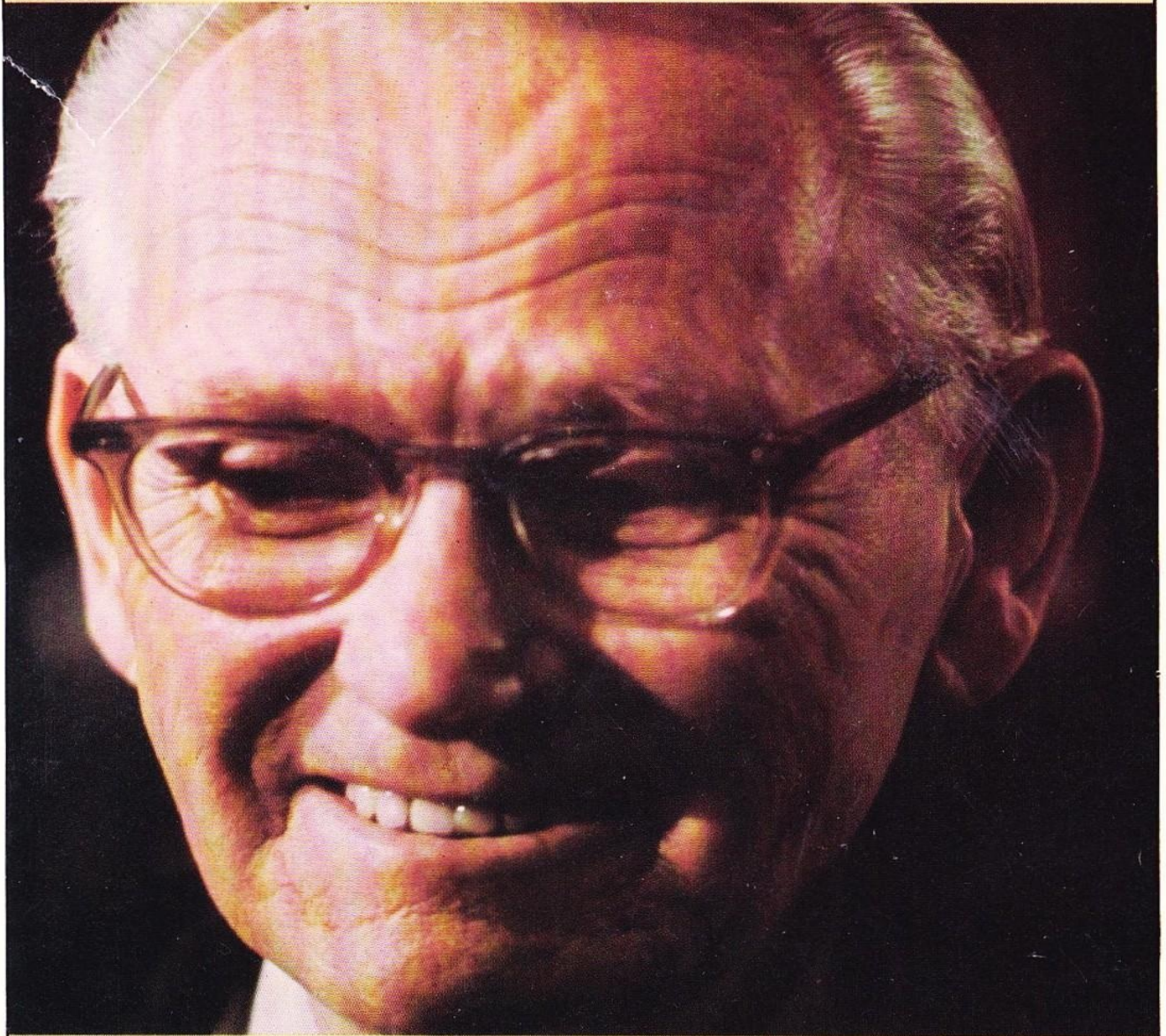


A man called
MR. PENTECOST



DAVID DU PLESSIS

as told to Bob Slosser

A Man Called Mr. Pentecost, David du Plessis, as told to Bob Slosser

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Smith Wigglesworth Prophecy

David du Plessis was peacefully at work in his office early one morning in 1936 when the door burst open, admitting a purposeful Smith Wigglesworth.

"I've been sent by the Lord," he said, and he went on to relate a remarkable prophecy of a future worldwide revival that would awaken members of every denomination. Du Plessis would be a recognized leader, figuring prominently in the movement Wigglesworth said, and he would travel worldwide promoting unity in the Body of Christ.

The years have proven the validity of that prophecy for the man who more than any other single person has been the catalyst by which the power of the Holy Spirit has re-entered the old-line denominations.

This is the story of David du Plessis, the African-born Pentecostal preacher whose obedience to the Lord led him in love and humility to such unlikely places as the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.

Bob Slosser, the Author

Acclaimed by Time magazine as one of the nine best-known religious leaders in North America, David du Plessis is a humble, unpretentious man with- none of the loftiness that often comes with fame.

Born of French Huguenot parents in South Africa, as a youngster he became involved in the Pentecostal movement sweeping the globe in the early 1900s. By the time he was fifteen, he was widely known as the "Boy Preacher," and as a young man he was a leader in the Pentecostal movement.

But it is his activity after World War II that has earned him the name of "Mr. Pentecost." It was then that the Lord began to open to him the door to working

with mainline denominations.

Bob Slosser, a newsman formerly with The New York Times and the National Courier, is co-author of *The Miracle of Jimmy Carter* and *The Road to the White House*. He is a member of the Publisher's Board of Logos International.

“Come out here!”

“His voice boomed. Without hesitation, I moved around the desk and walked toward him. ‘Yes, Brother Wigglesworth.’ He put his hands on my shoulders and pushed me against the wall—not roughly, but certainly firmly. He began to speak, and I knew he was prophesying.”

What followed was a remarkable and—to a Pentecostal in 1936—heretical message. The Lord would pour out His Spirit upon the established church, he said, and the ensuing revival would eclipse anything the Pentecostals had experienced. And David du Plessis would be mightily used by God to bring acceptance of the Pentecostal message to the established churches.

It was an extraordinary prophecy—and the years that followed have been equally amazing. How was—and is—the prophecy being fulfilled? Here is the remarkable story.

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Foreword

I first met David du Plessis in 1937 when I attended Glad Tidings Tabernacle in midtown Manhattan. He was asked to preach there by our pastor, Robert Brown, who had heard that Mr. du Plessis, having been in the city only a day or so after arriving from South Africa, had helped conduct a gospel meeting in Washington Square in lower Manhattan.

The report Pastor Brown received about David was of a preacher truly anointed by the Holy Spirit. And so he proved to be among us. And to this day he has continued instant in season and out of season.

Little did either of us realize then that one day I would be a publisher and he a prominent, world-renowned Christian leader. But so, in God's providence, it has happened. In 1976 I accompanied him as part of a small delegation to minister in South Africa. Two years before that, Time magazine had quoted religious editors who esteemed him one of the most prominent Christian leaders in the world. Now I was curious to see how he would fare in his native land. I saw quickly that God had so prospered him that even there, among his own, he was not without honor.

It is one of the great privileges of my life to have a part in bringing this story before the public. The reader will find in its pages a chronicle of a faithful and humble man whom God has commissioned to perform tasks that would inflate beyond recognition the egos of most men. No single book could tell all that he has done, but this one volume is at least an invaluable and accurate memoir in which we learn much about how God shaped and prepared David du Plessis to do the work he was called to.

Dan Malachuk

Chapter 1, The Warning

I was in my Johannesburg office well before seven o'clock that bright, sun-bathed morning in 1936. The mail, as usual, was piled high on my desk. I worked intently in the quietness of the hour—a typical South African spring morning—to get as much mail opened and out of the way before others in the Apostolic Faith Mission headquarters arrived for work. Not even the janitors were on hand yet. Using the dictaphone, I could get my letters answered and the decks cleared for a busy day.

I was general secretary of the mission, the leading thrust in the Pentecostal movement that was booming throughout the country. We South Africans, like the rest of the world, were struggling our way out of depression, and Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin were making merely political noises at that time. There was no talk of war. In our circles, the dominant theme was the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone was sure that was imminent.

I was bent over my desk, fully absorbed in a letter to the mission, when suddenly the door burst open. There was no knock. The door swung wide and there stood Smith Wigglesworth, the British evangelist. I started to smile and speak, but instantly sensed this was no time for cordiality. He was grim-faced, taut, erect to his full five-foot-eight stature. The fiery, rough-hewn Pentecostal evangelist looked like an elder statesman in his immaculate gray suit, well-groomed gray hair and finely-trimmed white mustache. He was nearing seventy at that time. A comparative youngster at thirty-one, I remained silent.

He wore a fierce expression and offered no greeting. Instead, he raised his right hand and pointed the forefinger at me. “Come out here!” his voice boomed. I remember thinking, how can a man of such small size have such a ringing voice? Without hesitation, I moved out around the desk and walked toward him. “Yes, Brother Wigglesworth.”

He put his hands on my shoulders and pushed me against the wall—not roughly, but certainly firmly—and he held me there. I didn't know what to expect. I had been around this powerful preacher a lot. In fact, I was at that time his host—he and his party were staying in my home. I did a lot of the interpretation at his meetings, and we were quite close. I had seen the Lord use him so dramatically in preaching and healing that I could hold him in nothing but the highest regard. But I was more than a bit uneasy at that moment.

He looked straight into my eyes. I had no choice but to stare back at him. He began to speak, and I knew he was prophesying.

“I have been sent by the Lord to tell you what He has shown me this morning,” he began. “Through the old-line denominations will come a revival that will eclipse anything we have known throughout history. No such things have happened in times past as will happen when this begins.”

Without breaking stride, he plunged ahead in his rapid-fire manner. “It will eclipse the present-day, twentieth-century Pentecostal revival that already is a marvel to the world, with its strong opposition from the established church. But this same blessing will become acceptable to the churches and they will go on with this message and this experience beyond what the Pentecostals have achieved. You will live to see this work grow to such dimensions that the Pentecostal movement itself will be a light thing in comparison with what God will do through the old churches. There will be tremendous gatherings of people, unlike anything we’ve seen, and great leaders will change their attitude and accept not only the message but also the blessing.”

He paused ever so slightly, and his eyes burned into mine.

“Then the Lord said to me that I am to give you warning that He is going to use you in this movement. You will have a very prominent part. “

Again, a slight hesitation. “One final word, the last word the Lord gave me for you: All He requires of you is that you be humble and faithful under all circumstances. If you remain humble and faithful, you will live to see the whole fulfilled.”

For the first time in five minutes, his eyes left mine, and he bowed his head. “Lord, I have delivered the message of what you are planning to do with this young man, and now, Lord, bless him and get him ready; keep him in good health so that all this will come to pass. Amen.”

Without another word, he lifted his hands from my shoulders, turned and walked directly out the door, shutting it quietly behind him.

I stood against the wall for several moments, stunned by the whole scene and especially the words. I thought of running after the evangelist, but decided against it. I’d had enough for a while. “He sure has his own ways of doing things,” I mused.

I went back to my desk and sat down. “Lord, I don’t understand this at all. ” I knew something had happened to me. “Lord, it’s all very puzzling, very confusing. I didn’t expect this, but give me grace to be faithful. Help me to

remember; help me not to fail.” It was deeply troubling. Wigglesworth’s message was a jolt, completely contrary to what we Pentecostals were teaching and believing. We were praying for God to do something, but this wasn’t it. We were preaching and teaching the full gospel—the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Pentecost—but our message was “come ye out from among them and join us.” We were totally convinced that the Pentecostal teaching was the last wave before the return of Christ and that God had no further use for the main line denominational churches. They had missed the boat completely and were virtually apostate. They had ostracized the Pentecostals, criticizing and ridiculing at every turn. How could God possibly have anything more to do with them—the Dutch Reformed, the Anglicans, the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Catholics, all of them?

Without warning there was a gentle knock at the door. About ten minutes had passed. “Come in.”

It was Wigglesworth. He walked in as though for the first time, smiling and friendly. “Good morning, Brother David, and how are you this morning?”

“Oh,” I said, “about now, very puzzled.”

“And why is that?” he asked, with pure innocence.

“Well now,” I said, “you come into this office, and you stand me against the wall, and you prophesy, and now you come back in and you act as if you’d never seen me before, and you want to know why I’m puzzled?”

“Well,” he said, “the Lord said to the prophets, ‘speak to no man on the way,’ and I didn’t speak to anybody. I didn’t say anything to your wife when I arose this morning. I didn’t say anything to anybody I met. I didn’t say anything to you. I delivered the message. Now we can talk about it.”

Dumbfounded, I just looked at him.

He explained that, awaking at my home well before dawn that morning, he had received the message he had delivered to me. “Now what you heard was a warning for you. It was to give you a clear picture of what I saw. Remember, I wasn’t told this; I saw it in visions. If it had not been in visions, I couldn’t have remembered it. But I saw it all, and you’ve got the image now.

“I even argued with the Lord about it,” he smiled. “This is not what my brethren expect.”

I could only nod in agreement. It sure wasn’t what we expected. Nobody would accept it.

“At times,” he said, “I didn’t know whether I was asleep or not, it was so much like a dream. I was completely relaxed and felt good, and then I realized that the Lord was speaking to me. Finally, He said, ‘you must tell this to David, give him warning; he is to have a prominent part in this.’ ”

I was flabbergasted. It must have shown, for Wigglesworth asked me, “You got it?”

“Yes, I’ve got it,” I replied. “I think I will never forget it. But you’ll have to understand. I just can’t accept everything you’ve said. If it’s going to happen and I’m supposed to get involved in it, then the Lord will have to speak to me himself. “

Without blinking an eye, he shot back, “That’s wisdom. Don’t act just on what I or anybody else says. The Lord will tell you. But for now He wants you to have this warning—because it’s coming, that’s for sure. He will prepare you in the Spirit. But remember, it won’t come tomorrow. It will not even begin during my lifetime. The day I pass away, then you can begin to think about it.”

In the same breath he shifted gears, taking a step toward me, and asked, “Do you ever get airsick?”

Now what? I thought. “I’ve never been in the air,” I answered weakly.

“Do you ever get seasick?”

“I’ve never been on the sea.”

“Well,” he went on, “you are going to travel more than most men. I saw it in the vision.”

Again, moving a step toward me, he said, “Come out of there. “ Oh no, I thought, not again. But I came out from behind my desk. Once again he put his hand on my shoulder and began to pray, “Lord, you’ve shown me what you have for this young man in his future, and now I pray that he will never take ill when he travels in your service.”

Chapter 2, The Beginning

My boyhood memories are filled with images of mountains— beautiful blue mountains—around my father’s farm. We were nestled in a corner of the mountains, a “hook” they called it. And I remember so well the farms of my grandparents not far away. My dad’s father was a wheat farmer and lived in a big old South African farmhouse, situated near a large pond, fed by deep springs that provided good water for the sheep and cattle.

On the other side of the family, my mother’s people lived along the mountain where they maintained beautiful vineyards. Again, that home stirs memories of the blue mountains set against the plains, a scene of security and comfort linked in my mind with happy family visits.

I was born on February 7, 1905, near Cape Town at a place called Twenty-four Rivers, a commune of Christian believers that grew out of a revival led by a Norwegian evangelist. I was the eldest son of parents descended from the French Huguenots. My father and grandfather were members of that commune with their families. It consisted of a huge farm, stores, shops, everything needed for living.

One time, before I came along, some of the brethren prophesied that Christ’s return was imminent and that there was not time to harvest the wheat. The residents planned to drive the cattle into the wheat fields and let them have the crop.

But my paternal grandfather, who was in charge of the wheat farming, had other ideas. He took a big rifle, got on his horse and proclaimed, “Anybody who tries to drive cattle into the wheat fields, I’ll shoot, cattle and all.” He preserved the harvest and, of course, the Lord didn’t come. As I understand it, they produced a record crop.

But my grandfather had had enough. He demanded to be relieved, was paid a handsome amount for his share, and went to live on his own wheat farm, the one with the lovely old house that I remember so well.

