

# My personal journey of discovery

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In 1960 my parents moved from Nairobi in Kenya to Cape Town, and I enrolled at the University of Cape Town, with Zoology and Botany being major subjects. I became increasingly fascinated with Zoology and in particular with the origins of life and with evolution. At the same time, I experienced severe mental agonies, because my Christian upbringing had led me to understand that evolutionary processes could not be reconciled with the Bible.

At first, much of my time was spent trying to find fault in what I was being taught about origins and evolution. However, by my second year I was fully convinced that some sort of evolutionary processes were involved in the development of our planet and the Universe. At the same time, I was greatly privileged to meet some people who described real-life situations where events strongly suggested intervention in human affairs by a 'supernatural' being.

Thus, **I was torn between my sincere desire to follow truth in my Zoological studies, and my real desire to retain a higher meaning to life.** At this stage I wrote a few poems that perhaps show my mental conflicts. For instance:

I trace the misty centuries all past,  
and see the actors now for ever gone.  
as then I learn how man emerged from dust,  
of how our fathers lived in savagery scarce lost.  
These facts must bring my mind to certain doubt,  
and make me feel I am just naught but dust.  
For can there be a nature in each man,  
that differs from the common lot of life around?

Or again:

This mortal dust that vainly dwells,  
that passes on as mist does pass at dawn.  
Time marches by, and gone is mortal man,  
from dust he came and thus he must return.  
How can such folly reach on high,  
how touch and feel the infinite or real?  
Can Spirit with frail dust unite in one,  
or mortal reach to the immortal light?

During my time at University I was still very involved in student Christian activities. I largely kept my doubts and questions to myself. I remember on one occasion going out alone under a starry sky with a full moon overhead. Here I spoke out loud, "God, if you are really out there, and if you really know that I am honestly searching for truth, please send me an angel to speak to me, then I will really know that you are there". However, nothing unusual happened right then.

After graduating with a PhD. in Zoology, and getting married, I was employed in various wildlife research projects in South Africa. However, in 1975 we immigrated to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Here I was employed as Ornithologist with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Management. However, the country was being torn apart by a bush war that intensified each year and I had to carry a rifle wherever my research projects took me.

Within six months of arrival in Rhodesia, I was enrolled into the military. In my unit we had to do military service for periods of about three weeks at a time and then return to our civilian duties. The periods of military duty steadily increased and by 1978 I was spending about half of the year on military duty. These periods of duty turned out to be my first real personal experience of the supernatural.

I was in a unit called PR 4 connected to the police reserve. It was thought that our exposure to real battle situations would be unlikely, because we were not part of the combat army. However, **a series of events took place that really changed my whole outlook on how God works in human situations.** I will describe these in some detail, hopefully to help you enter into the situation more realistically. There were many other times when I felt that events were somewhat unusual, and where apparent co-incidences were rather frequent. However, the most memorable were as follows.

**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 soldiers (actually armed Department of Home Affairs personnel) who had received very little training. Our main responsibility was to supply four other fortified bases with supplies, and to do this we had to drive a considerable distance into Mount Darwin, collect supplies, and then drive along these dusty two-wheeler tracks through the bush.

On 9<sup>th</sup> June we received a radio call from one of the bases in our area called Muteravendi. The corporal in charge said he had a sick soldier who needed to be uplifted to Mount Darwin. Jerry and I decided to leave early the next morning, as it was already late afternoon and no travel was done at night because it was too dangerous. However, early in the morning we received a call from Mount Darwin that we must first go there to collect supplies needed urgently by another base. I tried to protest that we needed to first go and collect the sick soldier. However, I was overruled by senior rank.

By the time we returned from Mount Darwin it was already early afternoon. We organised two mine-proofed vehicles and planned to head towards the Muteravendi base and sleep there overnight. I had two soldiers with me and we drove in front, because I had travelled this road several times, whereas Jerry had only just arrived at the base. These roads had no signposts and you had to know your way by experience. Jerry followed in a mine proofed Landover, together with two soldiers.

I drove confidently down the dusty road until I came to the first fork. Here, without any conscious doubt as to my choice, I took the left fork. I only realised I had made a mistake when I saw a small dam on my right side and I immediately remembered that this should normally be on my left side. I was about to swallow my pride, and tell Jerry that I had taken the wrong turn, when I noticed that there was a vehicle track going along the dam wall and this would take me back to the correct road. So, not wanting to admit my mistake, I simply drove onto the dam wall. However, unknown to me there was a soft patch in the road and the right hand rear wheel sank in deeply. In fact the heavy armoured vehicle was in danger of rolling down into the dam.

