot day, as we drove along a track through the game park, I needed to go to the toilet. There was no traffic on this road and so it was possible to stop almost anywhere. I saw a suitable place about 500 m ahead that seemed unlikely to have dangerous animals close by. However, while still quite far from this spot we saw in the distance what looked like a small animal running across the road. **This fortunate sighting alerted us to be cautious about getting out of the car when we reached the place.**

On stopping, I at first could not see anything except very low bushes. Then I noticed something in a bush right next to the road. It took a while before I realised I could see a face peering out and looking straight at me.

In this case I see the hand of God allowing us to see an animal crossing the road. Otherwise I would probably not have thought that a large and dangerous animal could be lying behind such low bushes.

After a few minutes this beautiful



leopard sat up, right next to the road. This encounter emphasised the need for great caution when leaving a vehicle in an area where potentially dangerous animals are found.

Foot and Mouth disease control

On 22 November 1976 our group of six Police Reservists were deployed to Humani cattle ranch, tasked with driving along fences erected to try and limit the spread of Foot and Mouth sickness in cattle.

Each day we drove in a single mine proofed land Rover along tracks next to the fence. We knew that this was a potentially dangerous task because the fence ran through an area used by Mugabe's soldiers on their way from Mozambique to go further into the country.

This was confirmed because we located places where the fence had been cut by infiltrating soldiers and we could see the flattened grass path where they had moved through in single file.

Humani Ranch was owned by Roger and Anne Whittle and during two weeks we travelled from the base at their house over 2,000 kilometres through potential ambush areas. At one place where we found the fence had been cut we interviewed a farm worker in a hut close by. He confirmed that a group of Mugabe's soldiers had passed through on the previous day. **Fortunately we had not passed this place on the previous day!**

Our only experience of danger came from one of our group with a faulty sense of humour. He had found a very large hollow Baobab tree when he was previously deployed to the area. He told us to go inside the tree through a large hole in the tree trunk and look upwards.

A few seconds after entering the hollow tree a swarm of angry bees descended. We all ran back to the vehicle with bees in hot pursuit. All of us received one or more stings but poetic justice resulted in the instigator being stung the most. Fortunately none of us were allergic to bee stings!

Evacuating family from their farm

On 27 September 1979 my family drove to my wife's parent's farm to help them pack up and move. The farm was Brackenridge, situated on the border of Inyanga National Park. The area had become too dangerous and they decided to move into Salisbury.

On the way back we decided to spend the night at a friend's house near Brondesbury Park hotel. The friend was Mr Brundel and he was very involved in security operations. As I unloaded my car in the late afternoon I felt uneasy but nothing dangerous happened.

We left the next morning and the following day Mr Brundel phoned to tell us that **the night after we left his house he and the nearby hotel were attacked**. I was grateful that this had not happened the previous night when we were there because it would have been traumatic for our young children.

Timely breakdown of my private vehicle

My employment with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management had a policy whereby we used our own vehicles for official tasks and then claimed back expenses.

As mentioned earlier, one of my research tasks was to assess damage to cereal crops, caused by swarms of *Quelea* finches. On one occasion the farmers at Middle Sabi Irrigation Scheme contacted me to say that considerable damage was being caused. I decided to survey the wheat lands to obtain an accurate estimate of the damage.

This meant travelling 460 km on my own in my quite old Peugeot 404 vehicle. I arrived safely but the next day when I needed to drive around the lands, my engine would no longer engage the wheels. Apparently the splines on the drive shaft had been wearing down and now had finally worn so much that they no longer engaged with the rear axle.

I realised that I was 55 km from the nearest town Chipinga and seemingly faced a major problem to become mobile. However, one of the farmers said they had a good workshop and there were a couple of old Peugeot 404s, in a scrapyard. The mechanic checked the scrap vehicles and found a drive shaft in reasonably good condition. He then put it in my car (no charge).

This was another example of precise timing and provision. **My car had broken down at exactly the best possible place! Co-incidence or miracle?** In the light of all the other miraculous events I had experienced, I had no doubt that this was another one.

Summary of the miraculous events in Rhodesia

I came out from these amazing situations in Rhodesia convinced that God was protecting me in miraculous ways on many occasions. On some of the occasions the miraculous was demonstrated through being at the right place at the right time or unexpectedly finding answers to questions in my research activities, just when I needed answers.

I still had many intellectual questions relating to how best to reconcile my scientific studies with the Bible and Christianity. However, the Rhodesian experiences left me so convinced that God exists that it was like I had jumped over a high “wall”. I knew with certainty that God existed, so now the “wall” seemed less high. I realised that the questions must have satisfactory answers and this encouraged me to pursue the answers with greater determination.

Moving back to South Africa

In 1983 I, my wife Claire and our three children, David, Sarah and Nancy, moved back to South Africa. At first we moved to Oasis Ostrich Farm near Sun City.

Solving ostrich chick deaths with Bob Keffen

I worked for six months on Oasis Ostrich Farm tasked with trying to identify why most of the ostrich chicks were dying and the laying birds stopped laying eggs. I was offered this employment because I had been involved with research into ostriches while in Rhodesia.

Soon after I started work on the farm, as I was busy undertaking a post-mortem on a chick, **a man walked up to me and asked what I was doing.** I explained that the chicks were dying and I was trying to find out why.

The man was Bob Keffen and he introduced himself as a veterinarian from Canada. He was just touring South Africa. He asked if he could help me identify the problem. In fact Bob ended up staying with us for six months and together we undertook a lot of research and identified that the basic problem was fungal (aflatoxin) contamination in the commercially manufactured ostrich feed. Bob and I ended up producing scientific papers together.

Bob's veterinary knowledge was vital to solving the problems and our findings proved to be very valuable for me when encountering similar problems on other ostrich farms.

It certainly was not by chance that a Canadian veterinarian, on a sight-seeing tour, visited this one ostrich farm at precisely the time I needed help from a veterinarian. Bob did not ask for payment for his services.

Move to Wellington in the Western Cape Province

After six months at Oasis Farm, I was offered employment as a researcher with the Department of Agriculture, based at Elsenburg near Stellenbosch. My family was struggling financially and so we found accommodation in Wellington because rentals were lower there than in Stellenbosch.

Every morning I was given a lift to Elsenburg and was picked up from just below the main church. Outside the church is a statue of Andrew Murray. He was influential in a revival of Christianity and wrote over 100 books. He died in 1917.

As a student I had read his book *Absolute Surrender* and had been challenged by it. Now it seemed like God was challenging me every morning to action. I had no doubt that God had acted miraculously in my personal life, but my family was not worshiping in any church. I decided to find an English speaking church and the only one I could locate was the Presbyterian. We started attending and very soon I was asked to take school leaver age Sunday school lessons. After a couple of years I was asked to become an Elder.

My divorce from Claire

However, in spite of all the miraculous events I had experienced in Rhodesia and in spite of now trying to involve the family in church activities, our marriage broke up and in 1988 my wife initiated divorce and disappeared with our two daughters aged 12 and 6. It took me six months to determine that they had gone to Belgium where her parents originated from.

This dramatic and traumatic event made me realise that all the amazing and miraculous events I had experienced and my conviction that God exist, did not mean that I was exempt from the challenges of life. I realised there was still a lot that **I needed to learn about God and how to relate to him and to other people in all aspects of my life.**

This development now prompted me to go to Belgium to try to resolve the situation and to regain access to my daughters Sarah and Nancy.

God-miracles in Belgium

In my attempt to locate my two daughters, I travelled to Bruxelles. I did not have much leave due to me from my work but my head of Department, Mike Walters, allowed me extensive compassionate leave.

When my sister, Professor Jennifer Jarvis, heard I needed accommodation in Bruxelles she contacted a friend who had been at school with her in Nairobi, but now lived in Bruxelles. This friend said she was about to visit her mother in Germany and I was welcome to use her flat in Bruxelles while she was away.

After I arrived in Bruxelles my Belgian attorney discovered that Claire was registered as living in a building at 58 Avenue Woluwe – Saint Lambert.

Bruxelles is a very large city so **imagine my amazement when I realised that my sister's friend stayed in this same street in Bruxelles!** I could watch the entrance to number 58 while sitting on the balcony where I was staying. **So, this was the first of several miracles that I experienced in Bruxelles!**



A view down Avenue Woluwe Saint-Lambert in Bruxelles.

After watching the entrance to number 58 for several days, I was able to tell my attorney that this was clearly a “front” address. In Belgium it is an offence not to register your true residential address with authorities. This infringement of the law enabled the attorney to gain access to unlisted telephone numbers. As it turned out, Claire’s father’s surname had only one listing in the whole of Belgium. This enabled my attorney to determine that they actually lived in a small village outside of Bruxelles.