Impressed in my mind are the visits by horse and wagon to my grandparents in those days. Early in the mornings, while we children were thought to be still asleep, we could hear the older folks gather for their morning devotions. They met in the big farmhouse kitchen—my parents, grandparents and anyone else visiting, along with all the servants and hired workers. The servants would arrive

early, but before they started working they would come in, most of them sitting on the floor, and join in the prayers and the songs. The farmers in those days were keenly aware of their responsibilities toward their workers. They made sure the gospel was heard. I remember clearly how good the relationships were between blacks and whites in those days. Of course, we were all under the gospel and that was the difference.

My father was a little man, five-foot-six. I'm five-eight. I never saw him without a mustache and goatee. And the goatee was very reddish, practically red. But his hair was jet black, and to the day of his death at the age of eighty-five, his hair never grayed.

My mother, who was about the same size, was different. Her people grayed at the age of thirty. So all my recollections of her are of a very motherly woman, a wonderful mother, with gray hair. And she tended toward the plump side, while my father was lean and compact.

They were both very quiet people. They didn't believe they had to be talking all the time to make themselves known and understood. Furthermore, they believed that children ought to be seen, not heard, so we had a very quiet family. Altogether they had twelve children, but two girls and one boy died, leaving nine boys, and I was the oldest.

Mother and dad were strong disciplinarians. They had to be with a family like that in the environment of those days. My best description of my father came the day I was studying Tennyson and found the line in "The Charge of the Light Brigade"—"Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die. . . ." That was my dad. That should have been his motto. And this was important to me then, and throughout my life. It instilled in me a sense of respect for my parents. Today, I can see that if that had not been built into my character, I would not have done what the Lord commanded—and in a hurry, too. With God, a command is a command. I learned to obey immediately, exactly as I was told.

But my father did not apply discipline to us boys that he did not apply to himself. And consequently, he was extraordinarily conscientious in everything he did. In his work, as a carpenter and builder, as well as a preacher, he was especially meticulous. Once, while I was in high school, I was helping him with the interior of a house. That was my main extracurricular activity in those days — that and gardening.

I was working away by myself, building a door. And I used a piece of lumber with a knot in it. But I put it in with the back on the wall side, covered it up, and no one could see it. It wasn't long before dad walked over, noticed I had used

part of the wood with the knot and asked, “What happened to the piece with the knot in it?”

“I put it behind, where no one can see it.”

“No one can see it?” he exploded. “The Lord can see it!” Rather shamefacedly, head hanging, and mumbling to myself, I did the whole job over. I was careful never to use knotty pine again, even to this day when I’m doing work around my home in California.

My father maintained the discipline and meticulousness right up to his death. One day early in 1961 he said to my younger brother, Justus, one of the three of us who became preachers, “David may come to South Africa again this year, and, if you write him, tell him, if he is coming, to make it before Ascension Day. I’ve asked the Lord to take me home on Ascension Day.”

Justus was startled. “You can’t do a thing like that, dad!” “Well,” father replied, “I don’t say I’m doing it; I only discussed it with my heavenly Father. And if He approves, that is my desire. And I’m going to prepare for that day.”

Dad’s getting senile, thought Justus, and he never wrote to me. Neither did any of the other boys.

Late in the morning on Ascension Day, a few months later, a pastor came to the house to pick up some of his camping gear that had been left there. He stopped to talk to dad.

“Grandfather (everyone called him that), do you still have some communion wine?” Dad loved to grow grapes, and his vines were magnificent. He made unfermented communion wine that was a favorite of everybody.

“Yes,” dad said, “I’ve got a gallon left and you’re welcome to it.”

Then he said, “You know, this is Ascension Day.”

“Yes.”

“Well, I’ve asked the Lord to take me home today.”

The pastor assumed he was joking. “In that case, grandfather, please bring me the wine before you go.”

Dad went into the house, fetched the wine and gave it to the pastor, who paid him for it. Then dad said, “I won’t go to the garage with you. It’s open, and you know where your things are. I feel just a little tired, and I’m going to sit down.”

“That’s fine,” the pastor said, and walked away. After only a few steps, he heard a strange little sound—a “hallelujah.” He looked around to see dad slumped in

his easy chair. The pastor rushed over to him in the bright sunshine of the morning and found dad unconscious.

Just then, mother came out of the house, peaceful and serene, and walked toward them. The pastor was excited, “Grandma, grandpa’s fainted.”

Mother, smiling and calm, continued her slow pace toward them. “No, pastor, he hasn’t fainted. He’s gone home.”

“But, grandma, you take it so easy!” he nearly shouted. “Oh, it’s all right,” she said gently. “I expected it. You see, he said goodbye to me at breakfast. He said the Lord might call him and he wouldn’t be able to come and say goodbye.”

I was at Kennedy Airport in New York, calling my wife before heading off to Jerusalem. “I’ve got some bad news,” she said. “What is it?” I asked.

“A cable came this morning that your father has passed on.”

I paused for a moment, but felt absolutely peaceful. “That’s just like old dad,” I said half-aloud. “He waits until Ascension Day, and he goes up, too.”

My parents came under the Pentecostal influence in 1914, while we were living in Ladybrand, a little town of 4,000 people at the foot of a rocky hill called Flat Mountain in the Orange Free State, only a few miles west of Basutoland. That’s where I began my schooling. It was a comfortable place to grow up; everybody knew everybody else, the population being about evenly divided between Europeans and natives. It was a lot like the small agricultural towns in some of the western mountain regions of the United States, except for its many distinctive cream-colored sandstone buildings.

My father invited a Pentecostal minister—they called them “faith healers”—to come and pray for my grandfather, who was suffering from heart disease. It was strange. My grandfather was not healed, but both he and my father had such deep experiences with the Lord in praying for healing that their lives were thoroughly changed. The next thing we knew, my father was saying such things as “The 103rd Psalm—‘Who healeth all thy diseases’—is still true.” And then came the other gifts of the Spirit, including speaking in unknown tongues.

It was promptly announced from the pulpit of the Dutch Reformed Church that my father had come into false teaching and was now a wolf in sheep’s clothing. He and my mother were expelled from membership.

As for me, I didn’t understand much of what was going on, but I was impressed with dad’s belief that the Lord would heal our diseases and keep us in good health. My mother explained that to me in the kitchen one night, when just the

two of us were talking. “If that is what dad believes,” I declared, “then I don’t have to take castor oil any more.” That ugly, greasy stuff was a regular part of our diet. “That’s right,” she said, “no medicine. “ I was all smiles. Mother told that story many times to show how glad I was that we had come into this new light.

We lived in that town awhile longer, joining a little company of Pentecostals who had all been pushed out of their denominational churches. We had people out of the Anglican church, one out of the Methodist, some from the Dutch Reformed. One of the old brothers in that small, hardy band of Christians was constantly worried about the diversity of our backgrounds. He was convinced that a critical part of the Scripture describing the early church was “these all continued with one accord.” He had the idea that the “one-accordedness” was the crucial factor about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost rather than the day itself. He constantly disturbed the congregation with his complaint that “we are not one, we are not one.”

Then, the Lord in His mercy gave him a vision that provided a great lesson for the old man and for all of us. In a dream, he found himself in a room with a gathering of strangers, dressed in Middle Eastern garb, all talking different languages. Next to him stood a man, dressed in the same fashion, who said to him, “Do you see where you are?”

“I’m in a very strange place,” he said.

The man continued, “I want to show you what Pentecost was like, and you will understand the conversation. Listen.”

From there on he understood what they were saying. One stood and declared, “Brethren, we were five hundred when Jesus ascended, and I just counted: now we’re one hundred and twenty. The others are gone. We’re losing, and I feel it is because we’ve lost our leadership. Jesus is gone. We have elected Matthias in the place of Judas. We must find somebody to take the place of Jesus. “ After a moment’s pause, he added, “And so, I would nominate Brother Peter.”

Another man got up and said, “I couldn’t second that because I haven’t forgotten what Peter did. The Lord knows I love Brother Peter, and I admire him, but how can he be the leader when he failed so badly?”

So, down goes Peter.

Another one gets up and says, “Well, we need a man of great love and I would suggest John as that man.”

Someone else protested, “How can you want John? He wanted to sit on Jesus’

right hand and lord it over us. I wouldn't vote for John."

"Well," said another, "we must have a man of faith, and James is a man with great insight into faith. I nominate James." "But," came the argument, "he is the brother of John and he wanted to sit on the left hand of the Lord."

Then someone else said, "What we need is a very cautious man who will not accept just anything. I nominate Thomas."

Another declared, "Thomas is not cautious; he's just a doubter. He'll get us all doubting."

Then Peter got up and said, "How far are we going with this? If we begin to expose everybody's failures and weaknesses, who of us is any good at all? I do not feel qualified to stand in the shoes of the Master, but I want to suggest this: Anybody in this meeting who feels so qualified, stand up and I will follow you, and I'll call everybody else to follow you."

No one stood up. At last, they were in one accord.

That old brother's vision helped me in later life to understand that the accord necessary for God's blessing does not center on how good we or anyone else may be, but rather on our willingness to acknowledge and accept the weaknesses and failures of each one, including ourselves. This stopped the disturbance in our little congregation and we were humbled. We knew that we were no good at all and that even Jesus had said, "I can do nothing of myself" (John 5:30). So we trusted the Lord to help us.

That was the kind of spiritual education I received in that little town of Ladybrand.

Chapter 3, Conviction

Late in 1915, a family of missionaries from England came into our midst, setting off a series of events that were to change my life profoundly. David Fisher, a successful mill owner in England, was touched by the Lord, converted and baptized in the Holy Spirit, and then directed to Africa as a missionary. Giving up all his business interests, he and his family set out with two elderly ladies determined to establish a mission station in southern Africa. They came to our little town of Ladybrand, knowing of James Moody, a descendant of the Scottish royal family, who as one of three elders in our little church had been so instrumental in shaping my young life. And very quickly our congregation was flooded with British influence, which added greatly to my efforts to become thoroughly bilingual.

But we were not to remain in the snug, comfortable fellowship of Ladybrand. As my father grew closer to David Fisher and the vision for a mission station sharpened, Basutoland drew more and more into focus as the site. At last the missionary prevailed upon my father to cross over the border into the British colony, and help him build a sixteen-room mission station in a small village where Christian believers had already established a foothold.

The Basuto village, one of several in the area, was situated on a high mountain ledge, with beautiful, dark-hued valleys all about it—a wide expanse of flatlands, alternately deep green and tan and brown, revealing cornfields and meadows and wild growth.

Mother, father and we four boys—the fifth boy, Justus, was born during our stay there—moved into two African huts, one very large one containing the living room and room for us boys. The other one, which was for mother and father, included the family dining room. A third hut held only the kitchen, in which the cooking fire was built right on the dirt floor. Between these three round structures, with adobe walls and straw roofs, was a yard where we could spend time as a family, talking, reading, praying. It was a primitive life, but clean and pleasant, not choked with the filth and disease that is so often associated with native villages in the heart of Africa.

We in no sense felt alone. Evangelists had been there before and there were many believers among the Africans. We also had brought workmen with us to assist father in building the large mission station—to quarry and dress the stone, and to erect it. We found great, close friends among the black villagers. We and

the two Fisher boys were the only white children there, and most of our days were spent playing with the village children, learning intimately the African ways, the customs, the language.

These were peaceful and kind people; life as a child among them was very good. The kindness and concern for one another were greater than in more advanced societies I have since known.

The polygamy among them was difficult for many of us to adjust to. Indeed, the missionaries began to educate them and agitate for them to drop all of their wives but one and then to officially marry only that one. It seemed only right, but it wreaked havoc among the natives. The wives that were dropped inevitably became prostitutes. A polygamous society in which there was happiness and virtually no divorce was transformed into a monogamous one filled with meanness and immorality.

Even in later years I never agreed with the missionaries on this. The Apostle Paul insisted that a church leader be the “husband of one wife.” If he had meant to exclude only single men he would probably have used the term “married,” but instead he used this odd phrase. To me it shows that there must have been those in the church with more than one wife. There’s no indication that they were put out of the church. They merely could not be elders.

Time went by in idyllic fashion and I was approaching my eleventh birthday. It was Sunday, and we were gathered for worship with the villagers in one of the sheds dad had erected to store materials. I sat on the wooden bench with my family—we always sat together, dad, mother, all the boys strung out like ducklings— and I studied those ignorant black people in my ten-year-old manner. “These people cannot read, they cannot write, they are illiterate. . . .” Their singing swelled, untrained, rough, but full and free. “They are illiterate,” I said angrily to myself, “but” I didn’t even like to say it. “But they know Jesus.

“Those two other there, that man and woman,” I thought, talking this out to myself, “they’ve completely changed, almost overnight. How can this be? Why didn’t I see it with the whites?”

“Of course,” I rambled on, “the whites all came out of churches. They’ve been taught, and they know, but they don’t show it so quickly. How can these natives change so quickly when they don’t even have a catechism, or any regular course of teaching? All they hear is the teaching in our meetings.”

There was the case of the witch doctor. And I looked right at him. He had been

terrifying, the fear of the people. But now he was gentle, loving, kind—a wonderful man.

And so many of those simple people had experienced such power at their baptisms. They knew that Jesus had been baptized in the river and they insisted on being baptized in a flowing river; a pond would not do. Again, my eyes swept over the sixty-five people crowded into the small shed. “Was it their simplicity?” Jesus received the baptism in the Spirit when He came up out of the river, and they expected the same thing to happen to them. They expected Jesus to do for them what His Father had done for Him. I had heard many of them make such statements. And sure enough, they came up out of the river speaking in tongues. “How can this be?”

My thoughts were interrupted when the singing died down and one of the missionaries stood to ask if there were any requests for prayer. The old wife of the leading chief in that area—actually she was just one of several wives since the bigger the chief, the more wives he was likely to have—rose slowly to her feet to ask everyone to pray for an old friend who was lying desperately ill at that moment. She had stopped at her hut to see her on the way to the meeting and felt that she was dying. The missionary leading the meeting moved forward and said, “Let’s pray for her right now. “

So they began to pray and that shed was ringing with prayers and weeping, and then the rising chorus of “Hallelujah, Hallelujah for the Cross; it will never suffer loss. “ Then the old wife of the chief began to march around the shed to the singing, and she marched right out of the building with the people following her. In a minute or two, the place was empty and the people were marching in single and double file, strung out for some distance among the village huts, toward the hut of the sick woman several hundred yards away. My father and the other missionaries had no choice but to follow. I went along too, still mumbling to myself about the faith of these ignorant people.

When they got to the sick woman’s hut, they continued singing and marching around the hut, “Hallelujah, Hallelujah for the Cross. “ It was a strange sight. My father, the chief’s wife, and two of the missionaries went into the hut. Two or three minutes passed, although it seemed like considerably more, and suddenly the old woman who lived there, the sick one, came whirling through the door with her arms lifted up, smiling and laughing. “Hallelujah, Hallelujah for the Cross; it will never suffer loss.” The singing soared louder and higher, and the people, dancing and happy, wound their way with her back to the shed.

Back inside the church, we had a great old-fashioned service. The Lord had done

another miracle. To those people, that was the only way. That's the way the Bible told it, and that's the way it was.

My youthful mind raced on, troubled and almost desperate. "These poor people are too dumb to know it's impossible, so they never argue that this can't happen. 'God can do it,' they say." I had seen the truth of the Scriptures in action.

I was almost crying inside in my exasperation. "Why don't I know Jesus like that?" I'd been getting up at dawn every morning all my life, reading the Scriptures and having devotions. At the age of not quite eleven, I had read the Bible through. From the time we boys were old enough to do so, father had awakened us at five-thirty. We washed and got dressed, and were sitting before our open Bibles by six. First, there were devotions, and then systematic reading of the Scripture, a chapter or two every morning.

"I know the Bible," I anguished. "I know all about Jesus. But I don't know Him." When I prayed, or my parents prayed, to me it was still a recital. God was always far away in heaven, never here. But for these people, these poor black villagers, He was always near at hand.

"If only I could know Jesus the way they do," I thought, my youthful heart hurting.

Chapter 4, Conversion

Basutoland is often called the Switzerland of South Africa because of its mountains, high ones whose peaks retain deep snow throughout the year. Our mission station was halfway up one of those beautiful mountains, eleven miles from the village where we purchased many of our goods. There also were the blacksmith's shop, and, most important to us, the post office. In the clear, sparkling air of the mountains and the valley below, you could almost see the post office from our Mount Tabor Mission. But it was a long way—one mile down the steep, tricky mountain side and then onto the flat lands, through corn fields and narrow footpaths into the Basuto village.