We carefully climbed out and I apologised to Jerry for my mistake. He was very understanding and suggested that we should leave the soldiers to guard the stuck vehicle while he and I would drive back the few kilometres to our base. At base we had a Bedford truck that we could use to pull the stuck vehicle back out of the sand.

I jumped into the mine-proofed land rover next to Jerry and he then attempted to put the vehicle into first gear. It was one of those Land rovers with a ball at the base of the gear stick. As he tried to put it into gear the lever simply broke off flush with the ball.

When we got over our amazement, we tried to get the vehicle into gear with a screwdriver. However, there were no other tools and it turned out that both of us were totally ignorant of mechanics. No way could we get that vehicle into gear, so we now had two stuck vehicles.

I remember at this point saying to Jerry, "It looks like we are not meant to go to Muteravendi" We then decided that Jerry and two soldiers would walk back to base while the rest of us guarded the vehicles. After some time Jerry appeared with the Bedford truck. It was now approaching evening and we decided it was not a good idea to try to tow the vehicles back until the morning, because a night-time curfew was in operation. As we drove back into camp I heard an excited voice on the radio calling us and saying, "We are under attack". It was the corporal at the base that we had intended visiting.

It was now that I 'heard' a voice in my head saying very clearly to me "Your times are in my hands". I was quite shocked, because it seemed to me that this was probably a phrase out of the Bible. The full significance of this did not immediately strike me because I had to attend to the radio.

At first I was very disappointed, because I knew that all the troops on that base were new recruits and had very poor training. A couple of weeks earlier another base had come under fire and the troops just fired in all directions until they ran out of ammunition. The only reason they were not overrun was because the opposition forces apparently did not realise that they had no more ammunition. My real fear was a repeat of this situation. After some persuasion and shouting over the radio I managed to get the corporal to stop his men from firing and to just hold their position. Fortunately the opposition did not press home another attack that night.

In the morning we started down towards Muteravendi, to see what damage had been done. Another group of army came with us. About two kilometres from the Muteravendi base we found that a land mine had been placed in the left wheel track (I actually took a photograph). In the bushes to the right we found flattened grass where an ambush had been in wait. Apparently the ambush was expecting us to come to pick up the sick soldier. It was common for such information to filter out of camp to the opposition. When we did not appear the previous evening and it became so late that the ambush must have known that we would not be coming that day, they then decided to let off their frustration by firing at the base camp.

The ambush site was very well planned. The two-wheeled track ensured that the lead vehicle would hit the landmine. Both Jerry and I realised that we would have been in a very precarious position because of the mine, but also because the four troops with us were still very poorly trained and inexperienced and unpredictable. We had discovered this a few days earlier when we had them all out on a firing range. Some of the rifles did not fire because of poor maintenance and the safest place to be on that range appeared to be in front of the targets!

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

1. Clearly the opposition had known we intended to visit Muteravendi on the 10<sup>th</sup> June.
2. Our intention was delayed because of the urgent command to collect supplies from Mount Darwin.
3. We still tried to get to Muteravendi to collect the sick soldier.
4. Things went further wrong when I somehow got confused and took the left fork instead of the right. I got the one vehicle stuck on the dam wall.
5. We still tried to salvage our plan by driving back in the second vehicle.
6. This was further frustrated when the gear lever broke off in a most amazing way.
7. We still hoped to salvage the situation, but by now it was again too late to travel to Muteravendi. 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.**

That night, I looked through a Bible that I had with me and managed to find where those words in my mind had come. It was in Psalm 31: *“My times are in your hands”*. As I thought about this I was suddenly reminded of that prayer I prayed years before while a student “God, if you are really out there, and if you really know that I am honestly searching for truth, please send me an angel, then I will really know that you are there.”

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 one organising events for us. I then got quite 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. But God, 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, I remember my section Commander Alastair Kitto saying to me one day, "how come, whenever our section gets into an ambush or dangerous situation you seem to be there?" I actually 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. Here is another case:

**28 February 1978.** I was in charge of a group of five men, tasked with escorting commercial vehicles from Fort Victoria 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. We were a Police Reserve unit and normally we 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 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 to Renco mine 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 army base until an alternative vehicle became available.