I now faced a series of court appearances designed to try and establish that various South African court verdicts could be actioned in Belgium. Initially a Belgian court ruled that I could not even see my daughters and if I tried to do so I would be arrested! There were several long delays between court appearances and I found I had to remain in Bruxelles much longer than initially anticipated.

When my sister’s friend returned from Germany I needed to find other accommodation. My other sister Elizabeth, who lives in England heard that there was an American couple (Martin and Ruth Riding) who were living in Bruxelles and they might have reasonably priced accommodation. I phoned them and they provided me with **a small room in the attic.**

The rent was very modest but I knew I was soon going to run out of money. After a few days I discovered that Martin made a living by buying old buildings and renovating them for sale. I offered to help by sanding walls and painting and after a few days Martin said he had discussed with his wife and they had decided that if I could continue helping Martin I could stay with them for nothing and they also provided meals. **Thank you God for another miracle!**

This was a great blessing but I still realised I was short of money to follow up on things related to the legal issues. The Ridings introduced me to a group of English speaking Christians who met in a school hall. Here for the first time in my life I was exposed to Christians whom

some classified as “charismatic”. **This proved to be a major challenge to my understanding of Christianity.**

I noticed that some of these Christians had a degree of commitment and experience that challenged me and led to much personal “soul searching”. **I came to a decision to tell God that I was available to receive from him anything that he wished to give me.**

When I returned to my place of residence, I knew nobody else was in the house at that time. **As I was slowly walking up the stairs praying aloud about the many problems I was facing, suddenly I experienced a very powerful supernatural presence** and my prayers became very intense and not in the English language. I realised that this experience was what some Christians referred to as being “baptised in the Holy Spirit”. A result was to pray aloud in words that I had never heard before. This was what the Bible describes as “speaking in tongues”.

From that time on I experienced an escalation in the frequency of events that could be described as miraculous.

The next Sunday I was sitting near the aisle in the Christian meeting when a young German man came and kneeled next to me. He asked how I was and then said; ***“The Lord told me to give you something”***. He handed me an envelope. On the same day an Indian couple came up to me and gave me 1 000 Belgian francs.

When I was alone I opened the envelope and **it contained 20,000 Belgian francs**. I used this money to hire a car and achieve several other tasks. I then had to return to South Africa on a previously purchased air ticket.

As I sat in the plane I remembered that I did not have a ticket from Johannesburg to Cape Town. It was a Sunday and at a time before I had a credit card. I only had my cheque book but knew I had money in my South African account.

When I arrived in Johannesburg I went to the airways ticket office

to purchase a one-way ticket. I then took out my cheque book but was told, *“Sorry. On a Sunday we can only accept a cheque up to R100.”* This was not nearly enough for the ticket. The ticket office directed me to a foreign exchange kiosk. They had the same story; I only could cash a cheque up to R100. Then the man said *“Do you perhaps have some foreign currency?”*

I then remembered that I still had a few Belgian francs. When these were changed into South African Rands, together with my R100 cheque, it covered my ticket to Cape Town.

This was just another miraculous intervention by God in my life situation. More was to come because the legal issues in Bruxelles were dragging on, due to amazing incompetence within the Belgian legal system.

I was back in South Africa for a while before returning to Bruxelles, and I met a lady who was familiar with my situation. **She told me that a good friend of hers had married a Belgian Senator.** Would I like her to let this friend know about my situation? I agreed to this.

This “God arranged appointment” proved to be vital in finally resolving the legal matters in Belgium. For the first time, when back in Belgium, I faced a female judge who thoroughly investigated all relevant issues. She had clearly been influenced by the Belgian Senator. This led to her giving a judgment that opened up solutions to the questions that had led me to Belgium.

It had taken three years before the Belgian legal system finally allowed me to see my two children. The female judge decided that, in order not to further disrupt the children’s education, they should continue their schooling in Belgium but could visit me in South Africa during school holidays, as long as I paid the air fares. This court decision enabled me to bring the two girls to South Africa twice each year.

Today I have a wonderful relationship with them and meaningful contact with their mother Claire. **My “baptism in the Holy Spirit”**

experience led me to do much “soul searching” on my part and it empowered me to move past anger and enable forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Quail story

While my son David was still at school in Wellington and living with me after my daughters had been taken to Belgium, we did not know at the time how important quails would become.

We kept the Quails *Coturnix coturnix* for several reasons. David decided to breed them for eating. However, this also gave us the opportunity to study how to increase the average size of the birds.

We kept the fastest growing and largest chicks as our next generation of breeders and also crossed our birds with other different genetic birds. In this way we achieved a rapid increase in average size and **were able to more than double the size of our quails.**

When David left school and started at Cape Town University, majoring in microbiology, I told him he must sell his quail business. He found a lady in Stellenbosch who took over the birds and over a number of years she developed a big breeding business, selling slaughtered quail mainly to restaurants.

The years passed and David graduated in microbiology but his main interest was computers and he believed by setting up a shop selling them he could make a better living than through microbiology. He also branched out into developing a network that could connect people to the internet.

However, I always felt that he should get back into microbiology. **In fact, I had a vivid dream in which I saw that other things were trying to keep him from his main destiny that resided in microbiology research projects.**

To cut a long story short, David did re-discover his interest in microbiology. He founded Liselo Laboratories, together with other

researchers. It became clear to them that there was much potential for further research into these quails. As he was wondering where to source a supply of them he unexpectedly was contacted by the lady in Stellenbosch who had bought the quail business from him eight years before.

She had decided the time had come to retire from quail farming. She sold the business but had about 300 quails left over and **wanted to know if David was interested in them.** He immediately drove to Stellenbosch from where he was in KwaZulu-Natal. He fixed up a suitable trailer and took the birds back. They were the same genetics that we had developed into larger birds while David was still at school. Now, at time of writing, the research into aspects of these quails is leading to valuable microbiology related information with potential benefits for human and animal health.

I describe this quail story because it is an example of how God plans our lives. He sometimes creates interests in young people that he knows will later develop into opportunities with potential to be a blessing to many people. I ask myself the question: Why would a school boy develop an interest in breeding quails and improving their genetics through careful cross breeding experiments?

This only proved to be very significant eight years later when he returned to his initial academic training in microbiology. Then I ask myself, can it be a co-incidence that this same improved genetics would again land up with David, just when he had decided to focus some of his laboratory work on these birds?

Personally, I **classify this as another miracle.**



Married again

The events around the family led me to believe I would never get married again. However, I met Anna at church in Wellington and for several years both of us were very active in a Bible study group. We got married on 12th February 1995 and enjoyed 27 wonderful years together until she died on 7 July 2022. Several people who knew us well said *“This was a wedding planned in heaven”*.

Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

In July 1999 I was able to experience a wish I had since childhood, to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. It is the highest free standing mountain in the world and is the highest place in Africa.

“Kilima” is a Swahili word for mountain, and “njaro” is one of the Massai tribe words for God.

This climb proved to be an experience of how God organises supernatural events when our motivation is to put God and his message foremost in our lives.

I joined a group of 34 other climbers, including Tomene Gibbs who is my wife’s daughter and Robin her husband. Our climb was organised by Tribe Safari and aided by a team of local people from Moshe town at the foot of the mountain.



They carried most of the equipment and prepared all our meals and added to the joy of the experience with their cheerful personalities, accompanied often with singing of Christian hymns.

The climb started along a wet and very slippery road through ‘shambas’, the local name for small plots of cultivation. The volcanic soil is so fertile that no additional fertilisers are needed and bananas, coffee and mango trees are mixed with root crops and vegetables.

On the first day we left the cultivated area and walked through lush tropical forest and crossed many small streams. These areas still team with wildlife, including many beautiful butterflies.

The evening of our first day brought us above the dense forest and into an area with much shorter vegetation. Here we found the team of porters had erected our tents and prepared a meal.

This camp was close to the upper border of the Forest Zone 1800m above sea level.

The next day took us through more of this less lush vegetation. The porters often spoke out the words “pole pole” meaning “slowly slowly”. They knew that climbers who walked too fast often suffered later on and were more likely to suffer from nausea associated with “mountain sickness”.





We soon found ourselves walking through thick mist and up a steep path, accompanied by our super fit porters with their heavy loads

We emerged from woodland into low vegetation that is adapted to the cold, including vegetation similar to the “fynbos” of the South Western Cape Province in South Africa. This area is often referred to as the Heath and Moorland zone, extending between 2 800m and 4 000m above sea level.

The vegetation included Erica and Protea species, mainly found close to the protection of rocks.

Much of the vegetation was similar to what I saw on Mount Kenya, during a research trip while I was a student. Some species are unique to each mountain.

As the mist started to clear we caught our first glimpse of the mountain top. This was all still on our second day of the climb.



Each day, as we walked I found myself often interacting with the same five people. These were Rob and Tomene, a middle-aged farmer couple, a man I classified as an intellectual sceptic, a young man whose father was a bishop in Cape Town and a Jewish man who had a very “colourful” vocabulary.