Almost every family in villages like ours had a horse to be used for trips such as going for the mail. We missionaries had one, too, but a young, newly-arrived Swiss missionary, Reinhardt Gschwend, had a special horse, which he had bought from one of the neighboring chiefs. Reinhardt was a kindly young man who struggled hard to learn the Basuto language, which he finally mastered. He went on to become one of the great missionaries of Africa, publishing more literature in African languages than any I know of. Millions of pieces still come off presses that he started in South Africa. His two boys carry on this work and are becoming as famous as their father.

That bright February day, Reinhardt said in his thick accent,

“Take my horse to the post office. “ That sent my eleven-year-old heart floating, for that was a real horse. He was dark brown, sleek and strong, a racing horse. Together, we would soar across those fields and through the narrow paths. That animal reduced my weekly chore to a great sport.

We made our way carefully down the mountain path. It was impossible to do more than walk until we reached more level ground. As the horse moved easily out onto the flat lands of the valley, I sat back in the saddle and looked over the fields, fully relaxed yet keenly aware of everything around me. I was learning to read nature, not only the approach and departure of the seasons, but the condition of the soil and its effect on nature's growth, the prevalence of animal life thereabouts, nature's reaction to mankind and the changing environment. I was learning from the Africans to read things in nature that others did not notice. These Africans thought other people were foolish. “They read books,” they said, “and they don't read nature.” Meanwhile, the people who read books thought the others were foolish. It was a crazy circle, and they both were a little bit right.

We picked up speed as we passed through the rows of the corn fields, which were reaching their autumn raggedy tan look as the harvest time neared. Summer in South Africa was almost over. The day was hot but still clear, and the ride was exhilarating.

At the little one-story, brown adobe post office, I gathered the mail into the saddle bag without event. Nine letters and two shoebox-size parcels, an average amount. When I stepped back into the open and began to mount the horse, I noticed the sky was clouding up quickly. Huge, rolling thunderclouds swept in toward the mountains, the same direction I was heading. The sky was suddenly almost totally overcast; it was beginning to streak with lightning farther out in the valley.

“Maybe I can outrun the storm,” I said half-aloud to no one. I didn’t want to stay there. I still didn’t know my way among the villagers very well. I swung the saddlebag into place, secured it, and scrambled onto the horse, which was moving about the hitching rail, ever so slightly nervous. “I must get home,” I said. “I don’t want to get caught in this. ” I had gone through two or three Basutoland rain storms, and they were king-size. I swung the racehorse away from the rail and moved at a fast canter up the village path and out into the fields, where I stretched the gait into a gallop and urged him on. The wind blew fiercely, and the day seemed to turn into night. First the wild, streaked lightning; then the terrifying claps of thunder, cracking and slamming and rolling across the meadows to echo in the foothills. Then torrents of rain, sloshing down in sheets of solid water.

I had covered less than a third of the eleven-mile trip when lightning struck the ground right in front of me, flashing and spitting in a way I’d never seen before. It sizzled, and I smelled sulphur. I was virtually blinded for a moment. It was no more than twenty feet in front of me. The horse stopped instantly—from a gallop to a standstill in a split second. Then came another deafening thunderclap. It’s funny how thoughts come to you at times like that. I remembered the saying, “If the lightning strikes you, you won’t hear anything.” Well, I heard the thunder, so I knew I wasn’t dead.

The abruptness of the horse’s stop almost threw me to the ground. I slid the rest of the way off and fell to the soaking earth. My trousers drenched and muddy, I knelt in the corn field, which was being beaten flat by the storm, and I cried aloud: “Jesus! Save me! Save me!”

It’s strange. No appeal to surrender to the Lord Jesus had ever penetrated the crust around my young soul. I had sat through dozens of such appeals. None had

touched me—at least enough for me to respond. But there I was, kneeling in the roaring, raging wind, rain and lightning, scared into the very arms of Jesus.

And, at once, I knew I was saved. I knew Jesus had accepted me. I was no longer afraid of the storm, continuing all around me. The lightning flashed, the thunder roared, the rain swept down. But I was as frisky as a young colt. I looked up into the sky and said, loud enough to be heard: “Wouldn’t it be wonderful if Jesus came on those clouds right now.” He’s going to come on the clouds, according to the Scriptures, and I wanted to see him come right then. I wanted to see Him face to face. I knew He was real.

After returning the horse and getting him dried and rubbed down, I went into my mother and father’s hut. Mother was alone. “How’d you get through the storm?” she asked.

“Well,” I replied, with the nonchalance of an eleven-year-old, “Jesus saved me.”

I saw her head snap upward ever so slightly, but she made no big show of emotion. She merely turned her head toward me, and kindness and love poured through her smile.

“The storm scared me,” I continued, “and I cried to Jesus and out there He saved me. “

It was as simple as that.

Mother apparently told my story to dad sometime before supper , for that evening after our regular devotions, he looked up from his Bible and said to me, “I believe you had an experience with the Lord today?” My father was the kind who would wait to see the Christian life before he would commit himself too fully as to whether anything had happened to me.

“Yes,” I said rather solemnly, with all the wisdom I could muster, “I can truthfully say that I prayed today and talked to Jesus like the Africans do. Not up in heaven or some far-off place; He was right there next to me. ’

I paused. And there was silence around the table. Everybody watched me. My dad’s clear, sharp eyes stared straight into my face.

“Something happened there,” I said quietly. “Now Jesus is real to me.”

It was not long after my conversion that my family’s work at the Mount Tabor Mission station was completed, and we returned to our little fellowship of Pentecostal believers in Ladybrand. My father resumed his work as carpenter and preacher, and I returned to school, filled with wonderful tales of life in an African village.

Spiritually, I had one burning concern—baptism. When was I to be baptized in water? Didn't the Scripture say, "Repent, and be baptized"? I wanted it badly, convinced by my dramatic conversion that I was ready. My father said no; I was too young. I didn't understand the meaning of baptism.

So he and the other elders in our congregation began talking with me at length about baptism and its meaning. They worked especially with me on Romans 6—"You are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." You have to live a new life, they insisted; and everybody seemed concerned that I wouldn't. I waited. And I waited. No baptism.

One day—it was 1917 and I was twelve years old—the church elders announced a baptismal service the following week for two elderly people just recently saved. They were going to be baptized in a creek outside of Ladybrand. The Caledon River bordering Basutoland was four miles away, too far, but this creek had a nice wide pond at one point, more than adequate for baptizing.

Again, I asked, "Can I be baptized now, please?" I had no confidence as to the answer. But, surprisingly, it came. "Yes. We are convinced you are ready for baptism."

I still remembered those Africans over in Basutoland and the way they came up out of the water, expecting to be baptized in the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ. I was sure that would happen to me.

It was a quiet, peaceful Sunday when we gathered at the creek outside of town. But, contrary to custom, a large crowd gathered with us. The service had been publicly announced and literally hundreds of children, many of them my school friends, were there. Nobody wanted to miss it. Other such services had been held privately at a nearby farm. But this was a public baptism by immersion. The Dutch Reformed, the Anglicans, and the Methodists would just have to wag their heads.

The elders baptized the elderly couple first, and then came me, the first youngster to be baptized in that manner in that town. I came up out of the water, and nothing else happened. No baptism in the Holy Spirit. Just hundreds of wide-eyed faces, staring curiously at me.

But one thing was certain for me: I had been buried with Christ and raised with Him to newness of life. The most significant evidence of this was in the new power I found in the Scriptures. They referred to me. I had become an heir of all they talked about. This was mine. This was for me.

That night as I lay awake in my bed, looking through the darkness up at the ceiling, I had it clear in my mind, “I am buried with Christ and now I will live a new life. I will find the way in the Scriptures.”

Chapter 5, The Spirit

It was the second night—a Friday night—of my all-out effort to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Converted at the age of eleven, baptized a year later, living in the midst of a community of Pentecostals, and no baptism in the Holy Spirit. How could this be? I was determined to pray and fast until I was baptized in the Spirit.

Daylight was fading. I was on my knees in a big, open warehouse containing nothing but coffins. All alone, thirteen years old, I prayed and thought and prayed there in the increasing darkness, with about a hundred coffins stacked up against the walls on every side. It became harder and harder to concentrate; I was afraid. There were no lights to turn on; the only lights we had in all of Ladybrand were paraffin or gas lights. There was no electricity.

“When will the people get back?” I muttered into the darkness. “They’ve been gone an awfully long time.” And I prayed on, opening my eyes every few seconds to see nothing but the blackness and the shadowy, tarpaulin-draped coffins. Absolute Christian believer or not, fully aware of the defeat of death or not, I was troubled by those coffins. I knew they were there.

My prayer activity improved perceptibly when the adults and the other children began to file back into the shed and the gas lights were turned on for another session in our series of evangelistic meetings. This was the summer of 1918—that is, early in the calendar year in South Africa, right around the time of my birthday. Our little band of Christians had invited an evangelist, Charles Heatley, a simple, Bible-teaching Englishman with a reputation for leading people into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, to come to Ladybrand for the meetings.

Our problem was finding a site. In town, we still numbered only twenty to thirty and customarily met in homes. But for such an occasion as this, believers from out in the farmlands swelled our ranks to a size that would not fit in any of the cottages.

During the Boer War of 1899-1902, when the Dutch-populated Boer Republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State challenged the authority of the British Empire, to which they were finally annexed, many farmers were converted to faith in Jesus Christ.

In one of those amazing displays of the sovereignty of God, many South African prisoners of war, including some of the farmers from our area, were sent to a war

camp in Bermuda. A revival broke out there, and many were saved. Our farmers came back to South Africa knowing the Lord, and they were among the first to enter into the Pentecostal movement. God had worked through the tragedy of war to bring salvation to the people.

So we needed a sizable hall in which to hold our special meetings. And by that time, no one owning a building large enough would rent it to us. In the past, when we rented meeting places, scoffers from the surrounding neighborhoods gathered and frequently threw stones up onto the roof and through the windows. We couldn't use a place with glass windows, or they would break them. We had a saying then that went something like this: "We don't have panes in the window, but, thank God, we don't have pains in the pews either. " In those days, praying for the sick was a significant part of our ministry and we believed we must pray for them until they either recovered or died. We didn't think dying was so terrible; we only thought suffering was terrible. Today, people have too final a view of death, losing sight of the fact that this life is just the tiniest fraction of our eternal life. But in those days, we prayed, "Lord, if you don't intend to heal them, take them home. " And we prayed them well or dead.

In our group was one old English brother, a Methodist, who had a contract with the town to bury the paupers who had no other means to receive a decent burial. At the center of his business was a big shed on the outskirts of town where he kept a stockpile of coffins.

He came to see my father and three other elders of our little church. From an adjoining room I was able to put my developing English to use (in addition to Afrikaans I was learning English in school from my Scottish teachers). I could eavesdrop on the elders' conversation with the old Englishman. I heard him saying, "I can make an arrangement if the people won't mind. I can stack those coffins up against the wall and cover them with a tarpaulin so you won't see them."

I remained quiet, my eyes wide.

He went on, "I don't have carpets. It's a flagstone floor, but I've got a lot of the big bags they bale wool with."

I wasn't thoroughly convinced, but my father and the other elders accepted the offer. We would hold our meetings in the big coffin shed.

The Lord did mighty things in that shed in the days that followed. Brother Heatley's ministry was successful. Jesus baptized many, young and old, in the Holy Spirit. A number of young people from the farms were saved. But there I

was. I had known the Lord for two years, and still He hadn't baptized me. I felt bad.

With all respect, however, it has to be remembered that most of the teaching on the baptism in the Holy Spirit in those days was poor. For one thing, the teachers told ignorant people like me that if we wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit, we first had to get empty. Of course, the more I tried to get empty of self, the fuller I seemed to feel. They never told me that there was a well of living water in me, that I had received the Holy Spirit within me when the Lord Jesus saved me. The teaching was that the baptism in the Spirit was the infilling; even if you had been born again, that was only a work of the Spirit—you had not received the Spirit within you. The church had lost sight of the fact that Jesus "breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22) even before they had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which came on the day of Pentecost. The baptism, as we know now, is not into you but on you. Jesus baptizes—immerses—the believer into the Spirit, handing him over to the Spirit and leaving the believer with the Spirit in him and on him at the same time.

So I prayed and prayed, and nothing happened.

That Thursday morning, I walked into the school principal's office and asked to be excused the following day. "Why?" asked the principal, a kindly man.

"I want to pray," I responded soberly.

There was a pause. The only noise was the muffled voice of a secretary outside his office.

"David," he said at last, "I have been asked for days off for the funeral of the grandmother who didn't exist, for sicknesses that never did appear, for every kind of excuse in the book. But nobody has ever asked me for time off to pray."

He continued looking straight into my face. I just sat there.

"Now what is it that you are so serious about that you want to spend a day in prayer?" he asked.

"I want to fast," I said, "and the Bible says to fast and pray. I do want to pray, but really I want to fast, so if you will let me have the day off, I'll begin this evening. And I plan to pray through till the Lord baptizes me in His Holy Spirit."

Again, all became quiet.

"Oh, so that's what you want," he said. A trace of a smile appeared on his lips, then vanished. "You must be very careful, David. You know, there is such a thing as hypnotism or mesmerism. I don't know how these people do it, but be careful,

and be sure that you really speak to the Lord. “ I nodded, and looked back at him. “I will.”

He gave me the day off.

Dad was delighted by my determination. He and a half-dozen of the other men and young people prayed with me all that Thursday night, stopping for only a few hours of sleep. They prayed for me, laying hands on me, calling heartily upon the Lord to meet my need. Then we prayed softly, and then silently. We knelt on the hard flagstone floor, and we stood, and we paced. Like good, old-time Pentecostals, we “prayed through.” We continued on through Friday, interrupted only by Brother Heatley’s services, and then the few hours between services when I was left alone among the coffins.

We prayed on through Friday night, into sheer exhaustion and exasperation. I was worn out, frayed mentally, spiritually and physically. But nothing happened. My frustration got worse and worse.

Saturday morning, I was sitting forlornly off to the rear and side of the shed by myself. Unexpectedly, one of the farm girls—a fourteen-year-old with dark brown hair, who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit during the meetings—came quietly up to my side and sat down.

“David?” she said, tentatively. “Can I say something to you? I don’t want to interfere, but I know how hard you’ve been trying.”

My silence seemed to give her the go-ahead. I wasn’t hostile; I just didn’t have anything to say.

“I think the Lord has given me something to say to you.” A pause. She was embarrassed, and she blushed. “He has told me that if you will confess the thing that’s on your conscience, he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

I looked up at her. She looked down. And as quietly as she had come, she walked away.

I knew instantly what the Lord had shown her. My conscience was troubled, at age thirteen, by the first sin in my life that I became aware of, a sin that had led to similar sins. It was a lie that I had told to my parents seven years earlier. They had believed me, and I’d never forgotten it. And, of course, that one lie had produced other lies to cover the original one. I was a liar.

That first lie had occurred very simply, in a little accident as I was tending my only baby sister at that time, who was to die in infancy. Mother was busy in another part of the house. To pass the time, I was playing with a piece of string

that had a small metal trinket attached to it, swinging it around and around for no particular reason. Suddenly it slipped, and the metal hit the baby on top of the head, hurting her slightly. When mother and father later noticed a bruise on the baby's head and asked me about it, I told them I didn't know how it had happened. I was immediately aware, for the first time, that I had sinned, and it ate away at me for seven years.

Reflecting on the farm girl's word, I put my head in my hands and bent over until my head was between my knees. Her kindly admonition echoed in my frustrated, exasperated mind, ". . .if you will confess the thing that's on your conscience. ..." How could she have known that? It had to be from God. No one knew of it, except the Lord and me.

I sat bolt upright and spotted mother sitting about twenty feet away. I went to her and quietly and quickly told her of my lie seven years before. The confession came easily and swiftly. "Oh, child," mother said softly but with deep emotion. "Why did you keep this on your mind for seven years? Why didn't you tell us long ago?" There was no condemnation in the questions, merely compassion.