Since we were immobilised, I asked the army lieutenant at Ungundu halt base if one of his chaps could instruct two of us in the use of MAG machine guns. This was duly done and I was one of the pupils. The other chaps with me were Wesley Chambers, Derrick Robinson, Daniel Rossouw and John Urie. If I remember correctly John Urie was the other pupil.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March, the Lieutenant took pity on us and volunteered to send one of his army trucks together with 6 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 not one person 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 us. I was on the back of one truck 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 the two 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 inches 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.

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.**

For instance;

1. 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.
2. Our further delay at Ungundu halt meant that we were given instruction in their use.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. The 'someone' had a detailed awareness of our personal situation.

All these delays and developments led to a failure of the ambush, because of the unexpected intensity of our return fire. Are all these circumstances pure chance? If it happens once we are tempted to say so. However, this was now the second time that **all the chaps with me said, "There was someone up there organising events"**.

**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 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 gratified 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 this suspicious spot we would stop and investigate while the convoy continued without stopping.

On this return trip I was driving, Dick Salt 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 very slow 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 the left side embankment. I started firing out of my window while driving in case there was 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 immediately to our left.

This flash was in fact a rifle grenade 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 an 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?

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

1. The mark on the road. Was there really a mark or did I 'see' something that was not actually there?
2. 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.
3. My rifle jamming, leading to me swerving at the precise moment that the grenade was fired at us.
2. The 'someone' had a detailed awareness of our personal situation.

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. **Another amazing event came to light when we got back to camp.** Don Mclean and Peter Haddon, from the lead vehicle 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 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.

Once again, all the chaps discussed the events over a beer and all agreed "someone out there was on our side today". But no one had a good reason as to why. However, it seemed that the 'someone' had again influenced human thought processes, leading to split second timing of events.

**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.

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 poison over the roosting birds. A survey the next morning would sometimes reveal several million dead Quelea. It was rather an unpleasant task, but at the time this was the only approved way of protecting crops from potentially disastrous damage.

On this occasion I flew to the Mid-Sabi irrigation scheme with Mike La Grange and 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.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 farmhouses. 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 they had forgotten to meet us.

Mike La Grange and I now drove to the riverbank and walked down the dry riverbed, between two parallel 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 firelight 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 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 certainly have returned fire.

**Once again, we saw how pinpoint timing of events led to us escaping a very nasty situation and almost certain loss of life.** Clearly, the 'someone' who was in overall control of the events, was aware of the minute details of my life and circumstance.

**Other Rhodesia adventures:** I have outlined some of the more dramatic Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) events that convinced me that God was, for some strange 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 we had been supernaturally protected.

**God at work in Belgium:** In 1988 I faced some dramatic events that necessitated my going to Brussels as part of a legal action. At the time I was employed by the South African Department of Agriculture. My goal in Belgium was to locate missing family members. This was a private goal financed by my family and there is no need to go into details. However, I needed to know if some people lived at a particular address in Brussels, and to determine this without myself being seen at that address.

When my sister heard I needed accommodation in Brussels, she contacted a friend who had been at school with her in Kenya, but now lived in Belgium. This friend said she was about to spend time with her mother in Germany and I was welcome to use her flat in Brussels. On arrival at the flat I discovered that it was situated in the very same street as the house I needed to watch. Furthermore, I could watch that house from the balcony of this flat! **For those of you who know the size of Brussels you will appreciate the odds against such an event being chance!**

During this time in Brussels I found I had to stay longer than planned. I was introduced to a small group of English speaking Christians who met informally in a school hall. I was asked by some of them why I was in Belgium and I told them it was in connection with a pending court case. However, I did not tell anyone of my real financial situation.

One family, the Ridings, put me up at a very low rent. However, I still realised that I would run out of money before my tasks were completed. After a few days, I asked the landlord what he did for a living. He bought old houses, renovated them and then resold them at a profit. I offered to help with renovations when not otherwise occupied. After a couple of days he told me that, if I could help him in this way, I could stay in the accommodation free of charge.