On the third day we passed through more cold adapted vegetation including these Giant Groundsels (*Senecio kilimanjari*), similar to the closely related ones I saw on Mount Kenya.



On the third day we also entered an area known as Alpine Desert, spread between 4 000m and 5 000m above sea level. Very little grows here due to the cold and low rainfall. The only moisture comes from precipitation from mist. The sparse vegetation includes three species of Tussock grass and a few flowering daisy plants referred to as “everlastings”.

This picture speaks of the intense cold necessitating my thermal attire.

We also had some spectacular views of the climb ahead.

On the third day I was walking behind a man who was talking to the woman in front of him on the path. He told her that his wife had given him some crystals to bury on the top of the mountain to *“improve the spirituality of the world”*.



When I heard this I decided not to tell him or anyone else that I was planning to put a scroll in a crevice near the mountain top and this spoke of bringing down all false gods in Africa. **To me, belief in the spirituality of crystals was belief in false gods.**

My intention was to share the scroll contents only with my relatives, Rob and Tomene and hopefully we could pray the prayer together from the mountain top.

Another interesting conversation was with the man I thought was an Intellectual Sceptic of spiritual things. At one place on the climb he paused and exclaimed how magnificent the view was. I agreed and said how it reminded me of the Creator. He looked surprised and before he answered I said I had heard of a debate on BBC. It was between

an atheist and a Christian pastor. At one point the atheist said to the debate chairman *“What I can’t accept is that this pastor has faith to believe that some hypothetical God made the universe out of nothing.”*

The pastor thought for a moment and replied; *“I agree it takes a measure of faith but my atheist friend wants us to believe that nothing made everything from nothing. To my mind that takes even more faith.”* My sceptic friend said; *“I like that. In fact I like that a lot.”*

The path we took is known as the Machame Route. It takes five days to reach the top because the path does not go straight up, so as to help climbers acclimatise to the high altitude. There is a real danger of getting “mountain sickness” and in fact nearly all of the climbers with me were soon taking tablets to minimise the bad effects. It made climbers nauseous.

I escaped this problem and believe it was by taking the advice of my sister who had been told by one of her students to take a little salt every time I stopped for a rest and wash it down with water. I just moistened my finger, dipped it into the salt container in my pocket, sucked off the salt and washed it down with water.



Our camp on the third night was in this valley. As we waited for our evening meal we heard the rumble of an avalanche in the snow above us.

The third day was very exhausting. We were walking almost continuously and the path went down and up a series of valleys and hills. This was also made difficult because of less oxygen in the air at this higher altitude.

The fourth day was up some very steep areas and we aimed to reach Barafu Camp as early as possible because the plan was to start the final ascent at eleven that night, so as to reach the crater rim at sunrise.

This is Barafu Camp. In Swahili “barafu” means cold. We were provided with a meal consisting of carbohydrates and were informed by our guides that this was essential to give us the required energy.

Tomene was now struggling with mountain sickness and so I decided to give a copy of my scroll to Rob and ask him to share it with Tomene in their tent. The next day he told me that, as he entered the tent Tomene was reading the same scripture as written on the scroll, namely Isaiah chapter 42.

The toilet was perched on the edge of a cliff and we were advised to approach it with caution at night. Apparently one woman on a previous climb had ventured there on a misty night and accidentally fell off the cliff.

From Barafu Camp we could see the path we would take that night. We started this last ascent at eleven pm so as to reach the mountain top at sunrise.

It became very steep and slippery and I stopped at least three times that night feeling I just could not go any further. However, on each occasion I felt a gentle push from behind that got me going again. It was one of the guides and apparently each guide took a bet with the other guides that they would get all the climbers allocated to them to the top.



The snow and glacier glow in the sunrise and in the distance we were looking down on the clouds.

When I returned from this climb, three women in Wellington told me that at that time of night they woke up with a strong motivation to pray for me on the mountain!

We reached the crater rim just before sunrise and it was full moon. From our vantage point we could see the sun rising in a clear sky and the full moon setting.

We had to walk along the crater edge to reach the highest point, with the sunrise behind us and the setting moon in front.



On our left we passed spectacular glaciers. Monitoring of these has shown that global warming is quite rapidly reducing the ice and snow.

Our climb was during unusually warm weather, only minus 10 C and the sky was cloudless. The bright full moon meant that our night ascent was not in total darkness. We could see the snow above us as we climbed, illuminated by moonlight.

Scientists have drilled down into Kilimanjaro glaciers and the ice cores revealed a period of severe drought lasting 300 years, starting about 2000 BC. This is recorded in 2002 by Thomson in *Science Journal* of October 7.

It is interesting that the Bible records the Israelites moving to Egypt about 1876 BC because of a severe and prolonged drought. By then the drought had already lasted some 121 years.

At the highest point on the crater rim, 5895 meters above sea level, the oxygen content of the air is about half of what it is at sea level.

After reaching the summit, I decided to find a quiet place to read out my scroll prayer. Rob was not in sight so I decided to say the prayer alone as I looked out over the crater. In essence the prayer was asking God to bless Africa, to raise up the name of God the Creator and bring down false gods that were holding back Africa's progress and renaissance.

I placed my scroll in a plastic bottle in a crevice, as I looked out over the crater. There is still a little steam coming from a vent in the crater, a reminder that we were standing on an enormous volcano.

The same day that we reached the highest point we also walked halfway down the mountain and discussed our experiences over supper.



As we were walking down towards base camp I was rehearsing in my mind a thank you speech for the porters and guides. I could speak the Swahili language a bit as a child and so offered to give my little speech. I told them about my father coming to Tanzania as a medical doctor and that I was born in Dar-es-Salaam. I also thanked them for their hard work and said how we enjoyed all their hymn singing during the climb. I said that it seemed to me that they loved Jesus. This resulted in many nodding heads. I said that this was great because I also loved Jesus.



When I finished my speech one of the climbers said “Now we want an English translation”. **I gave it and wondered what reaction I would receive from the other climbers.**

I was one of the first climbers to arrive back at the hotel in Moshe. The receptionist asked me if I minded sharing a room with three others. I agreed and then had a wonderful hot shower. As I emerged, the first person to arrive at the door was the Jewish man. He asked “**Are you in this room? Then I suppose no dirty jokes tonight?**” I just said, “*The hot shower is great, enjoy it.*”

Then, as I stood outside the room the young son of the bishop came up to me and told me how, on the last night of the climb, he just totally ran out of energy. He sat down and thought he could not move. Then suddenly he received a burst of energy. This surprised him but then he remembered how he had asked his father to pray for



him. He remembered that his father got up very early each morning to pray and his normal prayer time coincided with when his son got that unexpected burst of energy. I realised that this young man only had courage to share his experience because I had given my speech to the porters.

A few moments later the farmer came up to me. He thanked me for sharing with the porters. He said that, shortly before coming on this climbing trip he attended church. The pastor had invited people to come to the front and re-dedicate their lives to God. He and his wife went forward but they found it hard to share their faith with anyone, but now my testimony gave them courage to share in future.

Each of us was presented with a certificate and then the chief guide invited us to a Chinese restaurant in Moshe. Here each of us was asked to briefly describe their most memorable experience on the mountain.

It was then that the one climber, who had been given the crystals to bury on the mountain, gave his account. He told us how he intended planting them on the mountain top. His wife believed they would help improve the spirituality of the world.

However, the mountain top was so beautiful that he forgot to bury the crystals and only remembered when in his tent half way down the mountain. He decided to get up before sunrise and climb to a small hill next to where we were camped. He said *“I dug a hole and buried the crystals. I then decided to wait and watch the dawn and sunrise.”* At this point he became emotional and could not speak for a moment. Then he continued *“Then I realised what I had done. As it became light I saw that I had buried the crystals at a place where the porters used as their toilet.”*

I was amazed that he had told us what had happened. I thought that he must have been supernaturally encouraged to tell us, so that I would know that my prayer on the mountain, to bring down false gods, was being answered. **What did God think of “special crystals”** to improve

the spirituality of the world? **He organised to bury them in the toilet!**

The next day we flew out from the Arusha Airport. I was one of the last to enter the plane from the back door. It was free seating and as I looked down the aisle at first I could not see a free seat. Then a lady beckoned to me. She had kept a seat for me next to a window. Next to her was the Jewish man and in the row behind me sat the young son of the Bishop and the Intellectual sceptic.

The lady started telling me how she had recently been on an Alpha Course at her church. Then, for the rest of the flight to Johannesburg we had a chat talking about various Christian topics and some of my experiences during the war in Rhodesia. She spoke quite loudly and I replied loudly because I think she was slightly hard of hearing. I realised that the Jewish friend and those in the row behind could hear the conversation.

When we landed in Johannesburg the Jewish man stood up to retrieve his bag from overhead and then in a loud voice said *“Well, I suppose there may be a God after all”*.