"Well, I don't know, mother," I said, my head bowed. "I just know that now I must put this straight. The Lord forgave me out there in Basutoland, but this one memory has stayed."

I immediately got up and went to my father, taking him to one side and explaining my sin to him. Before I could finish, he burst out crying, "Oh, Lord! Lord!" He was deeply moved and hardly able to speak. "Dear Lord, my son feels he is such a sinner for telling a lie. I'm such a worse sinner than that." He was under strong conviction and with great tenderness forgave me for the lie.

Strangely, at least from my point of view, I didn't suddenly burst into sunshine and smiles with the confession of my childhood sin. I had expected a surge of relief. Instead, I felt unworthy. I felt different, but I sensed my own unworthiness. When the prayer time came, I went alone to a corner and prayed by myself. I remembered the school principal's warning about hypnotism and mesmerism, and I preferred not to have anyone lay hands on me. I wanted to be alone. "Lord, I see now I'm unworthy. Don't trouble yourself to baptize me in the Holy Spirit; just help me to live a good life like Jesus did, and to get to heaven."

Immediately, I had my first vision. A book appeared in my mind. I looked closely, and it became clearer. There was a book and two hands. One hand held the book; the other paged through it. I strained to be attentive, expecting to see something I could read, but the pages were blank, blistering, pure white. The last

page was turned, and then I heard inside myself, “There is nothing recorded against you. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God has cleansed you from all unrighteousness.”

I fully realized then that everything, even the sin of that first lie, was wiped out by the blood of Jesus. Pure, absolute joy filled my soul, my very being. There was no room for anything else. I couldn’t ask for the Holy Spirit, or anything else, to come in. There was no room.

The joy overwhelmed me, and I said, “Hallelujah.” But that was no good; it didn’t express what I was feeling. “Praise the Lord” was no better. It sounded silly in comparison with the sheer joy surging through me. “How can I express it?” I thought. But before I could go any further, I began to laugh. And I laughed, on and on, “Hahahaha, hohohoho, hehehehe, hahahaha...

I felt I couldn’t laugh any more. Nobody stopped me. Some of them laughed a bit with me, obviously because I was laughing so hard, harder than anyone I’d ever heard. But no one seemed upset. I held my stomach and said, “Lord, I can’t take it any more. Help me . . . help me to release what I’m feeling,” and I started to shout hallelujah again. I got as far as “ha-a-a . . . ,” but the “lelujah” wouldn’t come.

I began to speak in tongues, new sounds that I had never heard before. The “ha-a-a” had opened my mouth, and the Lord had filled it with a new language. It was a very funny language, it seemed to me.

An old sailor was in the meeting, Bob Masser, who had been around the world. He heard me speaking those strange new sounds there in the corner and walked close to me to listen for several moments. He then turned and shouted to the crowd, “David is speaking Chinese! I’ve heard it many times. He’s praising God in pure Chinese!”

And the people began to marvel and praise God themselves.

I quickly stopped speaking, with a frightening thought on my mind. “Oh Lord,” I said, “please don’t send me to China.” I was afraid that was an indication of a missionary assignment.

But, in a few moments, the thought vanished, and I began to speak again, wondering whether I had lost the gift. I was immediately aware that the language had changed. It was distinctly different, obviously not Oriental. I kept on speaking, and my mind was whirring with all kinds of thoughts. “What language is that now? . . . Have I disobeyed the Spirit by changing tongues? . . . Now what have I got? . . . It sounds like babbling. . . But if it’s babbling, why can’t I keep

up the same kind of babbling? . . . Who changes the babbling?. . . Why can't I do that first language again? . . . I've spoken over six different languages. . . . It's new every time. . . I guess I'm not doing this. . . I'm speaking. . . . But I'm not making the sounds. . . . They just keep forming on my lips. . . . And I can't change them. . . .But I can't keep them up either. . . .”

After nearly half an hour of this, I went over to the preacher and said, “Brother Heatley, when the Spirit gives you the gift of tongues, does He give you one language only and then that's your gift and you always speak the same language?”

“No,” he replied, “the Bible refers in First Corinthians 12 to ‘diverse kinds of tongues. ’ We may have many kinds. What's your problem anyway?”

“ Well, ” I said, “I think I have spoken half a dozen languages in the last half-hour.”

“Don't worry about that,” he said, chuckling.

“Well, how many do you speak?” I persisted.

With what I later perceived to be extraordinary patience, he opened his Bible to chapter 13 of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. “See what it says, ‘Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. . . .’ Now, how many tongues of men are there?” In those days we were taught that there were two thousand languages on earth. “Two thousand?” I answered tentatively.

“Well,” he said, “when you've spoken two thousand languages , then you can begin to worry about the angelic languages. “

“Oh, I don't think that will ever happen, “ I responded meekly, and I was satisfied. Furthermore, I've never worried about it since. Every time some agency issues a report on the languages and dialects of the world, the number rises, until now authorities say there are more than four thousand. I've never reached the point where I felt that I'd exhausted all the languages, even though frequently, when I'm praying in tongues, I suddenly hear a language that sounds completely new to me.

Chapter 6, A Donkey

We Pentecostals in South Africa had a saying in 1920 that any church that didn't hold outdoor street meetings at least once a week was a dead, backslidden church. Without fail, cloudy or clear, we held our street meeting every Saturday night in Ladybrand. In the two years following my baptism in the Holy Spirit I grew accustomed to giving my testimony in public, but gradually my participation in those meetings became more than mere testifying. It became clear to me, and apparently to all, that the Holy Spirit was leading me into a deeper preaching ministry. I soon found that I had new inspiration as I gave forth not only the story of my conversion, but His word for us at that time. Each time I became clearer and was able to articulate with greater precision.

Often in Ladybrand, as we gathered in the main street of the little town, I stepped out in front, into the ring that we formed, and spoke the message of salvation with a good deal more poise and force than my fifteen years should have commanded.

With my Bible in hand, I was at ease as I moved about that circle addressing the people, first on a personal note, and then about the purposes of our collective lives, our call by God. I had a strong voice for a fifteen-year-old, and I was able to project it above the crowd noises and the frequent heckling and good-natured ribbing from the normal collection of scoffers and mockers.

Shortly after my fifteenth birthday, several of us from the Ladybrand church journeyed ninety miles west to Bloemfontein, the capital and trading center of the Orange Free State, the site for major religious, political and educational conferences as well as the colorful and widely-known Bloemfontein livestock fairs. We had come to attend the regional conference of the Apostolic Faith Mission in this clean, spacious city of fifty thousand. There were lots of people on the streets at most hours of the day and night, a perfect setting for our street meetings.

Our first evening there, a hot night in late summer, several dozen of us went out into one of the downtown squares, forming a ring and launching into an hour of singing, witnessing and preaching. Dressed in khaki trousers and shirt, I stepped into the ring we had formed in the center of the square and began to speak, a skinny, blond boy from the farm country, unused to the ways of the cities.

"Four years ago," I spoke strongly, "I came face to face with the terror of trying

to live in this world without God. As a boy of eleven, I felt myself suddenly on the brink of possible death, caught in a raging, violent storm on the plains of Basutoland. And for the first time, I was able to call out to Jesus, who had been drawing me closer and closer to himself without my actually realizing it. But there, on my knees in the flashing lightning and the lashing downpour, I called upon the Lord, the Son of God, and I knew instantly that He was there. He had reached out to me, and at last I was able to see it. I was able to see Him. He was real, and He was there. I knew the Son of God! He had saved me.”

My voice was strong and carried well out into the street and the sidewalk. People—men, women and children, well-dressed and plain—gathered on the fringes of the crowd. They wanted to get a closer look at this boy preacher, this young fellow speaking with such passion. Before long, we had an old-fashioned revival meeting right there in the streets of Bloemfontein.

This sort of thing occurred every night during that week, and I was even invited into the main conference to give my testimony at one of the night meetings. But the street meetings were the important thing in my life at that moment. With hindsight, I can see that God was shaping my ministry. He was teaching me to yield to the Holy Spirit and to speak the word needed on individual occasions. Even in the face of strange crowds, sometimes less than friendly, I was learning to hear the inner voice of the Spirit, to grasp thoughts that I had not been prepared to express. The Lord was most merciful to the boy preacher.

Later that year, 1920, I became convinced that God was calling me into the ministry. The street meetings, the conferences, the work in Ladybrand, these were the center of my life. I was certain that the Lord wanted me in full-time service. A notice in the Apostolic Faith Mission’s newspaper seemed to confirm this conviction in my mind with its call for a young man to serve as an apprentice in printing and publishing at headquarters in Johannesburg. I knew this was what I wanted to do.

“What do you think, father?” I asked as I shared my conviction with him. “May I seek this job?” I had completed my public schooling, such as were its demands in those days, and my father did not believe further education was necessary for those serving God, a point that was to rise up in our relationship later.

“Well,” he said, obviously pleased, “if you want to, I’ll let you go.” Thus, it was settled; I would offer myself for the job.

In December, Matthew, the brother next to me in age, and I traveled with father by railroad to Johannesburg, more than three hundred miles to the north, the urban center of South Africa, with a population approaching a half-million. We

would attend the mission's December conference and I would seek the apprenticeship. To us boys, traveling, as we did, in third-class accommodations where the other passengers were mostly black and where there were no conveniences or comforts beyond bare necessities, was, I am ashamed to say, humiliating. But father was absolutely unaffected and at ease, living in complete victory over such superficial circumstances. He did not have as high an opinion of himself as we youngsters did of ourselves.

On Thursday of the week-long conference came Missionary Day, when those serving out in the field throughout the country were invited to share their experiences and to encourage one another in the work. Even from its beginnings the Pentecostal movement was missionary-minded. I sat that day near the back of the church, the new Central Tabernacle on Church Street. The movement had begun in an old Presbyterian church, renamed the Bree Street Tabernacle, where they once had an unprecedented revival lasting without interruption for eighteen months. They would begin the meetings on Friday night and go right through Saturday, Saturday night, Sunday and through to twelve o'clock Sunday night. And the miracles flowed. The rapid growth of the work had, however, compelled those early Pentecostals to abandon the Bree Street building and to erect Central Tabernacle.

Six hundred of us were there that Thursday, rejoicing over the spread of the Lord's work as we perceived it. One missionary from the northern country, Daniel Booyesen, a handsome, rugged man with a full beard, strode to the platform and began to speak about his concerns.

"Others have expressed their needs, and the cost, and so on," he said slowly, in a strong, husky voice, "but I have not come to ask for money. I think that it may be possible for you to help me, to give me what I want, without spending any money."

This different approach immediately captured the audience's attention. He continued, "Money will not really help me. We have our farm, and we cultivate what we eat. We've got animals and meat, cows and butter and milk.

"But my problem is this: We're in the mountain country. I have to climb hills day in and day out, all on foot. I'm tired of climbing hills. I tried a bicycle, but that's too dangerous downhill, and besides you have to push it uphill. And horses, they can't live there because of a sickness in the mountains. They die."

"But," and he waited for impact, "but if I could get a few donkeys—well, they live anywhere. But they are very expensive, and I can't afford even one. Perhaps somebody could help me." He sat down. Immediately an old farmer, Brother van

Tonder of Potchefstream, rose and spoke from the audience. “My children have been going to the farm school on a little cart pulled by two donkeys. Now they are going to boarding school in the city and won’t need those donkeys any more. I will give them to this missionary.”

Shouting and applause broke forth from the assembly. And a man from Bethel, Brother Jan Smit, stood up in the midst of the rejoicing and said, “I have a son who rides a donkey to school. He also is going to boarding school, so I’ll send that donkey and a saddle to Brother Booyesen. He can use the cart where it will go, and he can use the saddle for the more treacherous places.” Then that crowd really shouted. Whoops and cheers rang through the hall.

The next thing I knew, from the back of the auditorium, there was my father on the platform. I didn’t know he was scheduled to do anything, and I watched with a mixture of curiosity and trepidation. He began to speak.

“Well now, it seems that we are in a very happy, giving mood. And so I would like to share with you that I also have a donkey I want to give to the Lord, but since I’m afraid he won’t pull with those others, I can’t send him to the missionary. But I am proud of my donkey.”

I thought, “Where does he have a donkey? He isn’t a joking man; what’s he talking about? We boys have always wanted a donkey and now he says he has one.”

My father looked to the rear of the room, to the last pew where I was sitting, and said, “David, come up here.” My heart jumped into my throat. I instinctively started to slouch into the pew but knew I had no choice but to go forward. Every face turned to watch me, all smiles.

I walked onto the platform and dad took me by my right ear and said to the crowd, “This is the only donkey I can give. This is my oldest son. His name is David, and he feels called to work for the Lord.”

He paused a moment, and his voice grew husky. “Before he was born, his mother and I prayed every day, ‘Lord, give us a son for our first born, and we promise we will bring him up for your service.’ So that’s how David arrived into this world. We have prayed the ministry into his veins. No wonder he’s never satisfied doing anything but working for the Lord.”

Another pause. And he put his arm around my shoulder. “Yes, this is the only donkey I’ve got to give. And I’m proud to give him to Jesus.”

There wasn’t a dry eye in the building. The shouts had turned to weeping and gentle thanksgiving to the Lord. Together, they prayed over my father and me,

and when the meeting was ended I found a new nickname floating around the assembly, “David the Donkey”—a name I was to hear repeated for twenty years, even during my first visit to the United States in 1937. I found that I had earned my D.D.

From that conference I embarked on my first full-time work for the Lord, the apprenticeship in the print shop, where I began to acquire a love for the smell of printer’s ink that has stayed with me all my life. Like the ministry, printing and publishing seemed to get into my veins.

The mission headquarters had agreed to pay for my board and lodging, but the apprenticeship carried no salary. So there I was, going on sixteen, and living in the country’s biggest city—but with no salary.

The headquarters provided lodging for me with an old widow—Sister Naude—and her family. I lived in a small spare room on the second floor of their red brick house, which was comfortable and clean. I was perfectly happy in that situation. But I was poor, penniless.

I had been there a week or two when, one Sunday morning while preparing for church, I went to my chest of drawers to get my one nice white shirt. No shirt. I was baffled.

I went downstairs. “Sister Naude, there’s no shirt this week. Didn’t I put one in the wash?”

“Yes, you did,” she said, “but it came out so tattered and shredded, it wasn’t worth ironing.”

Silence.

“Don’t you have another one?” she asked.

“No, it so happens I don’t have anything there. My khaki ones are dirty.”

“Well,” she shrugged, “I guess you’ll have to stay in bed today.”

I returned to my room and sat on the edge of the bed. Then came an awful battle, a struggle with the devil himself. “You see, you want to work for the Lord. Open your eyes, man; there’s nothing to all this. Who do you think you are? If you were home, your mother would always see to it that you had a clean shirt. “

I began to slip from discouragement into depression. But suddenly the light broke through and I said half-aloud, “Why should I be discouraged? There are such things as trials. Others go through much worse things. If the Lord thinks I’m worthy to be tried, then I want to see how I come out of this with His help.”

My eyes landed on my suitcase. “Wait a minute,” I said, still speaking to myself loudly enough to be heard. “Maybe the Lord wants to do a miracle and put a shirt in the suitcase. “ I swung it up onto the bed and opened it. No shirt. But inside there was a very large white handkerchief that my mother had given me, as a farewell present. I smiled to myself. “I wonder if there’s enough cloth there to make a shirt. Maybe I can do something with it.”

I’ve often wondered when I see the ministers with their round collars whether they’ve got a shirt on behind that black dickey they wear. But I pursued my plan. Using some studs that I kept, and cutting two holes in precisely the right matching spots on either side, I managed to attach the handkerchief to a loose composition collar and then to my waistcoat. I ended up with a perfectly passable white front and six-button waistcoat. Off I went to church.

At the end of the service, a missionary from the United States approached me and shook hands, stuffing what felt like a wad of paper into my hand. “Somebody wants you to have that,” he said. I thought it was candy. But it was a ten-shilling note—two dollars in those days. “That will buy a shirt,” I said to myself.

Then, with the wisdom of the young, I managed to get away from the service quickly, afraid that if I had to shake hands with too many people, my improvisation might shake loose and I would be discovered.

The next morning I bought a shirt and ended another chapter in the lifelong lesson of walking in the Spirit. The Lord’s reward in that episode—an early step in my training for the ministry—was precious. I have never again needed a shirt. His provision has always been more than ample.