In spite of this generosity, my finances were again soon nearly used up and I was worried that I would have to cut short my stay before all the work was finished. One Sunday, as I sat in the school hall where the Christians met, a young German man came up and asked me how I was

getting on. I said all was fine, I just had to wait for events to happen. He then handed me an envelope and said God 'told' him to give this to me. I regret I cannot recall this man's name. If he reads this please do contact me. I would love to show my gratitude in some way.

When I got to my accommodation, I opened the letter and it contained 20,000 Belgian Francs. At that time this was a considerable amount of money. I used it sparingly on various essentials. For instance, I had to hire a vehicle for a few days to check out something in a small village outside Brussels. By the time I finally headed back to South Africa, on a previously purchased return air ticket, I still had a little of the Belgian money left over.

On arrival at Johannesburg on a Sunday, I realised I did not have a ticket to Cape Town. I went to the ticket desk and intended paying by cheque, since a salary had been deposited into my South African account in my absence. However, in those days banking was still not well automated and the ticket office told me that they could not accept a cheque for payment, and I did not have a credit card at that time. The man suggested I go to a bank that was open in the airport terminal. Here I encountered the same story. They could only cash a cheque up to R 100, which was far too little for the ticket.

I was looking for a solution to this problem when the teller asked if perhaps I had some foreign currency on me. I remembered the Belgian francs and when he changed these into Rands, together with the R100 cheque, it was just enough money to purchase my one-way ticket to Cape Town!

**I hope my reader can begin to see why I now believe in a God who does intervene in human affairs, especially when the human is in desperate situations and when that human exerts a measure of faith and trust in this God.** I am quite sure that He is actively involved in this world at all times, but we only become particularly aware of this at certain times.

**God at work in South Africa:** If you live life 'on the edge', and step out of your comfort zones, you are far more likely to experience the supernatural at work. It is not every day that I experience spectacular interventions by the supernatural. However, I personally believe that such events happen almost on a daily basis, even though I am often unaware of them. I often remark how I seem to be at just the right place at the right time. Some might pass these situations off as coincidence. I have learnt to thank God for his blessings.

**The suicide case:** Sometimes, being in the right place at the right time is really dramatic. For instance, we live in a small town called Wellington, about one hour drive from Cape Town. One morning I and my wife Anna 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 Tygerberg hospital, 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. Almost 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 very stressed state.

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

Apparently, they were being driven in a car along the highway and were having an argument. At one point when the vehicle slowed down, 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.

**A near miss with gangsters:** In 2002 I received a 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 in Cape Town. This would have meant a drive of 60 km and I told him I was busy, but maybe we could meet the next day. He suggested meeting at a petrol station on the main highway at 10 am the next day.

A few hours after this conversation I received another 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 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. So, once again I was protected by very precise timing of events. Again I repeated the Bible passage "*My times are in your hands*".

**This sort of event has been my experience on a number of other occasions.** I am therefore totally convinced that there is a God who 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 myself, it is not an audible voice. It is more a 'flow of thoughts' that somehow stand 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.

**Why me?** I often asked myself why I was seeing these amazing events and why it seemed that I was being supernaturally protected. I like to think that 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 believe in God.

I am also convinced that we see the hand of God at work in human lives mostly when certain factors are present. It seems there has to be a desire to discover God. He also seems to work most dramatically in situations that are totally outside our control. In this way we are forced to acknowledge his hand and give him due credit. In addition, each time these events occur, if we show our gratitude and acknowledge God, 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 write this book.**

**My personal experiences help 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. After all, my personal life experiences are just one tiny part of reality, a tiny speck in an immensely large Cosmos.**

**This points to a God who is aware of minute details.** This awareness of minute details is possible because he operates in the Timeless Dimension and this dimension permeates all of reality.

Once I became convinced of the reality of God, I found I could look at all the intellectual problems in a new way. It was as if I had managed to jump over the walls that seemed to stand between me and an acceptance of God. Now, looking from the other side of the wall, these intellectual problems seemed less formidable. I was now motivated to seek with even greater enthusiasm for answers that I knew had to be there for the finding.

These life-long searches for answers have finally culminated in my provocatively titled book 'God by Evolution' and the other publications listed on my webpage. I pray that my own journey of discovery may help you to come to an intellectual acceptance of the reasonableness of belief in God. Once you reach that point on your journey, the next great goal is to discover this awesome Creator in personal experience, through the revelations given to us by Jesus Christ.