Summary of amazing events

- Overhearing the man talking about plans to bury crystals on the mountain.
- My getting to the mountain top in spite of struggling on the last night.
- I was able to pray at the mountain top, the prayer to bring down false gods.
- My speech to the porters told everyone that I was a follower of Jesus.
- This led to the young man sharing his supernatural experience on the last night.
- This also led to the farmer sharing his testimony.
- The feedback at a Chinese restaurant led to the testimony of crystals being buried in the toilet. This was like a confirmation from

God that my prayers about bringing down false gods were being answered.

- It was a miracle that this man shared his humiliating experience with the crystals.
- My seating in the plane enabled talking about Christian things, loudly enough for the Jewish man to hear.
- These events must have impacted the Jewish man and motivated him to make his statement about “maybe there is a God after all”.

This whole climbing of Mount Kilimanjaro adventure was not only fulfilment of a long wish but also a demonstration of the supernatural interventions by God. Fulfilling this childhood dream of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro was one of the highlights of my life. As a child, on clear days I could see the mountain from Nairobi even though it was 240 km away, “as the crow flies”. It was also an experience of how God organised events.

This sort of event has been my experience on a number of other occasions. I am therefore totally convinced that God can and sometimes does intervene in individual human lives. I believe he intervenes most when he finds faith and a willingness to obey his ‘still small voice’, and a willingness to step out of our comfort zones. The more we develop that relationship of trust and obedience, the more we experience the reality of his presence.

Learning to recognise his “voice” is obviously important. For me, it is not an audible voice. It is more like a “flow of thoughts” that somehow stands out as important. I have learnt that, when such a “flow of thoughts” is followed by another thought that seems to say “take note”, then, as I act on those thoughts, the following events show that they were in fact God inspired.

I believe God speaks to us in various ways and I know not everyone in the same way.

A near miss with dangerous criminals

I was blessed with many miracles in South Africa where the miraculous was often revealed by being in the right place at the right time, without any planning on my part. I will only mention a few of the most spectacular events.

For instance, in 2002 I received an early morning phone call from a man who said he was from Nigeria. He said he wanted to meet me to talk about ostrich farming and asked if we could meet on this day in Cape Town.

I could have gone to Cape Town that day but I told him I was busy, but maybe we could meet the next day. I suggested meeting somewhere half-way into Cape Town. I felt his willingness to meet me half-way would be a test of his sincerity. He then agreed to meet at a petrol station on the main N1 highway at 10 am the next day.

A few hours after this conversation I received a telephone call from a policeman. He asked for my name. He then mentioned the Nigerian's name and asked whether I had met him. I told the policeman that I had not yet met him and explained my telephone call. The policeman then told me he found my name and telephone number in the Nigerian's pocket.

The policeman then told me that I was **“a very lucky man”**. The police had just arrested this Nigerian, together with four others in his gang. **He assured me that these men were very dangerous criminals.**

Once again I was protected by very precise timing of events. Firstly, by not agreeing to meet immediately. The postponement meant that I was protected from meeting these gangsters.

The other miracle was that the police had caught up with this gang just before I would have met with them.

Again I repeated to myself the Bible passage; *“My times are in your hands.”* **This was a very dramatic miracle of timing.**

The suicide case

Sometimes, being in the right place at the right time is really dramatic. For instance, we lived in a small town called Wellington, about one hour's drive from Cape Town. One morning my wife Anna and I needed to visit Cape Town. We neared the city at a point where the highway broadens into four lanes in each direction. This is a very busy highway and at mid-morning the traffic is only slightly less intense.

On this morning, as we rounded a bend and started climbing the hill near the Tygerberg Hospital off-ramp, we saw a young man standing in the middle lane. I instantly saw that he was most distressed and traffic was rushing past him on both sides. Instinctively I found myself stopping immediately in front of him. I put the hazard lights flashing and got out to talk to him.

Amazingly, **vehicles continued to rush past on both sides.** The young man was suicidal and my initial attempts to get him into the car were resisted. It must have been five or more minutes of quiet talking, with Anna praying hard in the car, before he reluctantly got into the back seat in a much stressed state.

As we drove on slowly down the highway we got him to tell us where he lived. When we arrived there he told us he had no key. However, **at that very moment his mother arrived** on foot. She was most relieved to see her son. After things calmed down and we had coffee together, she explained the events that had preceded our finding her son.

Apparently, they were being driven on the highway heading away from Cape Town and were having an intense argument. At one point when the vehicle slowed down almost to a stop, her son jumped out of the car and disappeared through the traffic. His mother decided she could do nothing so she prayed, **“God, please send someone to help him”.**

When her son had calmed down, and realised how close he had been to death, he kept saying that we were angels sent to help him. We

thought to ourselves, how true it was that God had indeed intervened. He answered the desperate prayer of a mother by sending us along that road at precisely the right time. Apparently no one else was interested in stopping, since the cars kept rushing past on both sides of us. I believe that God also intervened by preventing a major pile-up of cars and by enabling me to calm the man down enough to get him into the car.

We prayed that this event would also prove to be a turning point in the young man's life. It was clear to us that he had serious relational and emotional problems.

Sewing machine foot pedal

On another occasion Anna wanted to do some sewing with her Singer sewing machine but the foot pedal was broken. I had to go into Cape Town for business and so we decided that on our return trip we would stop at the sewing machine shop in Bellville.

We went to town in her 1983 Toyota Corolla. It was a misty morning and I kept the headlights on. We stopped where I had to drop off some documents. My later model Corolla would let me know if I opened my door without switching off the lights. But not Anna's car. Anna said she would wait in the car. I took longer than expected and as I emerged I saw that I had left the headlights on. As I got into the car my worst expectation proved correct – the battery was nearly flat and I could not start the car.

I walked to the nearest garage and asked the mechanic please to do me the favour of coming with jump leads. He agreed but first had to complete a task. As a result it was about 15 minutes before he arrived.

Once the car was running, we stopped at the sewing machine shop. It was empty except for one shop attendant. As Anna was explaining to her the model of her sewing machine and her need for a pedal, a woman walked into the shop just as the attendant was apologising that she did not have the desired pedal in stock.

The lady who had entered at that moment overheard the conversation and said; *“I have exactly the same model of sewing machine and I have a spare pedal. You are most welcome to have my spare”*. She insisted that we follow her to her residence and duly presented the pedal to Anna. We thanked her and asked how much we should give her for it.

Her reply was that we owed her nothing and then she told us, *“Every day I ask the Lord to lead me to someone I can bless and today you have enabled my prayer to be answered”*.

Such an amazing miracle of timing and of answered prayer.

My mistake, leaving the car lights on was, without my realising it, an essential part of the supernatural plan. This ensured that we arrived at the shop at exactly the right moment to meet the lady with a spare pedal. In addition, this lady’s testimony was a blessing for us to hear and also a blessing to the lady as she experienced an answer to her daily prayer.

Such an amazing God! Aware of every minute detail.

Avoiding robbery at bank ATM

Early one morning, just after sunrise, I needed to draw R3 000 from a First National Bank ATM in Church Street, Wellington. I stopped in front of the steps leading up to two ATM machines. The street was nearly empty and I could not see any suspicious person. On climbing the steps I found one ATM was out of order. As I was busy drawing the money a tall and well-dressed man suddenly appeared and stood right next to me. That should have made me suspicious. I said good morning and he replied in a friendly way. I told him the other ATM was out of order but I was done. As I was walking down the steps he called out “Excuse me Sir, the ATM does not seem to have closed correctly.”

I walked back up and the screen did not look like it normally should look after a transaction. **I looked at the man and said;** *“This is crazy, how do I know this is not a scam and you want to take my money?”*

He replied “No sir, certainly not, but maybe you need to re-insert your card”.

I hesitated for a moment and as I did so two other men came up and stood behind the first man. I was not thinking too clearly and nearly put my card back into the machine but then said *“This is crazy and I must go”*. Strangely I had no fear.

Amazingly, nobody stopped me going down the steps. However, as I was climbing into the car I heard one of the other two men say quiet loudly in English to the man I had spoken with **“What is your problem?”**

Clearly, the two men could not understand why the first man had not taken my money and wallet and probably also my phone and car. Certainly it was amazing. What stopped him?

I am convinced he was stopped by a supernatural presence. Did he see an angel? This was miraculous.

I pray that this encounter will remain in his mind and lead him to a life changing encounter with God.

Aortic ruptures in Ostriches

One of my research topics was a study of wild ostrich nutrition and how to adapt this to feeding of domesticated ostriches. The research led to my formulation of a very successful range of ostrich feeds sold under the name VOLOS. However, quite early in the process of determining optimal levels of nutrients in the feeds, I found cases of Aortic Rupture in young growing ostriches. **This condition is when the aortic artery at the top of the heart suddenly bursts causing almost instant death.**

As it happened, while I was thinking around this problem, I went with Anna to a doctor appointment. While in the waiting room I glanced at the pile of journals lying there, including travel magazines and National geographic. As I lifted them up I saw an article with information on pig

farming. It seemed out of place amongst the other journals. I was not really interested in pig farming but opened it up. Almost immediately I saw a **brief article on aortic rupture in pigs** and the comment that this can be due to insufficient copper in their diet.