Chapter 7, The Wedding

Approaching twenty-one, I found it would be necessary to undertake secular work while continuing to minister within the Pentecostal movement. So, I went to Pretoria as correspondence clerk in the head office of the South African Railways engineering department.

In 1925 and 26, Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, was a city of one hundred and twenty thousand people, nearly three-quarters European, a clean and well-landscaped city for the most part, laid out in modern rectangular-blocked design. It was an impressive city for the boy preacher from Ladybrand.

One of my first tasks, naturally, was to search out the work of the Apostolic Faith Mission. It didn't take long. In that city, too, the Pentecostals bore the reputation of false prophets among the main line denominations. The trail led to the Upper Room, a complex of several rooms and a main hall, situated in the heart of the city one floor above a quality chemist's shop, or drugstore. It was just one block from the main post office in one direction and one block the other direction from the great Central Dutch Reformed Church, the leading denominational church in the city. It was a marvelous sight on Sunday to see the crowds pouring out of each of the churches and mingling in the streets at the height of the day—the city's leading political, governmental and cultural figures on the one hand and the poor, outrageous "Apostolics"—that was the name given to the Pentecostals—on the other hand.

With the formal education and experience that I had acquired in those early years, it was not long before I had worked into serious ministry in the Upper Room, where the Lord moved dramatically and in such ways as to train me for the days and years ahead. The pastor, J. M. Francis, like myself, held a secular job and ministered only part-time. He needed help and eventually invited me to be his assistant. We shared the ministry, usually working in shifts, and that was the beginning of my more formal service as a pastor. What better place to start, I thought, than in "the Upper Room"?

The most famous member of that little Pentecostal church in the heart of South Africa's capital was the wife of the prime minister, General J.B.M. Hertzog. It was an interesting sight, both for us and for our neighbors at the Central Dutch Reformed Church, when Mrs. Hertzog would arrive in her long, black Cadillac and climb up the flight of stairs to the humble little Pentecostal meeting. To many it was scandalous; to us it was glorious. God is definitely no respecter of

persons.

Mrs. Hertzog, who had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, while her husband was leader of the National party, but before he became the prime minister, came to the meeting regularly except on Communion Sundays at the Reformed Church. Her husband consented to attend church on that day, and she was always by his side. The rest of the time she was with us.

The Dutch Reformed people almost lost the prime minister as a communicant at one point, however. He and his wife were together at the communion service, and an elder approached him. “Mr. Prime Minister, “ he said, “with all due respect, sir, your wife will not be permitted to take communion with us because she is an Apostolic.”

The old man nearly exploded, and was ready to storm out of the church. “This is the last time I will ever come into this place or any like it,” he said loudly enough to be heard for several pews around him. But his wife, a truly humble saint, held gently onto his arm, and quieted him. She appealed with all the power within her for him not to turn his back on the church. Despite his anger, he honored her plea the rest of his life.

He also stood by her in another controversy that became even more public. It centered on Mrs. Hertzog’s baptism in water by immersion, which came on the heels of her involvement with the Apostolic Faith Mission in Bloemfontein.

First she discussed water baptism with the general and received his permission to take this step, even though it was contrary to the practice of the Dutch Reformed Church. Then came the storm.

In Bloemfontein, the Apostolic Faith Mission was building a new church. The baptistry was completed ahead of the rest of the building, and Mrs. Hertzog asked if she could have a private baptismal service there before the church was dedicated. It was arranged and a few invited people arrived to take part. But they neglected to lock the front door after entering and a curious passerby secretly followed them in. To his amazement, he watched the wife of the nation’s prime minister being baptized in that new, little Pentecostal church.

Unhappily, that passerby turned out to be a newspaper editor and a leader in the National party. His newspaper produced a scoop that week and overnight the whole country knew of Mrs. Hertzog’s immersion. Letters of condemnation and judgment flooded the prime minister’s office from all quarters, and she was embarrassed for her husband’s sake.

She went directly to him. “Look at this,” she said, holding up several of the papers. He obviously was fully abreast of the stories. “I’m sorry,” she continued. “I never meant to cause you such embarrassment. We thought we were arranging for a very private baptismal service, but one of your men got into it and this is the consequence.”

The prime minister immediately dictated a letter to all his political colleagues and to the major newspapers. He offered no apology, no regret. The letter, as printed in the papers, expressed his gratitude for his “wonderful wife, “ described her commitment to the Lord, and stated flatly that her practice of worship was a personal matter that was not to be interfered with.

Within two days, the controversy was ended. And Mrs. Hertzog continued her life as an Apostolic—water-baptized as well as Spirit-baptized.

I learned another lesson from Mrs. Hertzog that has stuck with me all my life. I was ministering one Sunday and offered to pray individually for any people who wanted to come to the front of the church. A large crowd came forward, among them Mrs. Hertzog. I laid hands on several people and prayed for them, but I passed her by. It seemed presumptuous for me to lay hands on her.

As the prayers were ending, she caught my eye, obviously wanting to talk to me. As I approached, she said, “Why didn’t you pray for me?” Tears filled her eyes.

“Out of respect for you,” I answered. “You are the prime minister’s wife. I didn’t feel I could just lay hands on you.”

She was stern and sad at the same time. It was the strongest she had ever spoken to me. “When I’m in the meeting, I don’t represent the prime minister. Please remember that it isn’t the prime minister’s wife sitting in that pew. It’s me. Don’t ever in this church treat me with any kind of special respect. Outside, in the public, I’m the prime minister’s wife. Here I am a child of God, just like anybody else.”

That episode began a close and lasting friendship that was to affect my life at other times.

Right after Christmas, when I had become a regular part of the ministry at the Upper Room, a six-foot-seven fellow named Lorry Smit stopped me after the service. “David,” he said, “I’ve got a niece and she’s backslidden. She was so on fire for the Lord, but she’s been hurt terribly because of something that happened, and now she’s fallen completely away and won’t listen to anyone.”

At five-foot-eight, I had to step back to look up into Lorry’s serious face. “That’s too bad,” I said.

“I heard you mention one time that you have a lot of sympathy for backsliders, and I thought maybe you could help my niece out. I’ll take you out there to my sister’s home if you’ll go. I think you could help her. “

He agreed to drop by for me that afternoon and we rode our bicycles a couple of miles outside of the city to a village called Mountain View, situated at the foot of a mountain. Upon entering the humble cottage, I was introduced all around to several uncles, aunts and other relatives, and then finally to a slender, medium-height, brown-haired young woman.

Lorry was saying, “This is Sister Jacobs, Brother du Plessis. “ I looked into the woman’s eyes. At the same instant, it seemed, they were blue and they were green. It was impossible to say which with certainty.

Her face was virtually expressionless, no trace of a smile. “It is Miss Jacobs, please,” she said softly.

“Very happy to meet you, Miss Jacobs,” I said, instinctively bending at the waist ever so slightly, checking a temptation to laugh.

We walked to a couch along the far wall and sat down. I began to talk immediately. “Well, now, I think your remark demands an explanation.” She lifted an eyebrow. “Uncle Lorry introduced you as ‘Sister Jacobs’ and you right away say ‘Miss Jacobs.’ What in the world has happened to Sister Jacobs? Didn’t he have a reason to call you Sister Jacobs?”

“Oh yes,” she said quietly, a smile creeping across her very attractive mouth and her eyes brightening for a moment, “I was Sister Jacobs, but now I’m Miss Jacobs.”

“What happened to the sister?” I persisted.

She glanced at her hands clasped in her lap and then spoke, “I warned a woman in the church that the Lord wanted to heal her but that she would have to humble herself. The pastor heard about it and said my remark was of the devil. He said I had no right to talk to a great lady like that.”

She lifted her eyes to mine before continuing. “I’m sure I got it from the Lord.” Several seconds passed. “At any rate, I’ve stopped going to church. I don’t want any more to do with it.” “Tell me,” I said, “did you have a real experience of salvation?”

“Oh yes,” she said, with wide-eyed emphasis.

“Tell me about it.”

She began to unfold the story, and before long she was weeping. There was no question about her sincerity. The other relatives, including her mother, had left us alone as we talked, but, knowing that they all were believers, I felt they should help with the ministry to Miss Jacobs. I asked them to come and pray with us. We all knelt and, with virtually no urging, the young woman reopened her heart to the Lord Jesus and made a full surrender of her life to Him, while she continued to weep profusely.

When we rose, all strain and tension were gone from her face. She smiled easily and said, "Excuse me, I'll need another handkerchief," walking across the room to a table. Wholly unexpectedly and with unmistakable clarity, the Lord spoke to me at that instant, "That's your wife."

I was stunned. "Dear Lord," I thought, "I wasn't looking for a wife."

As she returned across the room, I looked fully at her. I was grinning uncontrollably. "Thank you, Lord. She's beautiful."

And that's how I met Anna Cornelia Jacobs, who had been identified by the Lord as the future Mrs. David John du Plessis.

Two days later, Anna and I had our first date. She agreed to go with me to the midnight service at the church on New Year's Eve. As I went to pick her up at work that evening, I wasn't absolutely certain I'd recognize her in a crowd. I was afraid that, having seen her only once, I'd miss her.

But I didn't miss her. She was working at the threepenny counter, the cheapest section of a five-and-ten-cent store downtown. The manager told me, as I inquired for her, "I put Anna at the threepenny counter because she's the prettiest and friendliest girl I've got. So when people come in they see this pretty girl, and they're always willing to spend threepenny just to talk to her."

At church, the congregation was singing, "Some through the fire, some through the flood, some through great trial, but all through the blood," when we both were touched by the Lord. Before we knew it, we were dedicating our lives to Him— together.

"This is too simple," I thought. "We only just met. I haven't even proposed to her yet." But there I was, whispering to her beneath the singing, "Let's dedicate our lives to the ministry. Someday you and I will work for the Lord."

Her eyes glistened. "Oh yes," she said, "I'll be a missionary."

The courtship lasted just over eighteen months. On Saturday afternoon, August 13, 1927, Anna and I were married by Brother Botha Opperman in the Upper

Room. It was a simple ceremony, a simple exchange of vows. About one hundred people were present.

We intended to have no reception or anything special beyond the ceremony, so we immediately headed for the photographer's studio to have our wedding pictures made. It wasn't like today, when the photographers roam all over the place at weddings, shooting at will. We had to go to the photographer.

On our way back, we asked to be taken home. Brother Opperman had rented us two rooms in his simple residence and that was to be our home for the indefinite future. But the driver pulled up in front of the church again. "We'd rather go home," I said, a little embarrassed and becoming exasperated as well.

He turned around in the seat of his new car and said, "You'll disappoint a lot of people if you go home now," waving his hand toward the church stairs. So, up we went, and the Upper Room was filled with people. It was a wonderful reception. Seats had been moved, tables brought in; there were flowers and decorations. And beautiful Christian music filled the hall.

It was a party to honor the Lord—and us. But it had a time limit. In two hours, we had to clear the hall and restore it to its normal use; that night we began a series of special teaching meetings. The new couple started their honeymoon sitting on a church platform.

It didn't stop there. In one of those inexplicable things that the Lord either arranges or allows to happen, we received an unexpected week off to be together although we were too poor to travel anywhere.

It began just two days before we were to be married. Anna and I, at the same time, felt a certain strangeness, not really pain, not even noticeable swelling, but we felt a certain discomfort in our throats. "Oh no, Lord, no sickness, please!" We went to the doctor. Mumps. Both of us.

What now? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding" (Prov. 3:5). We knew it by heart.

So the wedding took place as scheduled. The doctor ordered us to take the week off from work. We apparently were healed, with no further symptoms or side effects. And we attended all the special meetings. God gave us a week together and with our family, the brethren—a perfect honeymoon.

Several months before the wedding, my father and I ran head-on into one of the two or three clashes that ruffled our close relationship in my early years. I wrote to tell him that Anna and I planned to get married and asked if I could bring her home with me. His reply was that, at twenty-one, I was too young . . . "I don't

think it would be wise.” I fired back my response, typically bristling: “In that case, then, I think I’d better not come home. I’ll just follow the way the Lord is guiding me, and I’ll get married.”

Then silence. For many months.

After the arrival of our first baby, I took Anna to my father’s house to stay for a short time while I made preparations for a new job. That visit melted all opposition and replaced it with deep love.

When I returned for her, my father took me aside. “If you make such wise choices in everything in life as you did in the choice of a wife, you will be a great success.” Peace and affection were fully restored between us.

With the removal of the cloud, dad then proceeded to question me in great humor. “Did you go around the world to find a wife with exactly the same name as your mother?”

I laughed. “No, I didn’t think of that at all. It had to be the Lord.”

My mother’s name was Anna Cornelia, as was her mother’s and her grandmother’s. My wife’s name was Anna Cornelia.

My father’s name was David John du Plessis, as was the eldest son in his family going back to his grandfather.

I was named David John du Plessis.

I smiled as I said it, but there was a certain solemnity in my heart: “Well, dad, there are things that you prayed for that you may not be able to do. Maybe I’ll be able to do them. I’ll do them in your name.”

Chapter 8, The Walk By Faith

Right after our wedding, Anna and I had to learn a deep spiritual lesson, and quickly.

We both gave up our jobs and determined to live by faith, serving the Lord Jesus Christ with every minute and every hour of the day and night. The last month we worked, we earned about four hundred dollars together, and we started from there. In the first month of our walk by faith, we took in only twenty dollars. There was little room for frills.

After giving up our employment, we went to a town called Benoni, a biblical name—“son of my sorrow”—the name given by Rachel to the son she bore as she died, the name Jacob subsequently changed to Benjamin, well remembered as Joseph’s youngest brother. Benoni was forty miles southeast of Pretoria and we entered immediately into the Apostolic work there. I was a full-time worker, but not the pastor, in the church, and I spent most of my time visiting homes and counseling. In those days in South Africa, a church would never make it without a strong program of visitation. The pastor had to reach out to the people, out into the community, into the countryside, as the case might be. The outreach often had to be done person-to-person, which even today is probably the most effective means of ministering the gospel.

I liked that kind of work, and it fell naturally to me to carry it on, relieving the pastor for other ministry. Wherever there was a need, even in other towns, I would go, whether for physical or spiritual needs. As always, there was much to do.

And this is where I gradually began to be troubled. I perceived, slowly at first, that my life lacked power. I didn’t seem to be accomplishing as much as I knew deep down I should be. Several weeks went by, and I began to share this with Anna, when we were able to be alone at night—alone together and then shortly alone with our first daughter, Cornelia—“Corrie”—who was born in that community.

When we went to Benoni, we went prepared to set ourselves and the world straight through prayer and the disciplined life of faith. The first thing we did was to schedule certain hours for prayer, day and night. We set the alarm clock to wake us up during the night to pray, once before midnight and once after. And then we set it to wake us before daylight each morning, so we could begin each

day with prayer. We prayed at least an hour at each of those times.

Then we set aside specific times in each day for reading the Bible and Christian literature. We set aside a definite day of the week for fasting. And we blocked out every part of each day: here at this hour, there at that hour, back at another hour. Everything was in order. Neat and clean.

Finally, one night six months after the start of that clockwork routine, I turned to Anna in exhaustion and discouragement. “Do you realize we’ve been here six months and have accomplished absolutely nothing?” Her face showed as much discouragement as I felt.

“I accomplished more when I was in a job and worked on the side,” I continued, “and now, no job and all this time to serve the Lord, and I’m doing nothing. I planned to move the world, and what happens?”

The house was quiet. Corrie was fast asleep in her room. But we were far from being at peace. “Let not your heart be troubled,” the Lord had said. We were not obeying.

“We pray and pray,” I said, “and I haven’t seen one prayer answered in six months.” That was an exaggeration, but not far from the truth. “Nothing has happened. And nothing is happening.”

Anna nodded agreement at every sentence and added another item to the list of failures. “And you and I are not getting any more spiritual either. We’re just getting more and more bound by our system. “

That phrase, “our system,” rang like a heavy gong in the stillness of the room. Our system.

Without speaking, we both got to our knees. “Lord, where are we wrong?” My voice had lost all of its resonance and power: the words came in a gravelly whisper. “Why is it that instead of being able to pray through to victory, we feel we are losing?”