I immediately realised that I needed to look carefully at optimum levels of copper in ostrich diets. I noted that pigs need much higher levels than poultry. Literature on ostrich nutrition suggested the same level of copper as for poultry but I decided to try raising copper levels in my ostrich feeds. This had the desired effect of totally eliminating aortic rupture in ostriches.

So, this fortunate “co-incidence” was not a co-incidence. **It was another example of supernaturally being in the right place at the right time.** It also demonstrated that God’s miracles often relate to practical situations in our lives.

My poisoned coffee event in Oudtshoorn

During my time in Rhodesia I researched wild ostriches and together with my first wife Claire, we started the first ostrich farm in that country. In the process of research, I found that the genetics of Rhodesian ostriches was different to that of the ostriches farmed in Oudtshoorn South Africa. They grew faster and to a larger size and a good slaughter weight could be achieved by nine months of age, compared with the normal slaughter age at that time in South Africa being 12 to 14 months.

When we left Rhodesia (by then Zimbabwe) in 1983 and I became employed by the South African Department of Agriculture, I discovered, when I shared my experience of ostrich farming and how, with optimal nutrition, even the South African birds could be slaughtered by nine to ten months of age, this met with considerable opposition from vested interests.

At that time the Ostrich Industry was totally controlled by the Klein Karoo Co-operative. It had been granted, by act of parliament, exclusive right to trade in ostrich leather and other ostrich related products like feathers. They also benefitted from the manufacture and sale of ostrich feeds and they ran the only ostrich leather tannery.

I did not realise the extent of this opposition to my information until I attended a gathering of ostrich farmers in Oudtshoorn. At that meeting I shared how I had recently raised South African ostriches to slaughter weight by nine months of age. After a session where papers on ostrich related topics were presented by various local and international researchers, we were invited to a buffet supper.

Towards the end of the evening someone came up to me and asked if he could bring me some coffee. I said that would be nice although I wondered why I was offered this coffee by someone I did not personally know and still cannot picture in my mind. However, when I sipped the coffee it had an unusual flavour. I took only one or two small sips and then put the cup down.

Almost immediately after this my veterinarian friend Dr Bob Keffen and I left and started walking the short distance to our hotel. Suddenly I had a sharp pain in my chest that caused me to stop. Bob asked what was wrong but I said it was probably nothing serious. **However, every few minutes it was like I was having an exceptionally hard heartbeat.**

All that night I had repeated missed heart beats and intense heart beats. By morning it was less intense but the whole of the next day I knew my heart was performing strangely, like never before. As a precaution a few days later I consulted my heart specialist uncle Dr John Winteler in Cape Town. He conducted an ECG and made other tests and detected no sign of any heart abnormality. **I believe that I was poisoned. But “My times are in his hands”.**

Three FREE visits to Australia

My two daughters, Sarah and Nancy, both moved to Australia and both are now married to Australians. We wanted to visit them but there were financial restraints. However, my involvement with the ostrich industry had become widely known internationally and this led to a very significant visit from two ostrich farmers from New Zealand.

I was at the ostrich research farm run by Meadow Feeds just outside Malmesbury. The New Zealanders had only recently started farming ostriches and were in South Africa to learn. I showed them around and answered their questions as best that I could.

Towards the end of their visit they asked if I could come to New Zealand to advise them and also conduct a series of seminars for other prospective farmers. I answered that maybe this could be arranged. They then asked what I would charge. **At this point I am sure I received supernatural wisdom.**

I replied that if I came to New Zealand I would like my wife to come with because on our way back we could stop over in Australia and visit with my daughters. They consulted together for a moment and then said *“How does it sound if we pay two return airfares and cover all your expenses while in New Zealand?”* This was a generosity I had not expected, but in my mind I said *“Thank you Lord. That is wonderful”*.

We travelled to New Zealand and were enthusiastically welcomed. Apparently my liberally illustrated seminars covering all aspects of ostrich farming were well received because over the following two years **we were invited again on two more occasions, all expenses paid!**

Farming with ostriches in a cold and wet climate meant inventing new management skills, like giving young ostriches raincoats! These were made of waterproof material with a warm inner lining. The wings were put through holes in the raincoats.

This contact with New Zealand also led to a business arrangement whereby salted ostrich leather was sent to us in South Africa, to be tanned. This was because there was no suitable tannery for ostrich leather in New Zealand.



It is leather that requires very specific tanning conditions.

Three paid visits to family in Australia! **That was another miracle.**

Picture above our bed in Australia

As already mentioned, I and Anna visited my two daughters in Australia. On one occasion this included staying in a bed and breakfast accommodation for three nights. Our bed had a large picture in a heavy frame just above the headboard.

I felt uneasy about this picture. I took it down before we slept and placed it on the floor against the wall. The next morning room service put the picture back while we were away visiting places with my daughters.

However, when we returned, we saw that **the picture had fallen off the wall and onto the bed pillows.** This showed me that it was definitely the right move to have taken the picture down before sleeping there on that first night.

Our conclusion was that **we had been supernaturally protected** by me being prompted to remove the picture. This was another situation where I believe God directs outcomes by influencing the thoughts in our minds. We are tempted to think it is our reasoning but actually God guided us.

Three year old child on the road

Soon after Anna and I were married, we decided to drive up Bain's Kloof Pass in the mountains near Wellington, to stop and look over the spectacular view. As we were driving out of town, we passed a small boy standing beside the road. He looked about three years old and had a bewildered look on his face. We stopped and reversed to where he was. I picked him up and asked where he came from. He only pointed to a long driveway so we drove up this driveway to a house where we could see other small children behind a fence.

I caught the attention of an adult and asked if they knew this boy. I could see a look of shock on her face as she asked "*Where did you find him?*" Apparently he had somehow got out of the enclosure he was meant to be in. This was obviously embarrassing and no doubt led to changes to prevent a repeat of this potential problem.

Incidents like this are, in my book, **clear miracles of timing**. Being in the right place at the right time.

Qatar Ostrich Farm and COVID-19 lockdown

In early 2018 I received an email from Dr Abdulla Subaey who lives in the Middle East country of Qatar. He had visited the main ostrich farming area of South Africa, hoping to find information on ostrich farming. He received very little help but someone mentioned my "Jarvis Ostrich Manual". This led him to believe that I could be a good contact and so he asked if we could meet in Cape Town.

Abdulla booked himself in at a hotel in the Cape Town water front. We then spent four days between 10 and 13 September talking about how his vision could be implemented. I also took him on a visit to Cape Point and up Table Mountain in the cable car. We had a relaxed and very pleasant time together.

Abdulla is an eye specialist trained in Germany but living in Qatar. He confided that for several years he had the desire to set up an ostrich

farm in Qatar and this had recently been strongly motivated by the desire to set it up in time for the FIFA World Cup that would be located in Qatar and take place from 20th November to 18th December 2022.

I undertook to supply the plans for the farm and arrange for importation of adult ostriches from Australia. There were a lot of details to work out, such as where to source the required ostriches, how to provide the correct nutrition and where to locate the farm.

I arranged with Michael Hastings, director of Hastings Ostrich Farms in Australia to reserve a whole plane load of ostriches. Qatar Airways had a state of the art livestock transportation aircraft. In the meantime Abdulla located a suitable place for the farm and investigated the practicalities of sourcing required infrastructure within Qatar.

For various reasons the preparations continued into early 2020. The arrangement was that the ostriches would only be flown in once the farm infrastructure was in place. Then, I would visit Qatar to determine if everything was in order, before flying with Abdulla to Australia.

Once the ostriches were in Qatar I would spend one week each month in Qatar to train farm personnel and insure the farm ran as planned.

There was a lot of back and forth correspondence between us and his agent and I always sent my emails from my business email address mjarvis@iafrica.com. However, when answering an enquiry from Abdulla's agent in January 2020, I accidentally sent my reply from my mike@factandfaith.co.za address.

I then received no further correspondence and no replies to my enquiries. I suspect that the problem was connected to my accidental use of the fact and faith email.

At first I was very disappointed but then the COVID-19 pandemic struck the world in February 2020. South Africa and most other countries declared a lockdown and almost total ban on flights. Many

South Africans found themselves unable to return back from wherever they were in the world. Some could not return for many months.

In other words, the apparent cancelation of my involvement in a Qatar ostrich farm was such a blessing. If the plans had gone ahead I would probably have found myself blocked from returning to South Africa. This would have been disastrous for various reasons, not least because Anna's health required me to be in South Africa. I had made plans for someone to care for her for one week each month if I was to be in Qatar one week in every month, but to be away for months would have been a nightmare scenario.

I realise that God arranged this miracle of blocking the Qatar project just before the COVID-19 pandemic with its international lockdowns was about to occur. How did God organise this miracle of timing? This was another case of influencing my decisions, without my realising that I was being influenced. In other words, my 'accidentally' sending Abdulla an email from my mike@factandfaith.co.za address was not a mistake. It was part of God's plan.

I believe that this "accidental" use of my fact and faith email address led Abdulla to cancel the project because I presume he now thought my involvement in his ostrich project was a "front" for Christian evangelism.

Some people may say that God does not interfere with our Free Will choices, but in the light of nearly all of the miracles I was blessed to experience, **it is clear to me that he does at times direct our thoughts** to make decisions that fit into his overall plans for our lives.

Giving lifts to people

Normally I refrain from giving lifts to people who I pass on the roads, especially if I had Anna or children with me. However, on at least five occasions I sensed that I had to offer a lift.

For instance, when driving from Malmesbury to Wellington I passed a woman standing beside the road with a small baby in her arms. I passed her but after a short distance turned back because I sensed God wanted me to do so. The woman thanked me and said she had been waiting there for a considerable time hoping for a passing taxi or other motorist to stop. She had prayed for God please to help her, just before I stopped.

I was blessed because I realised I did the right thing. I was also blessed by her when I dropped her off at her sister's house because she prayed a blessing over me.

I often drove between Malmesbury and Wellington because the feed company who manufactured my range of ostrich feeds had an ostrich research farm near that town.

On another occasion I passed a family group walking along the road with bags on their backs and two small children. When I stopped I saw that it was a middle aged couple plus a younger couple with the two small children. I found out that they had left a farm near Malmesbury because the farmer had told them to leave. They said they were walking to Worcester where they had relatives on another farm.

Their luggage filled my boot and they filled the car. I drove them to my house in Wellington to show Anna and ask her advice. The younger lady said they knew the farmer near Worcester and he would certainly take them in. She had the farmer's telephone number and so Anna phoned him and established that he would accept the family.

The distance from Malmesbury to Worcester is just over 100 km and this family were intending to walk the whole way. They did not

have money for transport. As I drove them through Du Toit's kloof tunnel and onwards to their destination, I realised that God had timed my journey from Malmesbury, in order to show me how difficult life was for families like this one.

It was also another case of answered prayer. The lady who gave Anna the farmer's telephone number told her that she just knew they would never be able to walk that distance and that she had prayed to God for a miracle, knowing that few people would stop to pick up a whole car full of people and possessions.

This event also showed me the lack of compassion shown by some farmers like the one who threw this family off the farm. Fortunately, by far the majority of farmers are not like that.

This was another miracle of timing and a miracle of answered prayer on the part of the family.

Woman crossing N1 highway at rush hour

The N1 highway from Cape Town consists of three traffic lanes in both directions as it passes through Panorama, Tygerberg and Bellville. One afternoon, as I was leaving Cape Town and approached the off-ramp to Panorama, I saw a woman climb down the road embankment, clearly intended trying to cross the road. As it happened there must have been a traffic problem further up the highway because traffic in all outbound lanes came to a standstill.

I was in the fast lane and so drew off to the right into the yellow marked area and put on my car hazard lights. I saw the woman cross the road just behind where I had stopped and so I got out and asked her; *"Lady where are you going?"* She said she needed to cross the road to go to the shopping mall to buy a drain cleaning rubber plunger. I told her; *"You see the traffic on the inbound three lanes is full of fast moving cars. There is no way you can cross over. If you trust me get into my car and I will find a way to get you to the shops."*

She climbed in and as it happened the traffic on the outward bound lanes were still at a standstill. I think people in other cars had been watching these developments because they allowed me to cross over the three lanes so that I could reach the Panorama off-ramp. We drove to the mall and she said she knew where to buy what she needed. I waited for her return. Now we faced a problem because she could not remember which road to take to get home.

I drove back over the highway and turned left into Panorama road in the hope that she might recognise the right road. I drove slowly down and at each intersection I asked if she recognised the road. When reaching the third road off to the left she seemed to recognise it. Then she recognised the first left again and higher up the street indicated that we were at the right house. Apparently she lived in a flat attached to her daughter and son in laws accommodation. This woman was suffering from a degree of dementia. **Her family were amazed at what had taken place. I was convinced that this was another God organised event. A “be in the right place at the right time” event.**

Horses crossing road

One day as I was heading along the road from Wellington to join the N1 highway to Cape Town, I had a near miss with five horses. As I was passing a farm I saw these horses galloping down a farm road towards the vehicle road. I was not concerned because I knew there was a gate on the farm road and I presumed the horses would be prevented reaching the road.

However, when I was nearly passing the farm road entrance I realised the gate was open and the horses rushed across the road at a gallop. I had to apply brakes but a large truck was coming in the other direction and the horses crossed just in time to avoid collision with the truck. Was it a lucky chance or supernatural intervention? **By now you will know that I called it a miracle.**

Anna's death

My wife Anna developed some health problems that progressively made it difficult to walk and care for herself. Fortunately, by this stage in my life I was working from home and could provide the necessary care.

Anna had a very vital faith and relationship with Jesus. She wanted to go and be released from her pains. The one day when she fell, I prayed; *“Lord, if it is your time to take Anna then please allow her to go peacefully in her sleep.”* **My prayer was answered.** She woke up the next morning. I asked if she wanted something to eat. She took one spoon of yogurt and then laid back on the bed. She slept soundly for the whole day but I could see that life was fading.

I phoned her nearest granddaughter Samantha and she arrived 10 minutes before Anna left us, peacefully and without waking. It was at sunset on the 7th of July 2022. Some people pointed out to me the significance of numbers in the Bible. Three 7's can be associated with completeness. She died at 7 pm on the 7th day of the 7th month! She completed a full and very fruitful life during which she greatly blessed me and many other people.

Adjusting to an empty house

My jogging fall and meeting CJ Niemandt

I now found my life became filled up with new priorities that centred mainly on developing my www.factandfaith.co.za webpage and writing books. However, for forty years I had the habit of jogging at least three times a week and in Wellington on a circuit of eight kilometres from my house and round a road called the Horse Shoe.

One afternoon I was nearly back home and was crossing an intersection when I tripped and fell face down onto the road. I sustained a big cut on my forehead. A car had stopped to allow me to cross. In it was CJ Niemandt and he picked me up, took me home and then to my doctor who lived next door.

This was the beginning of a friendship that proved beneficial to me and to CJ. I discovered that CJ was, amongst other things, a handyman and I used his abilities on a number of occasions, including working on my car and even changing the timing belt on my Toyota Corolla. I was also able to help CJ and the love in his life in a number of ways. I got to know him and Cindy well.

In other words, **I am totally convinced that my falling in front of CJ's car was a God appointment.** The right people at the same place at the right time.

Henrico Delport spiritual support

Another God appointment was meeting Henrico and Ria Delport. I found that Henrico and I had similar interests in politics and other things but also in our approach to Christianity. We decided to meet for an hour once a week. This proved to be a big blessing spiritually as we spent time discussing and praying for various needs that came across our paths.

Help with moving accommodation

I first met Sanet while I was jogging up a steep incline. She came alongside on her bicycle. She said it was good to see someone with grey hair still jogging. I answered that I was grateful and it was made possible by the grace of God.

One day, a couple of years later, after Anna had died, Sanet turned up at my door and wanted to know about my Fact and Faith Publications. We had a good chat. Soon after this I decided to sell my house and move to a smaller house on the same property. My arrangement with an estate agent was that the new owners must allow me to stay in the smaller house for at least a year.

In late 2024 the house was sold. However, my house had much furniture and other things that I had inherited from family. I realised

that even to move to another house on the same property would not be easy, especially if I needed to complete the move before the new owners took possession.

Sanet offered to help me move and she organised two people to help her. I soon realised that I would not have managed to move in time without her help. This was to me another God appointment.

After the move was completed, Sanet continued to help me with cooking once a week and helping in other practical ways. Fortunately I was also able to help her in practical ways. Sanet has a strong Christian faith and so our meeting proved to be a God appointment for her as well as for me.

Sanet also helped motivate me to continue my exercise programme. When I was not jogging she accompanied me on very fast walks around five or eight km circuits.

Buying honey leads to the miraculous

In early 2025 I wanted to buy some honey and Henrico told me about a shop where he obtained his honey. I went to that small shop and as I was paying the sales lady a thought came to me saying “*this lady is a follower of Jesus*”.

The next time I went for honey more words came to my mind “*The joy of the Lord is my strength*”. I then spoke them out aloud. She looked at me with surprise and told me that she had just been thinking around that passage in the Bible. On the next visit I again had words in my mind. I spoke them out and again she told me that a close friend had the day before given her those same words from the Bible.