The answer came quickly—and not with great drama. I spoke the words that came into my mind. “You are worshiping by law, not by grace. You’re wrong to try to legislate everything. You’re even making laws on praying.”

I spoke to the Lord again. “Don’t you want us to pray like this?” “I want you to pray without ceasing. I want you to live as the Spirit leads you to live. You are so set on arranging your days that you never hear the Holy Spirit when He speaks to you about something else.”

It was startlingly clear. Like so many believers we had fallen into a trap. We had

become New Testament legalists, living just as much under the law as the Jews had under the old law. We were in deep bondage, despite our good intentions. The Lord taught us much from the Scriptures in a short time that night. He immediately laid three verses (26-28) from the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans before us:

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose” (italics mine).

Why must we strive so, we realized, when in fact He will govern and direct even our prayers.

And then came sweet peace with the full understanding of the closing verses in First Thessalonians:

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it” (italics mine).

It was not easy for us to understand how we had been so hard-headed, so set in our ways, so stubborn—and so proud of our discipline. We had fully misunderstood the admonition to “contend for the faith.”

“Anna,” I said, with my heart and my whole demeanor lifted, “let’s learn to pray all the time and just talk to the Lord. Let’s learn to let Him lead us every step.”

“Yes,” she said, smiling, “let’s learn how to trust Him. ”How humbling it was to realize we really hadn’t trusted Him.

Immediately our lives changed. We were suddenly very happy and ever eager to see what God was going to do. And, of course, we began to see miracles—the miracles we had missed by refusing to move out of our set ways.

I counseled a man and his wife, and the Spirit gave me the very words of wisdom required to set their lives straight.

I counseled a strong-willed businessman, and the Spirit gave me the word of knowledge required to cause him to seek the Lord's forgiveness and redirection of his motives.

In church, we prayed for the sick—physically as well as spiritually—and they were immediately healed.

It was only a few days after our gentle correction from the Lord that I became aware of the great change in Anna, not only in her service of the Lord, but also in her moment-by-moment life.

I watched her ironing at the ironing board. She had been there for nearly an hour, and she was alternately humming, singing, and laughing.

“What is it that makes you like to stand at that ironing board?” And it wasn't just the ironing either—it was all her housework: she kept the house spotless. However, she did seem to love that ironing board.

“Oh, ” she said, “this is a time when I don't need to do anything but talk to the Lord. I can iron and talk. It's fun.”

Her chores had become pleasures because of the freedom Jesus had given us. While her hands were going a mile a minute, she prayed for me, for the children, for the brethren, for whomever the Lord put on her mind. She and I both had taken the first steps toward living by prayer, not by the law, not by the clock, not by a formula. It came through talking to the Lord all the time, anytime, anywhere.

If He were to say, “Saskatchewan,” we were ready to go to Saskatchewan, although we hadn't the slightest idea where it was.

Chapter 9, Temptation

I have skipped an important episode of my life between 1920 and 1927 in order to tell, in an orderly way, how Anna and I got started together. Now I want to go back to those years before we get too far from them.

My apprenticeship at the Apostolic Faith Mission's headquarters was a wonderful time for me. Print shops have a unique smell that I love. It is primarily the ink, but the grease, oil, machinery and paper all blend with the ink to produce a marvelous odor. It seems to possess life within itself, life that is carried on by the words that fill the books, magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers that printers produce. Especially in the case of books, those words can easily outlive the men who framed them. To me it always seemed so right that the printing press was first used to publish a Bible, the word of God.

I worked only in the printing side of the business there in Johannesburg. I frequently had an eye on the editorial department, fascinated with the writing and editing of the publications, but my assignment was to learn the work of the printer. I was a beginner, on the bottom rung.

Several months passed, and one day one of the old brothers there—they were all Christians—singled me out for a private talk during lunch break. “David,” he began gently, “I’ve no doubt that the Lord has called you to His work, but I don’t believe this is what He called you to.”

I was puzzled. I had a deep sense that he was right, but I wasn’t ready to admit it openly.

“You don’t really fit in here,” he continued. “You are too young and too uneducated to go very far. You need to get into the editorial department, for example, but you don’t have enough education for that.”

I had been something of a “genius” in the eyes of so many because of my accomplishments as a student in high school and as the “boy preacher. “ I wasn’t used to being considered too uneducated for a job. But I had great respect for the old man. At that moment, my feelings were deeply hurt, and I was puzzled. I know it showed.

“You must have more education,” the old man said. “It would be wonderful if you could go back to school.”

I told him I’d think about it. I knew he was right. I had an aptitude for learning,

and I needed more training and exposure to men's knowledge to prepare me for God's work. By myself, that afternoon in the print shop, I prayed. "Lord, I thought you called me, and now, look, this old brother wants me to go back to school."

As clearly as anything, the Lord responded to my heart-broken statement. "I called you, but I haven't sent you yet. Go and prepare yourself."

What did that mean?

The Lord repeated it. "I called you, but I never sent you." "Dear Lord," I prayed, "I didn't know that."

Still clearly, in my thoughts, the Lord explained to me, "Don't you know, I called the disciples, but I only sent them three years later. In the three years from the day I called them I prepared them.

I sent them—I used them—on short missions. But that was only preparation. You want to be on full-time service right now."

Under my breath, I said, "Well, Lord, then I can only go back and study some more."

"Yes." His reply was direct.

I completed two years of junior college, basic liberal arts education, at the Ladybrand School and then came another of those serious confrontations with my father. It produced a classic example of the discipline he expected from us boys and that which he set for himself.

"What are you going to do next year?" my father asked after my two years at junior college.

"I'm going to the university," I replied. I was prepared to go to Grey University in Bloemfontein, which later became the University of the Orange Free State.

His look was stern. "I don't want you to go to the university. "

There was a long silence.

"Dad, I must."

"If you are determined to go to the university, then you leave this house. Today." His stubbornness was at its height.

So was mine. And I walked away and sought mother in the kitchen. "What do I do?" I asked her.

"Son," she said softly, "he will never agree. You'd better go. I feel you should

prepare yourself for the work of the Lord, but, you must understand, your father sincerely believes education is not going to matter in your serving the Lord. He's against education. He's seen it ruin too many young people who might have ended up in the service of the Lord. You'd better leave."

At that time, my father possessed a lay preacher's certificate in the Apostolic Faith Mission. It was very important to him. He returned it to the church with these words: "The Bible says the man who ministers must be able to discipline his home. My eldest son will not obey me, and I can't make him do it, so I can no longer be a preacher."

He returned his papers. His son was more of a donkey than anyone realized.

The healing of the rift between my father and me occurred two years later in Johannesburg, while I was working for the railroad there. I sent dad a railroad ticket to come to one of the Apostolic Faith Mission conferences, and he accepted it.

We met alone at the conference, and the barriers gradually melted. In a nutshell, he saw that my university education had not interfered with my love of Jesus but rather had enabled me to be a better preacher. He changed during those few days—especially as he heard me preach—and we became close friends once again.

It turned out that at Grey University—an institution of three thousand students—I was able to get special loans by arranging a course of study suitable for a schoolteacher. I was to be guaranteed a job as a teacher after graduation, and was thus considered a good risk. But I ran up serious debts in the process.

I became the first Pentecostal in South Africa to obtain an education that high, and, of course, the doors opened even more for me. The "boy preacher" gradually became the "young firebrand."

Nearly two years later, during the annual one-month winter holiday spreading over June and July for South African colleges, I accepted an invitation from the Apostolic pastor to preach at Durban on the east coast. It was a chance for a vacation in that beautiful resort where winter was almost like summer because of the warm ocean currents.

A number of things happened during that vacation. First and most importantly, the Lord brought a remarkable revival. Second, I found out I could get no more money for school. I had reached the limit for loans, and I was completely without funds. I would be unable to return to the university, where I had, for all intents and purposes, completed all my courses but still lacked a degree.

"Why worry?" I thought. "You've got the education. Why is the degree so

important? Besides, you've got a big revival going on. You're needed here."

I dropped out of school during that vacation and continued with the revival work, putting my bilingual capacity to full use, preaching or translating for the pastor, in English or Afrikaans, depending upon the need. But, still, there was little money; my education debts were deep, and I was in sore straits. That's when I went to work for the railroad and was subsequently transferred to the mechanical engineers' headquarters in Pretoria, encountering first the Upper Room and then Anna. Which brings me to that important episode I mentioned earlier.

The temptation of David the donkey began to take shape as I learned and grew in the ministry at the Upper Room in Pretoria. It was a good example of a young man's vulnerability to flattery, but it also capitalized on a significant germ of truth: The church has failed to minister to the nations with the vigor required.

On a hot Saturday night in Pretoria, I was leading an open-air service in Church Square, the city's central square, assisted by half a dozen people from the church. We had a portable organ and, with our singing and enthusiasm, we were able to attract a good crowd. It was a lazy, warm evening, and the strollers welcomed the diversion.

I began speaking from the middle of the ring that the people formed and, as usual, I threw myself into it in short order, spelling out the straight, pure gospel. I got warmer and warmer, and I removed my jacket and tossed it to one of the brothers. After a minute or two I rolled up my shirtsleeves, and I was really in high gear—a regular firebrand at the age of twenty-one. Then I grabbed one of the chairs we brought for some of the women in our group and stood up on it. My voice rang across the square. In minutes, there was a tremendous crowd and extra police were sent to direct the traffic. The Lord enabled me in extraordinary fashion to move the people with the message of salvation. They were really with me—with the Spirit, actually—and a large number accepted Christ right there. It was an unusual scene, even for one of our unusual street meetings.

In the middle of the following week, a stranger sought me out at the church, asking to speak to me alone. He was a solidly built, dark-haired man of middle age, kindly enough looking, but serious. When we were by ourselves, he addressed me earnestly: "You know, my friend, you can do great things for your country. I watched you last Saturday night at Church Square. You are an orator; you can move people."

Naturally, I was flattered. "Thank you," I answered, hardly interrupting him. I still didn't know who he was. My puzzlement was apparent.

“I represent the National party, the government party”—Prime Minister Hertzog’s group—“and I’ve come to tell you we need you. The country needs you.”

I was amazed. “You’re from the political party?” I said, disrupting his flow.

“Yes,” he said, “I’m secretary of the party.”

“And you’re interested in me?” It was exciting. I hadn’t thought of such a thing before.

“You can do great things for your country,” he repeated, “but not through the church you’re working with. You must come to work with us. We’ll appoint you as an assistant secretary and you can arrange meetings all over the countryside. “

He continued to put it so nicely. I could serve God and country. By working through politics, I could bring the nation to God. It sounded great. There would be a salary, and expenses paid.

I told him I’d need time to think about it, and we parted. A whole new life had been laid before me in five minutes.

One thing stuck in my mind, nagging me even as I found myself becoming excited about his offer. He had not mentioned anything of what I had told the people at Church Square. He had said only that I was effective. The message was unimportant.

The first person I talked to about this offer was Mrs. Hertzog. I had to go no further. Encountering me at the Upper Room, she listened as I told her about the visit from the stranger.

Tears were in her eyes as I finished. She studied my face. “Don’t do it,” she said softly but with great emphasis. “You must not get mixed up in politics. You already have the pearl of great price. I know what God has done for you. Don’t give it up.”

She seemed close to crying, but there was iron in her voice. “You don’t know the bitterness, the hatred that can be in this. And you won’t be able to resist, especially if you become one of the leaders, which you will. Soon, they will push you for Parliament, and then on into other things.”

Then she clinched it. “You told us your parents dedicated you to the Lord. Are you His or are you not?”

The next day I declined the offer. Phase one of the temptation had passed.

After Anna and I had stepped out into full-time ministry, I was given the

pastorate of a district in the most spiritually depressed area in the entire country. We lived in the town of De Aar, a railroad center in the northern Cape. The spiritual depression there far outdistanced the economic depression that was creeping across the nation. “This must be the subway to hell,” Anna said of the railroad center.

But the Lord capitalized on the situation. As I ministered to a number of the railroad people there, I was offered a free pass on the railroad once a month in any of the four directions the line traveled. I’d go to a nice little town south and hold some meetings there, stopping off to visit people along the way. The next time, I’d head east and I developed a large congregation at the terminal. Then, I’d go west, all the way into West Africa, where I’d work the whole area. And then north, and more of the same.

I was the only full-time minister in that whole section, and I worked it regularly, thanks to the railroad. Today there is a pastor in almost every town and village.

This led me into further systematization with a typewriter and a duplicator. I developed a newsletter that I sent regularly to all the people I’d encountered. They became linked and the whole work prospered.

The Apostolic Faith Mission headquarters was impressed with the organization that the Lord led me into—and my editorial ability, which my education had begun to feed, was beginning to attract attention.

By 1930, Anna and I were called to another, more prosperous and advanced district in the Orange Free State and we landed in the town of Bethlehem. It was a pleasant town near the Drakensberg Mountain Range spreading into the Orange Free State from Basutoland.

I became secretary of the district council for the-whole state, entered into more and more of the activities in Johannesburg, and my work for the Pentecostal movement spread.

One major leap forward occurred during one of the Johannesburg conferences. Discussion developed over the condition of the official mission newspaper, The Comforter and Messenger of Hope, the publication on which I had begun in 1920. It was in such bad shape financially that not one issue had been published in the last six months. What was to become of it?

I got to my feet. “If you will turn the paper over to me,” I said, “and allow me to publish it from where I live rather than here in Johannesburg, I will make it pay. I know what to do.”

After hearing me out, they elected me editor and authorized the transfer of the

operation to Bethlehem. But there was a serious, seemingly impossible hitch. I was to function under a committee of twenty-one men.

Fortunately, the chairman of the committee was the vice president of the movement, Botha Opperman, the man who had married Anna and me. At our first meeting, he said, "All right, David, what do you plan to do?"

I outlined my scheme for farming the printing of the paper out to the commercial print shop in Bethlehem, which was a good one, thus avoiding the expense of operating and maintaining our own costly equipment. I would work directly in the shop, doing a lot of the tasks myself and directing the printers first hand. I would immediately set up a circulation program with all the churches, in which they would pay in advance for so many papers and then sell them for cash themselves at a slight profit. That way I would have enough money to pay for an issue even before it came off the press. And I would at once make the paper bilingual, Afrikaans (Dutch) and English, some articles in one language, some in another, and all the official reports in both languages.

The committee was impressed. Brother Opperman moved that my plans be approved and said, "From here on out, we'll just watch and see what he does. If something comes up that he needs help on or if something goes wrong, we can get together. Otherwise, this is our final meeting."

The committee never met again. And the paper flourished. It has never missed an issue to this day.

The depression that gripped so much of the world in the early thirties was painfully felt in South Africa. Businesses stagnated; people were without jobs in certain areas. I had been without a salary from the church for six months. Our house was provided, but we were strictly on faith for everything else.

One day I walked into the publishing house where the church paper was printed, ready to continue work on our next issue. The manager, a man who tended to drink too much even under good conditions, met me at the door. "Do you know this place is going under the hammer?" he said to me glumly.

"What do you mean?"

"The whole thing is going bankrupt," he blurted. In this case, "the whole thing" was a fine print shop and a general newspaper, the Bethlehem Express, the only newspaper in the eastern part of the free state.

"The shop and the paper, too?" I asked. What about my church paper, I thought. This shop was the key to its success.

“The publisher bought it with the idea that it was a gold mine, ” he explained, “but now he thinks the depression is killing it.”

He glared at me. “And that’s all wrong, you know,” he said angrily. “It’s not the depression. It’s mismanagement. The owner knows nothing about publishing. And, young man, if I had the knowledge of printing that you have, and the ability, I’d buy this place. You could get it for three thousand pounds.”

“Oh my,” I said, and walked out to the front where I stood praying. “Lord, what am I going to do if this place closes up? There’s no other print shop here.”

And around the corner came Norman Ellenberger, a lawyer who had branched out into real estate and was prospering.

“Hello, Norman,” I said. “Did you know this place is going bankrupt?”

“No,” he replied. “That would be a tragedy for the town.”

“I can buy it, you know,” I said, rather blankly.

“Well, why don’t you?”

“My dear man, do you know my church has stopped my salary?

And all I’ve got is the parsonage. The rest is on faith. How can I buy it?”

“Simple,” he said, squinting in the sunlight. “You float a company. Sell shares. It’s just cut out for you.”

“I don’t know how to do that,” I said.

“I do,” he answered quickly, “and I’ll help you. I’ll take the first one hundred shares, at a pound apiece.”

“Are you serious?”

“Absolutely. Now, you see how many more shares you can sell.”

I went back into the office and told the foreman what I was going to do.

“If you’re serious,” he said, “I’ll take one hundred shares.”

Before I’d finished, all ten employees had taken a hundred shares each—on the condition that I would be managing director—and I had eleven hundred pounds. I needed nineteen hundred more.

Not really sure what this was all about, I took up a position in the outer office to watch the customers go in and out. The next one who came in was one of the wealthy men in the area, Mr. Sugden, who had only recently sold his dairy. I approached him.

“Mr. Sugden, this newspaper and plant are ready to go out of business, and I’m sure you’d agree that would be bad for the town.”

“Is that so?” he said.

“I am interested in taking it over,” I continued and explained my plan to him.

He looked me up and down. “You’re a preacher, eh? I think I like you. I’ll tell you what: I’ll give you five hundred pounds and Mrs. Sugden will give you five hundred pounds.”

It was amazing.

The next man to come in was a former mayor of Bethlehem, a contractor. I told him the story, and he took one thousand pounds’ worth.

In a few weeks, it was my business—I was managing director of the company and editor of the paper. I had acquired the operation at a third of its commercial value, although along with it had come severe financial liabilities. And once again, I had a salary. The outlook was bright.

I began virtually to live in that office. All of us put in long, hard hours. It was our business, and that makes a difference. One of my first moves with the newspaper was to draw on my church paper experience and shift to a bilingual publication. Seventy per cent of the farmers were Dutch. Why should they have to depend on an English newspaper? Quickly, the circulation doubled, and tripled, and quadrupled, and along with that, of course, came increased advertising revenue. Before long, we were a roaring success. After six months like that, we moved into the black and in one month covered the losses of that first six months. The depression began to lift.

Meanwhile, I did most of the reporting for the newspaper myself, attending city council and school board meetings, political events, Chamber of Commerce activities, everything. At the same time, however, I carried a full load of church work and had even begun a Bible school, in which I taught six fellows from five to seven each morning.

Although I was overextended, I had quickly become one of the best known people in the town and seemed to thrive on the hard work. It went on like that for a year.

Then came the dedication of the new city hall. All the important people were there that day. Early in the program I was introduced as the representative of the Chamber of Commerce and spoke about the business conditions of the city. Fifteen minutes later, I was introduced as pastor of the Apostolic Church and

spoke about our spiritual condition.

That event set change in motion.

The directors of the printing and newspaper business came to my office to see me. “You’ve done marvelously well, David,” said the spokesman. “We think it’s time for bigger things. We’d like to expand, buy new equipment, increase the volume. We want to buy you a car and increase your salary. And it’s time you received a percentage of the profits. We’ve got a lot of confidence in you.” It sounded too good to be true.

“But, David,” another director said, “you’ll have to give all your time to this. You’ll have to stop your church work. You can’t speak as a businessman and a churchman at the same time. They don’t go together. You’re on your way to becoming a big man in this state.”

Anna and I talked alone in the parsonage. She never came to the office. “It looks to me as though I take the offer, or I resign and leave town.”

And we had just reached the point of living comfortably, for the first time. She was quiet for nearly a minute. “I’ve always remembered that you are the Lord’s donkey. It’s my favorite story about you. If you are the Lord’s donkey, don’t you think you’ve backslidden enough?”

I looked up, bristling a bit, but she continued talking. “You don’t know it, but they’ve already been here to consult me about your life. They want to put you on the school board, and from that you’ll go to the city council, then to Parliament. They’ve got it all mapped out.”

More silence. I knew she was right.

“Don’t you remember how Sister Hertzog pleaded with you not to go into politics?” she asked.

I remembered Mrs. Hertzog’s strong warning clearly.

“David, the Lord called you. You are David the donkey—the Lord’s’ donkey. I don’t think this situation is from God.”

“But, Anna, tell me, are you willing to go back to the faith life—and suffer?”

“I’d rather suffer with a dedicated husband who’s a pauper than live with a well-to-do man I’m not sure I can trust. If God can’t trust you with your commitment to Him, then how can I trust you?”

Her moist eyes sparkled both blue and green.

“All right, dear,” I said softly, but happily, “then together we go.”

Chapter 10, The Acts of The Holy Spirit

In the faith life, it was imperative to know the voice of the Lord. I had many things to learn, but the Holy Spirit is the perfect teacher and He's patient, for which I, a donkey, am grateful.

Learning to distinguish between the Lord and the devil was crucial. One day some students came to me and asked about this problem. "We have heard you say so many times, 'The Lord said.' How do you know the Lord said?"

"Well," I replied, "doesn't He speak to our minds?" "You," I said to one of the boys. "In chapel this morning I heard you say the devil's giving you a rough time. 'The devil said so and so,' you told us. How can you fellows hear the devil so plainly and not the Lord? Haven't you noticed how many people say, 'The devil said so?' Why can't they hear the Lord if they can hear the devil? For some reason they're afraid to say it's the Lord, but they're not afraid to say so when they think it's the devil." The young man answered quickly. "Well, Satan shoots fiery darts into our minds; we know that."

"So," I said, "all the bad thoughts, that's the devil?"

"Yes," he replied.

"And all the good thoughts, that's you?"

He was quiet, but nodded.

"Where does the Lord come in?" I pressed on. "No. I think that all the bad thoughts are of the devil. All the good thoughts are of the Lord. And I'm in between; I can choose."

"You see, " I went on when no one responded, "I have a mind. But I usually find that my mind is influenced by what the devil says or what the Lord says. And I listen to the Lord. I don't listen to the devil."

The light seemed to come on in the students' faces. It was important that they should understand this. We are not following the devil. We are following the Lord. It is His voice, the good voice, that we must listen to.

In my early spiritual life I was concerned that when I prayed my mind seemed to wander, particularly when I prayed in tongues. It was so bad that I eventually cried out to God, "Help me control my mind and my attention. Why does my mind wander when I pray with tongues?"

Almost immediately the thought came into my mind, “Where does your mind wander?”

And right away I thought, “Why, that’s the Lord asking me. Somebody’s talking to me. I’m hearing Him!”

I began to realize that my mind wandered toward those issues I was grappling with, the people I was trying to help, or the burdens I was carrying. I then thought that, as I spoke in tongues, I was receiving interpretation. So I asked, “Lord is this interpretation of the tongues?” For we had understood all those years that when we spoke in tongues, it was a message from God. But the Lord said, “No, you’re speaking to God. And don’t you think I have anything to say back to you?”

Then, just as with the students, the light clicked on. I was speaking to God in tongues, and He was speaking back to me in my mind. I began to find beautiful revelation that way. All that had been lacking was understanding of what the Lord was doing and a realization that I should take more notice of where my mind was wandering, for there was meaning to it.

It was increasingly obvious that I should pray faithfully with the Spirit—in tongues. For I didn’t know what to pray; I didn’t know the whole situation in cases I was praying for; I didn’t know the answers to the questions being asked of me. But, praying with the Spirit, in tongues, I found understanding.

For the Scripture teaches us that the Spirit:

“helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered ... the Spirit. . . maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Rom. 8:26-27).

Through practice and training I learned to listen. I learned also to pray with understanding, in my natural language, and then to sit still, and wait, and listen. I learned to know that the Holy Spirit was talking to me, giving me guidance or revelation. And if I was suspicious that the guidance might be merely something of my own and not from God, merely a mind full of ideas, there was a way of testing. I would immediately pray in tongues—“he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God” (1 Cor. 14:2)—and would expect an answer. If the guidance evaporated, I would say forget it; that’s not the Lord; it was just my idea, influenced by circumstances. But if the guidance remained clear and steady, then I knew it was from the Lord and I could stand on it

without fear or doubt.

That way I learned to know what the Lord wanted me to do or to say, and He was ready and able to tell me twenty-four hours a day. I didn't have to set certain hours for praying, or follow a ritual. I was able to hear His voice no matter where I was or what I was doing. That was important.

As I grew in this relationship, I entered into another form of guidance. It came when I discovered that Paul and his companions had wanted to go certain places but had been blocked by the Spirit. One prominent passage of Scripture speaking to this point comes in Acts 16:6-7:

“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Asia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not” (italics mine).

I began to be sensitive to the Lord's checking rather than relying only on those times when He said, “Thou shalt do that.” It became my practice to dedicate my mind to the Lord daily, often before I got out of bed in the morning, something like this; “I'm yours today, Lord, and whatever comes to my mind, every guidance I get, I'll just follow on. I will do what my hands find to do. I won't stop unless you stop me. Guide me hour by hour, and I don't want to know this morning what I am to do this afternoon. I have an idea of what duties there are, and I am going to do my duty. If there is any point in which I am losing the way or going where you don't want me to go, check me. “

I had had experience with people who would kneel down in the morning with a little book and write out that day's program. It never worked out, and they ended up each day confused because things had gone differently from what they had wanted.

Fortunately, the Lord kept me out of this foolishness by teaching me to trust His checks. I found I never worried. I just proceeded along the course that seemed right. And I learned to recognize the checks. My mind might say one thing, but my heart felt something else. And I began to pay attention to those feelings. If I developed a marvelous thought in my mind, but didn't feel comfortable down in my heart, then I knew I was being checked. I stopped, and waited. Praying in tongues proved to be a wonderful step in working my way out of such an impasse. I would merely pray in tongues, and if the idea held firm, then I knew it was real. If it evaporated, it was not from God.

It is vital to emphasize one point about praying in tongues and guidance. People

who do not sincerely believe that they are speaking to God when they pray in tongues—people who do not believe that the Holy Spirit is actually making intercession—may end up in disaster. They must believe without doubt that what comes to their minds comes from God and be able to act on it. Jesus said,

“And these signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall speak with new tongues ...” (italics mine).

They must believe. New tongues is far more a practice of faith than of anything else. There is no compulsion of the Holy Spirit in it. It is an act of faith. And if the faith is not properly founded, those things growing from it will not be properly founded either.

It was also important for me to learn the Lord’s timing. That is at the core of obedience. I learned that when the Holy Spirit said move, it was good to move right then. There was probably a good reason for the timing.

This was well illustrated during my days in the Apostolic Faith Mission headquarters. I would arrive early and begin the day by opening and sorting the mail. I’d take the paper knife and cut open all the letters, and from the outsides I could tell how to sort them. Then I’d begin to read them.

One morning, I was opening envelopes when the Holy Spirit said, “Read that one.” So I put it in a special pile. I picked up another. “No,” the voice said, almost audibly, “read that one first before you open another one.” So I picked it up and began to read. It was from a church. “We had invited an evangelist to come and now we’ve been notified that he cannot come. Could you help us and send us an evangelist to take care of the meetings this weekend?”

Again, clearly, the Holy Spirit said to me, “Call Albert Spargo.”

Well, I looked at my watch. It wasn’t even seven o’clock. I said, aloud, “Albert Spargo is asleep.” The Spirit said, “Call him now.” So I called him.

When he answered, I said, “Anything going for this weekend?”

He said, “I somehow have the weekend off, it seems.”

I told him about the opening. “Do you want to go? I can tell you that the Holy Spirit told me to call you.”

“I’d be happy to go,” he replied.

I went back to the mail, and the telephone rang. It was the pastor of a church in the Johannesburg suburbs. “Do you know where Brother Spargo is?” he asked.

“Yes, I was just talking to him.”

“Could you arrange for us to have him this weekend?” the pastor asked.

“I can’t,” I answered. “I’ve just arranged for him to go to the country.”

The light came on again. The Lord knew what had been coming. His timing had been important.

Brother Spargo went and stayed on the road for more than two weeks. When he returned, he was on cloud nine. “I wish the Lord would always tell you where to send me,” he said. “It’s the greatest ministry I’ve ever had. It was just glory to glory to victory. I was busy every night. People were saved, healed, blessed, beyond anything I’ve ever known.”

When I thought of what had happened on that one trip, I could see how disobedience for just one minute could have ruined the whole thing. The Spirit bids me go, the Spirit bids me stay, the Spirit bids me do. That is the motto of my life.

Another lesson came through a professor with whom I had been discussing the baptism in the Holy Spirit. “You’ve convinced me that I need this baptism,” he said. “You have convinced me that I must be willing to accept the consequences of speaking in tongues. ” He paused, and shook his head slowly. “ But I still have a problem. ‘He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God’ (1 Cor. 14:2). That I like; that’s what I want to do. ‘No man understandeth.’ That I can see. ‘Howbeit in the Spirit he speaketh mysteries.’ That’s my problem.”

He looked into my face. I said nothing. He wasn’t finished. “What is a mystery?” he went on. “What am I to expect in this matter? What is the nature of a mystery? Is there anything I can go by?”

“I really don’t know what the nature of a mystery is,” I answered, genuinely puzzled.

He pressed on. “But Paul wrote it, and Paul must have known. He must have used the right word. How did he discover ‘mysteries’ were being uttered?”

“I don’t know,” I said.

“David, when you talk to the Lord and He talks to you, why don’t you ask Him?”

“Don’t worry,” I said. “I’ve already made up my mind that when you go, I’m going to ask the Lord about this.”

“When you get the answer, tell me.” And he left.

I continued sitting right where I was. “Lord, you heard the conversation, and now I have a brand new problem. I also would like to know the nature of the mysteries. I don’t want to know the mysteries, but what direction do these go?”

Immediately, the answer came back. It was so fast that I was surprised. “Read Ephesians 5:18-19 and you will discover the way to the mysteries. “ I read the verses:

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

“Be filled with the Spirit,”

it said, which properly translated means keep on overflowing with the Spirit, and then, when you overflow with the Spirit, speak to yourselves with psalms. If I hadn’t opened the Bible, I would have missed it, but I began to read and, all of a sudden, the word “psalms” seemed to be printed in bold type—blacker than the other words. And I thought, “Psalms? Psalms? Is that the way?”

The thought came back, “That’s where you’ll discover the way.”

So I opened to the Psalms and the very first words that my eyes fell on were in Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

“There it is,” I said. “He is talking to God.” And, sure enough, almost all of the psalm consists of speaking to God. Much of it is dialogue between the praying man and God.

Then I began to see the difference between the psalms and prophecy. One is speaking to God and dialogue with God; the other is speaking for God. The psalms are addressed to God. They are worship, praise, adoration. Beautiful. And we need to learn more of that. And then there’s confession, humbling oneself. Then intercession for others. I discovered all of this in that session with the Lord over the psalms.

“Now I see where my mind wanders, and why, and what inspiration I get,” I said half-aloud. “Lord, it is not interpretation that I get in my private devotions. No. Interpretation is required only when you address somebody. But when you are alone, it is conversation. That’s it! And the mysteries are in the nature of a psalm—worship, praise, adoration, confession, intercession. It’s all there in the mystery as directed by the Spirit himself.”

There was much learning from the Holy Spirit in the early days of my life. But

for sheer, miraculous drama, none of the teachings exceeded an episode in Ladybrand, about which I was reluctant even to speak for many years. It was a time so powerful and so alien to our natural ways of life as to be subject to misunderstanding and disbelief.

It began when I returned from a trip to find strife in our little congregation. It centered on one man who had become extreme on holiness and was making life miserable for everyone else. One Sunday, for example, he stood up and lambasted the people for not living above sin. He went so far as to say that he lived above sin and was immune from any attack of the devil. Of course, before long he was mired in the sin of spiritual pride. The very next day, in fact, he fell into deep despair and even doubted his salvation. He became worse and worse.

The brethren came to me and asked if I would try to help him. I was convinced the devil was trying to destroy him, but I didn't think he was demon-possessed. He was being hit with the fiery darts, which can only be quenched by the shield of faith. And he was then incapable of wielding that shield.

Meanwhile, two other men in the congregation had entered into a feud over a different matter, spewing bitterness and wrath over everything they came in contact with. I felt that the Lord wanted them to help minister to the devil-afflicted brother, so I went to them. "Our brother needs you and I'm going to minister to him," I said, "but I can't permit you to come to his house because your attitude toward one another opens the door for the enemy to attack you. You must make peace between yourselves or you may become the next victims."