Before I was planning to visit the shop again I experienced what I can best describe as an awake vision. **It was like a video playing out in my mind.** I saw the honey shop lady (Andriëtte) walking along a foot path in the open countryside. She came to the bank of a wide and fast flowing river and wanted to cross over because on the opposite bank

was a pole with a sign saying “My future in God”.

As she was wondering how to cross the river suddenly a tall man stood beside her and said **“If you can trust me I can take you across”**. You just have to lie on my back holding my shoulders”. She trusted him and he took her across. As she stood up she marvelled that her dress was not even wet. **She turned to thank him but he had disappeared.**

When I went to the shop I was hesitant to tell her my vision, but still decided to do so. She was amazed because it complimented a Bible scripture that a lady friend had given her, namely *“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you (Isaiah 43: 2)*. This was a real encouragement for her because she was facing a major personal challenge.

To my initial surprise, I have more and more often been receiving mental pictures, together with the thought that I should share them with specific people that came to my mind. Frequently these pictures have proved to be meaningful to the people I share them with. The mental pictures have become increasingly meaningful over time and so I am convinced that this is **another evidence of a supernatural miracle from God.**

The honey shop lady then asked me where I went to church. I explained that I met with a very small group in a house. A few weeks later she visited this group and after the meeting I asked her if she would mind telling me how she became a follower of Jesus.

It turned out that she had for many years been very involved in various pursuits after spiritual meaning but without fulfilment. She then started praying to Jesus and soon after that she experienced a powerful presence of God.

She was driving towards a venue where she was to be a key subject in a video on a New Age theme. **Suddenly, as she was driving alone, she was impacted by a powerful presence that she knew must be God.**

She found she could not drive but pulled off the road. During a period of time by the roadside, she found her views and convictions about life changed. She then drove on to the venue and told the people that she could no longer take part.

As she was driving back she noticed the beautiful sunset and so stopped to take a video. She said; *“I will never forget that day. It was on the 7th July 2022”*. I said; *“Wow, that was exactly the time, the day and year that my Anna died!”*



Anna

While this video was being filmed, the background music in the car was a song in Hebrew from Psalm 133. It says how pleasant it is when brothers and sisters live together in unity. Then God bestows his blessing “even life for evermore”. This was like a message to me straight from Heaven saying “Anna has at this moment entered her ‘Life for Evermore’”!

Clearly, it was amazing that I had met someone who was “powerfully born again spiritually” on the same day that my wife died. I realised that this was **another God appointment** and I decided to be open to help her in any way I could.

As a result, over the following year, I was able to be of help in various ways. My conclusion was that God knew I would be blessed by the video that she had made but I also realised that God wanted me to help this lady in some way. He had revealed this to me through these amazing events.

Why me?

Why me? I often asked myself why I was seeing and experiencing these amazing events and why it seemed that I was being supernaturally protected. I believed it was partly because I really did have a great desire to discover God in my own experience. Even in those student days, with all my intellectual doubts, I really wanted to experience the reality of God. That desire led me to my rugby field prayer, as described earlier.

From reflecting on these miraculous events, it is clear to me that God works most dramatically in situations where we are totally outside our control. In this way we are forced to acknowledge his involvement and give him due credit. In addition, each time these events occur, if we show our gratitude and acknowledge that it was God organised then it is much more likely that similar events will occur again.

I also believe that one reason I was permitted to experience these events and survive them, was because it was **part of my appointed destiny** to share these events and direct people to seek for the reality of God in their own lives.

Personal testimonies to the reality of God are more powerful than presentations of intellectual reasoning. For instance, I can give a detailed talk on the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This can be an intellectually convincing presentation. However, a much more powerful and long lasting conviction of his resurrection comes from experiencing his supernatural reality in our personal life experiences.

I also realise that these events enabled me to work on my initial questions relating to reconciling scientific discoveries with belief in God and in Jesus Christ. It took many years before I reached a time when I could develop a webpage www.factandfaith.co.za and write books, with a desire to help other people to resolve their intellectual doubts and questions.

My personal experiences helped me to understand how God has acted throughout cosmic history, and throughout the evolution of this vast universe. I conclude, from my personal experiences of God, that it is reasonable to describe this God as the one who is in all things and aware of all things, even the minute details, and who acts within his creation. I am convinced that this cosmic super-mind, that we call God, is in fact intimately aware of every minute event in this entire Universe and he interacts with these events. My personal life experiences are just one tiny part of demonstrating this reality.

It became clear to me that the miraculous situations I was allowed to experience could only have been possible if God is aware of the tiny details of his creation. Like Jesus said, “*Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will (knowledge) of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered* (Matthew 10: 29-30 NIV translation).

Do we have to live perfectly moral and godly lives before God performs miracles? **From my own experience I can say no.** In Rhodesia we did not go to church and my own actions were sometimes not right, according to the standards of morality revealed in the Bible. This has led me to realise that God plans ahead and knows in advance how we will make decisions.

If he sees in advance that we will reach a time in our lives when we will be willing to surrender totally and open our lives in every part to him, then he continues to work in our lives, guiding us towards the place and time when we will surrender to his best plans for us.

I love the words of the apostle Paul when he wrote from his own experiences and from a study of the scriptures, the following: “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he*

predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified (Romans 8: 28-30).

In the light of my own life experiences, I interpret these words to mean the following:

Because God operates outside of the restrictions of time, he can see clearly into our futures. As he looks at your life and mine, even before we were born, he can see that we will, at some point in our lives, invite God to take over control of our lives, then he guides our lives towards that destiny.

I am excited that scientific discoveries in Quantum Mechanics can help us to at least partly understand how God can be aware of all things simultaneously and in great detail. This is because he exists outside of the limitations of time, as we experience time.

Raymond Pearson miracle

God has a perfect plan for every life but sadly not everyone desires God's plan. It is human nature to want to be in control of our own lives but God wants each of us to come to a place of surrender. **This is because he desires the best for us.** He desires to lead us into Eternal Life. He desires to enable us to be a blessing to people we meet. He desires to bring us to love him out of gratitude for what he has done for us on Calvary's cross. He desires to fill us with his Holy Spirit so that we can be empowered to love others around us.

It is wonderful when young people desire God and seek for him. They can then have a life before them that impacts many other people positively. But, even if we have lived a life outside of the best plan that God had for our lives, **it is never too late for us to surrender.**

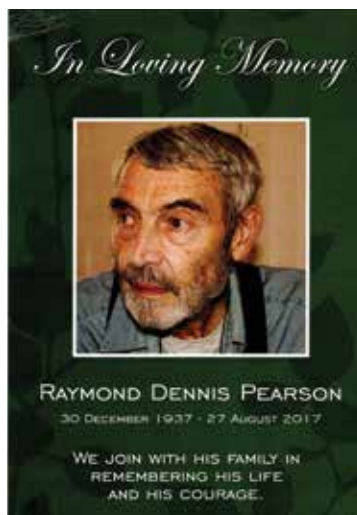
As an example of my last point. I visited Raymond Pearson, who was suffering from terminal cancer of the lung. He and his family told me that he was a **very vocal atheist.**

After a couple of visits he thanked me for visiting him but asked me not to try to convert him. However, over the course of a couple of months that I visited him most days, I just shared on photography, politics and other subjects of mutual interest but I also shared with him some of my life experiences. I slowly saw him change and become more open to seeking for reality.

One day he asked me; *“Mike why do you keep on visiting me?”* I said; *“Ray, it is partly because I enjoy sharing information on photography and other things, but to be honest, I visit you mainly because you think this life is the end but I know it is not the end. I think it would be such a blessing if you could come to accept the reality of God and that your existence does not end here.”*

Raymond did not respond verbally. However, some weeks later another Christian man, Wallace Loedolff visited Raymond and asked him if he was ready to invite Jesus into his life. I don't know in detail what discussion happened between them, but when I visited him the next day he said; *“Mike I have something to tell you. I have become a Christian.”* He then apologised that he had made this decision through the mediation of the other man. He said, *“It was actually your testimony that had opened up my heart.”* I assured him that the only important thing was that now he had found faith in God and in Jesus Christ. His becoming a Christian was met with amazement by everyone, including myself.

Wallace had led Raymond through what is known as the Repentance Prayer and had stuck a copy on the wall. I asked Raymond; *“Have you gone through this prayer and meant it all?”* He said yes and then read



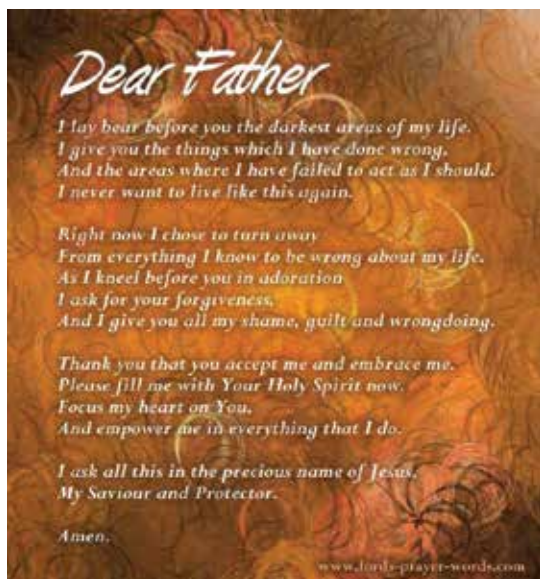
it to me line by line. I can't recall the exact wording but here is an example with similar wording.

Raymond now asked me to pray with him before I left him after the visit. He also asked me to find him some prayers to say. I realised that he probably thought he needed to read a prayer. However, after a couple of days, as he experienced

that I personally just prayed words that came to my mind, he asked me if he could pray. **His prayers were thank you prayers like;** *"Thank you God for bringing Mike here. Thank you God for forgiving me and giving me peace to face my end. Thank you, thank you, thank you God."* As I think of Raymond and how he changed dramatically over his last few weeks of life, **it nearly brings tears to my eyes.**

Over the next few weeks, after his "spiritual 'Born Again' experience", I saw how Raymond changed. His brother and sister travelled down from up country to visit him. They were amazed how their vocally atheistic brother had changed. He now had peace to face his end but also a reality within him that prompted him to pray. They were always *"thank you God"* prayers. **All his previous intellectual reasons for atheism had disappeared!**

You may ask if God could still use his life, even at the end of his journey? The answer is "Yes". I use his life as an example of what God can do through sharing of real life testimonies rather than theological



sermons. He became a powerful witness to his family of the mercy and grace of God and a witness to the old age home staff and many others as I continue to share his story.

On one occasion towards the end of his life, he became delirious and agitated and not responsive towards us. I stood next to him with one of the nurses. I prayed aloud something like the following; *“Raymond, according to the words of Jesus, all your past sins have been forgiven. You are now a new creation. You do not fear death anymore because Jesus has given you Eternal Life. So now I pray that God’s Spirit will give you peace in your heart and mind.”* As I prayed Raymond became calm and no longer delirious. That was to me another testimony to the fact that Raymond now had become a new person through his opening up his heart to God, to Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

I was asked to conduct his funeral at the old age home where he was staying. It was a time of celebration and amazement at how he had changed from a vocal atheist to vocal Christian. **His testimony lives on because I tell his story quite often.**

KEYS to experiencing God's miracles

I will try to summarise in point form the KEYS, as I understand them, to experiencing God's miracles in our lives and support these points with Bible references.

- **Desire to discover the reality of God in your personal experience.**

Hebrews 11:6: *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

God promises to reveal himself to us if we are seeking for him with all of our heart. We read how God told Jeremiah; ***“You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart”*** (Jeremiah 29:13).

Jesus said: *“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him”* (John 14:23).

Jesus said: *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened”* (Matthew 7: 7-8). *The emphasis here is continuation of seeking, continuation of knocking and continuation of asking.*

Possibly the most powerful scripture on seeking is:

My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1-6)

Prayer of Salvation

Heavenly Father, I realize that I am a sinner and have broken Your laws. I understand that my sin has separated me from You. I am sorry and I ask You to forgive me. I accept the fact that Your Son Jesus Christ died for me, was resurrected, and is alive today and hears my prayers. I now open my heart's door and invite Jesus in to become my Lord and my Savior. I give Him control and ask that He would rule and reign in my heart so that His perfect will would be accomplished in my life.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

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- **Have a teachable spirit**

Psalm 25:9: *He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.*

Other scriptures emphasise humility. A teachable heart acknowledges its own limitations and recognises God as the ultimate source of truth.

A teachable heart accepts correction, and does not shut out things that might initially seem to conflict with our views.

My father emphasised to me *“Do not be afraid of knowledge. Do not shut out from your mind facts that initially may seem to conflict with your views. Be sure, he said, in the end all truths will be reconcilable. But that reconciliation may require you to re-examine your interpretation of the facts and in doing so, discover a broader, deeper and more satisfying understanding.”*

- **Be prepared to step out of our “comfort zones”**

The apostle Paul discovered that he experienced his greatest miracles when he was ‘Out of his depth’. In other words, when he had no way of solving a situation himself, like when he was cast into prison or shipwrecked. He experienced how God turned these difficult situations into victories.

He wrote: *Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10).* His strength came from the reality of God’s Holy Spirit in his life.

Paul had discovered that miracles happened when he was out of his comfort zones and without ability to resolve situations through his own wisdom.

- **Thank God for every “co-incidence” because nothing is by chance**

It is possible to increase the frequency of experiencing miracles by expecting them in everyday situations like needing to find a parking space close to where you have to go. I have found that, if we vocalise our need like “*Lord I really need a parking space*”. So often I then find a parking close to the desired place. I now vocalise a “*Thank you Lord for the parking*”.

As we turn every day needs and events into little prayers, we find our days turn into little miracles. We discover a process of bringing God into every aspect of our lives.

My Caleb years

Shortly after Anna died, I was reading the Bible account of when the Israelites were entering the Promised Land of Canaan, especially in relation to Caleb (Joshua 14). About 40 years previously Caleb was one of the spies that Moses sent into the land that God had promised to give to the Israelites. However, only Caleb and Joshua came back with a positive report. The others said that the inhabitants of that land were giants and told Moses that it was too dangerous to fight them.

God then told the Israelites that they would therefore wander in the wilderness for 40 years until all of that generation had died. Only Caleb and Joshua would survive to enter the Promised Land.

Moses had said to Caleb “*The land on which your feet have walked will be your inheritance and that of your children for ever, because you have followed the Lord my God wholeheartedly.*” Now Caleb reminded Joshua about this promise and said; “*So here am I today, eighty-five years old! I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out: I’m just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then.*”

So Caleb was given the hill country that contained giants. **He still had to conquer his inheritance!** As I was reading this I was challenged

to ask God for my own inheritance of “hill country containing giants to conquer”. By the grace of God I am still able to jog eight km as I turn 84. In March 2026 I moved to a literal hill country in KwaZulu-Natal, to stay with my son David and family. I still have giants I want to overcome through the empowering of God.

The biggest “giant” I want to overcome during my Caleb years, is to find ways of greatly increasing exposure of my webpage and my articles and books, so as to help seekers after truth to reconcile belief in God without rejecting the major discoveries of our scientific age.

I also pray that “Intellectual giants of unbelief” will be challenged and defeated in the hearts and minds of many agnostics and atheists. These giants can be partly humbled through intellectual reasoning, but my experience with Raymond Pearson convinced me that **personal testimonies to the reality of God are the most powerful motivation for change.**

I believe that my own “80 years of miracles” will be used by God to break down intellectual barriers to belief, to encourage humility and lead other searchers after reality to discover the exciting life that awaits those who are prepared to “let go and let God have his wonderful way”.

It is such a wonderful blessing to know that God exists and Jesus exists. **His resurrection can be affirmed not only through intellectual reasoning but also through personal experiences of the Holy Spirit working miracles in the lives of those who seek for him with a passion.**

Acknowledgments

I am so grateful to many who knowingly or unknowingly contributed to my journey through life. Many of these people I may never have met but they became part of the web of events that God used while organising miracles in my life.

I was privileged to have parents who were examples of devotion to God and who expressed their gratitude to him through numerous sacrificial acts of service to those they met. My father had a far more brilliant mind than I but remained humble. Towards the end of his life he lectured anatomy to medical students at Cape Town Medical school. Many of his students remember his final lecture to those who graduated as doctors.

He drew a small circle on the blackboard. This, he said represents all the knowledge you have accumulated during six years of training. He then drew a bigger circle around the small one. This, he said represents the information you do not know but you know where to find it. Then he drew an even bigger circle around the others. This represents the massive amount of information that you do not know that you do not know. Therefore, remain humble and open to new ideas and information.

My training in science has taught me the same basic truth, namely that all the amazing discoveries that have been made over the past century are only a tiny fraction of total reality. Every major discovery reveals how much we still do not understand. Therefore, I try to remain humble and teachable in all aspects of my life.

I have learnt how important it is to be open to accepting and thinking around new information that we are exposed to and not immediately blocking from our minds things that initially may seem to conflict with our long held views. Many of those views were probably inherited from where we were born and the views held by parents and associates.

I am also grateful for three very supportive sisters who have also gone through life with strong faith in Jesus, in spite of excelling academically and cousins who have maintained their faith primarily because their parents have been good examples of integrity and practical demonstrations of caring, motivated by their faith.

Above all else, I thank God for hearing my prayer to personally experience his reality and in doing so to enable me to face intellectual questions without fear, knowing that in the end all aspects of reality can be reconciled.

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