Knowing the urgency of the situation, they agreed to do something about their problem. One came to me and said, "I want to change, but I won't go to him because he'll say that I surrendered. But he could say the same thing about coming to me. Would it be fair if we met somewhere at a neutral spot and you could come and help us? I'm willing to ask him for forgiveness and also to forgive."

The other man accepted the proposal, and I arranged for them to get together at a big, lovely old house with a garden on one side and a beautiful orchard of fruit trees. It was a warm, sunny day and we stood under a large apricot tree. Immediately the two began to stammer things like "Brother, forgive me; I've been wrong." I urged them not to argue about who was wrong. "Just forgive," I said, "and don't go into too many details."

As soon as forgiveness had started to flow, I heard the Lord speaking clearly to me. It was Afrikaans: "You are wanted at that house, at once."

“I can’t be there at once,” I said in my mind. “I’ll run as fast as I can.”

I turned to the two men. “Brethren, I’ve just heard from the Lord, I believe, and He says I am needed at that house. Now that you two are reconciled, I’ll go on and you can come more leisurely. I’ll run as fast as I can.”

And I walked quickly away. From the side of the house I went to the front and made a right turn toward the gate. It was in a hedge of trees. As I moved quickly toward it, I thought to myself, “It’s about a mile. If I go to the right, it’s in the middle of the block, then uphill and around some other houses. If I go to the left, it’s more level, and I can run faster.”

This all happened in two or three seconds. I went through the gate, and heard it click behind me. I turned left, the level way. And that’s all I remember. When I lifted my foot to run, I put it down at the front door of the man’s house.

I stood still for a moment. “How did I get here? Where did I come from? I can’t remember anything. Did I go to sleep?”

But my thoughts were quickly interrupted. Strange, violent noises came from one of the rooms. I was standing in the front hall, which entered into a large living room. To the right were the bedrooms. “Well, I’m here, Lord. Thank you.” I headed for the first bedroom door, passing a small table holding a Bible. I picked up the book and went in.

Four large men, including my own brother Matthew, were holding the afflicted man on the bed. The wife of one of the men stood nearby. It was an ugly scene. “Let go, please,” I said sharply. “This is not the way to handle the man.”

“But he’s become violent,” they retorted. Then Matthew said, “He’s been calling for you.”

They released him. He bolted upright in bed, stood up and came toward me menacingly. I held up the Bible and spoke directly into his face. “On the authority of this word, in the name of Jesus, I rebuke you.” I didn’t raise my voice.

He fell back on the bed, and I was filled with compassion and sympathy for him. I went and stood beside him, and continued,

“Now, Satan, in the name of Jesus, you leave this man alone, and get out of this house and don’t you ever come back again.”

The woman, standing at the foot of the bed by that time, gave a loud scream and jumped back. “What’s the matter?” I asked.

“When you ordered him to get out and never come back,” she blurted out, wide-eyed and white-faced, “out from under the bed crawled a big serpent and he has gone out this window. He looked furious—a terrible, big snake.”

She said it was real. I knew it was spiritual.

When I turned back to the man in the bed, he smiled and said, “My, I feel good now.”

“What happened?” I asked.

“Something like a serpent had coiled itself around my body, squeezing the life out of me, and I could not get the victory. And I wrestled and wrestled.”

The poor man had been wrestling with all his might against the devil.

He paused for several seconds, looking down at his hands in his lap. “I see now that I had boasted that I was immune from the attacks of the enemy. That terrible pride opened me up to him. He paused again. “I suffered. It is only by the grace of God that I am free.”

He went on to make a full confession and was fully restored to fellowship with the Lord and with the brethren. We broke into song, filling the house with “The Lion of Judah shall break every chain, and give us the victory again and again. “It was a glorious, triumphant moment.

One of the men heard a knock and went to open the door. In a few moments, I heard voices, loud and agitated. I went to the door and there were my two friends. “This brother says you’ve been here twenty minutes,” one exclaimed, turning toward me. “We’ve just now arrived. You left us twenty minutes ago. How could you be here twenty minutes?”

“Well,” I said, “I’ve been here some time. I wouldn’t know the exact time.”

The man who had been in the bedroom with us interrupted. “When David walked into the room with the Bible in his hand, I looked at my watch. And when you folks came, I looked again. Twenty minutes had passed.”

“But how can that be?” they almost yelled.

“Well, I don’t know,” I said. “I ran.”

“Which way did you run. We saw you go. You told us you were going to run, and we heard the gate click. And when we got to the gate, we looked to the right and there was no David. We looked to the left. No David. We thought you had gone into the house, so we opened the door and shouted. But they said they hadn’t seen you. “

I shrugged my shoulders. They charged on. “We decided we’d walk on, and when we come we find you’re already here—and have been here twenty minutes! Impossible!”

It was then that I realized I must have been transported by the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord for the Bible account of Philip (Acts 8:39-40). I would have been scared without that. As it was, I was plenty baffled. I knew it was something that should be kept to ourselves. “Please don’t mention it,” I pleaded.

I recalled the case of another man and the difficulty that had followed such a miracle in his life. From where we lived, we could look over into Basutoland and see two mountain peaks, about fifteen miles apart. The Basuto man lived on one of the peaks. On the other peak was a man like the demoniac of Gadara in the Bible. Beset by a legion of demons, he was untamable, a terror to all the people on the mountain. The Christians prayed virtually without ceasing for God to deliver them from that man.

As a result, the Holy Spirit transported the Basuto man across the fifteen miles, empowered him to cast the devils out of the man, and then enabled him to minister to the people. As they knelt in prayer, the Basuto man was transported back to his home.

The Africans were so understandably impressed that before long they began to worship the man. He became their prophet. And it ruined him.

“I don’t want this little experience to ruin me,” I said.

The acts of the Holy Spirit were very evident throughout South Africa in those years and later. One marvelous demonstration of the power of God came through a young Dutch Reformed missionary. He was David Pypers, an enthusiastic believer in his early forties who had not received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at that time. He had an outstanding ministry among Indians (not the American kind). At one point, he became much distressed over an Indian theologian who had come to South Africa and was challenging the Christian church, proclaiming that Jesus Christ had been a fake, that there had been no death on Calvary, that His disciples had removed Him before death so He could recover, that there was no tomb, that, in sum, Christianity was a farce.

The Indians in South Africa were beginning to pick up the challenge and were pressing David hard with questions like “How can you prove Jesus Christ is alive?” He just couldn’t take this lying down and picked up the challenge, arranging to meet the Indian on a public platform to debate the truth of Christ. He spoke with a Dutch Reformed elder, and the old man agreed to pay expenses

for the confrontation, so David rented the football stadium at Seapoint, Cape Town. The match was set.

Because of publicity in the papers, thirty thousand people— black, brown, white—jammed into the stadium. They weren't going to miss this show. The place quivered with excitement.

The Indian, as the challenger, went first, spinning out a story about how Jesus actually went into Egypt when the disciples took Him off the cross, doing many good works as a prophet there. He thoroughly ridiculed the Christian faith. “

Then it was Pypers' turn. He recited various points in Scripture and in history that argued forcefully for the historical Jesus, God come in the flesh. But he realized, “I've been doing as much talking as he has. The whole issue is, who's got the truth? There's only one way. Jesus will have to reveal Himself here and now.”

So he began to declare that Jesus was alive, that He was with them in the stadium, and that He could then and there do the very things He had done when He walked the earth as a man. Taking a deep breath, he spoke loud and clear, “Is there anybody in this audience that, according to medical judgment, has an incurable disease? Remember, it must be incurable. And if you are willing to come up here on this platform and let me pray for you, Jesus will heal you.”

He gulped, shaking all over. He had prayed for sick people before and they had been healed. But this was different. Everybody was craning his neck to see. The stadium was buzzing.

And then came several men carrying a woman with braces all over her body. She was paralyzed. They lifted her up onto the platform, and David was on the verge of fainting. It was an impossible case. But he went ahead, and asked if there were any doctors present who would examine her and vouch for her condition. Several doctors came forth, including her own physician, and they concurred in pronouncing her affliction incurable.

There was no turning back. He simply walked up to her, without dramatics, laid his hands on her, prayed briefly, and then said, “In the name of Jesus, be healed.”

She dropped her crutches and began to move. She removed some of her braces and moved further. A group of people made a curtain with their coats and she was able to remove all the braces from her body. She walked up and down the platform. The doctors examined her. She had been healed.

The crowd went wild, shouting, applauding, laughing. The Indian was furious and argued violently that the healing was a fraud and would not last. But nobody

was paying any attention. The challenge was over. Victory was the Lord's.

As a matter of fact, Pypers had the woman examined several days later by five doctors, who issued a statement to the press that she was indeed well.

That was quite a day's work for young David. But it spelled trouble for him with his church. Instead of rejoicing with him, officials started action against him for having joined the confrontation without getting synod approval. But he survived the criticism, remaining effective in the church, and a year or two later received the baptism in the Holy Spirit—not, happily, under my ministry although I had instructed him about Jesus the baptizer. He went directly to the Lord. If I had been involved they would have said, “Oh, he's just one of those du Plessis fanatics.”

Oddly enough, he did not go on to have a healing ministry, as many had expected. He did from time to time pray for the sick, as need arose, but it was not his specialty. He continued ministering to the Indians—Hindus and Moslems—whose attention he had most effectively secured.

Chapter 11, The United States

About three weeks after Smith Wigglesworth burst into my office unannounced and told me I was to have a part in a spectacular revival among the denominational churches, a letter arrived on my desk. It was from the general secretary of the Assemblies of God, J. Roswell Flower, inviting me to speak at the denomination's general council in Memphis, Tennessee, the following year, 1937. All I knew about Tennessee was that it was somewhere among the forty-eight United States. I knew even less about Memphis.

I knew Flower by name and reputation. He knew of me primarily as general secretary of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa and as editor of the movement's newspaper. Early in my service as editor, I had sent the paper to every Pentecostal movement in the world, trying to get feedback from them and to receive their publications. Through this and a heavy correspondence I had become well-known and was, in turn, quite up-to-date in my information about the movements, especially regarding tensions that existed within and between them.

Before replying to the invitation, I went down to Cape Town to talk to Wigglesworth. I had arranged all his meetings in South Africa and, when possible, served as his interpreter. We made a good team. I never had to stop to ask the meaning of his words, although that wasn't always easy. He had a habit of coining words when he couldn't find the right English one, but he never made up one that I couldn't understand. We were one in the Spirit, and I could follow the explosive, often cantankerous old man.

So I arrived one day just before the meeting, and took him aside. "Brother Wigglesworth," I said, "I have received an unexpected letter from the United States." We didn't have air mail in those days, so the letter had obviously been written before he prophesied over me. When I told him of the invitation, he seemed unperturbed, although he couldn't resist a smile. "I told you the Lord is going to prepare you for this great move. This is just one of the steps."

"Well, then," I said, "I take it you think I should go. So, I guess I will."

The South African brethren were virtually unanimous in their view that I should accept. But I wasn't to go alone, it turned out. A good brother and close friend, Henry Stewart, well-to-do and free of family ties, insisted on going with me. He practically grabbed me by the collar. "I'll be your valet, your chauffeur, anything

you need. I'll sell my car here and buy a new one there. You just put in gas. For my services, I'll get free board and lodging, which can come out of the offerings you'll get."

It was a deal, and a good one as it later unfolded.

It was Thursday morning, one of those viciously hot, midsummer days in New York City. And there we stood on the noisy, confusing Hudson River docks, totally without knowledge of our environment. We waited. And waited. No one approached us. And we waited until there was not another passenger in sight. Nobody had come to meet us despite all our well-laid plans. It turned out later that the man scheduled to welcome us had for some reason fixed the following day in his mind, and we stood stranded. It was impossible to imagine two more forlorn people than us unsophisticated country boys from the other side of the world.

I thought Henry might cry, not out of concern for himself but out of compassion for me. "Have we missed the mind of the Lord altogether?" he asked. "This is terrible!"

"Well, as far as I know, it's a friendly country," I said.

I had the address of the place where we were to go—the Assembly of God's Mizpah Missionary Home. So I went to a pay telephone and ran into another stone wall: New York is divided into five boroughs. Where's Mizpah? But then came the name Bronx. I remembered it in connection with the story of the missing Lindbergh child in the papers. I found the listing in the Bronx directory and called.

"Yes, we're expecting you," the kind voice on the other end said. "But no one is here. You'll have to take a taxi."

Another roadblock. But as I came out of the phone booth, there was a policeman. "Officer," I said as cheerfully as I could manage, "you're looking at a man and his friend who've never been to America. We don't know where we are. And we don't know where we have to go."

He was a kind man and helped us. We struggled along behind him with our overloaded bags as he led us to the street, waving down a taxi for us. "Now, I'll give the taxi orders," he said. "He might take you around and around if you don't know your way. " So, he gave the driver instructions, and in short order we were in front of the Mizpah Missionary Home. The people there were nice enough, but we thought the reception was rather cool for two fellows who'd never set foot in the country before. It later came out that they had thought we were two

missionaries returning home, not unlike all the other people there.

But our room was clean and bright, and before long our anxieties had dispelled. The only roadblock after that arose, when we decided to do a bit of laundering after our long sea journey. Our ignorance quickly told on us as we mixed our colored clothes in with the white and ruined our shirts.

Two days later, at breakfast Saturday morning, I asked one of the men, one of the few who was not a missionary passing through, whether the Americans ever held street meetings like those we were accustomed to in South Africa. He told me about the work in Washington Square in lower Manhattan on Saturday evenings, and I resolved to attend that night.

I was impressed by what I found. Washington Square opened up at the foot of Fifth Avenue through an arch into a marvelous expanse of trees, benches, tables, and a walkway centered on a large water fountain. It was early evening and the square was filled with people seeking the slightest hint of breeze or relief from the oppressive heat of the crowded streets and buildings.

I felt right at home with the meeting. First, there were songs and testimonies, and some rather general talk about the Lord. I felt I was to speak soon. On the way over on the ship, I had prayed, "Lord, what can I tell America?" He had answered, "America is trying to learn about everything but Jesus. Teach them that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life."

I knew I was being given my first opportunity that evening to obey that word. I stepped forward into the center of the ring of people. There were hundreds. I experienced the sensation that comes to most Christians as they capitalize on an opportunity to bear witness to the Lord to a group of strangers. I was not afraid, but expectant, and a bit excited.

Fortunately my voice was especially strong in those days, for there was the usual undercurrent of conversation and laughter, mixed with some mocking. But I sensed no hostility as I lifted my voice above the rumble. My words that night were simple, pure gospel, centered on the greatest truth in history:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

I'm not sure that the people were aware I was a freshly landed foreigner, although my English bore rather a distinctive Scottish accent, and some of my phraseology was not typically American. My summer clothes looked just like theirs, and my manner was not particularly alien. But some of them reacted to

my words as though they were alien. God's power was upon me, and although my words were nearly two thousand years old, His Spirit covered them with freshness. Before long the rumble of small talk and laughter diminished. The square grew considerably quieter as dusk deepened. The hundreds clustered about our little circle of believers drew even closer.

"Our Lord is a God who loves the whole world," I said, bringing my theme full circle. "Nobody can say He doesn't. He is a God who is able to take notice of every individual. And He is taking notice right this minute. Don't you treat Him as if He had nothing to do with you. 'God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him' " (I John 4:9).

The brethren prayed with many people for salvation that night. I have no idea how many actually heard the Lord and responded to Him. But I knew in my heart, and was grateful, that God had given me favor.

There was a knock at my door early the next morning. "You have a phone call, Brother du Plessis. It's Pastor Brown from Glad Tidings Tabernacle."

I went to the phone, fully aware of who the caller was. Robert Brown was a powerful man in the United States. In the Assemblies of God, anyone who had the approval of the pastor of Glad Tidings Tabernacle on Thirty-third Street in Manhattan had the approval of the entire denomination.

"Is that you, Mr. du Plessis?" the voice asked.

"This is David du Plessis, yes," I responded.

"Well, I've written to you and our mutual friend, Ernest Hooper, has written to you, but I presume we have never made contact. But then, last night I came home and it was reported to me that you had preached a marvelous message at Washington Square."

"Yes," I said, "the Lord prospered us well last night."

"Now," he went on, "any. man who comes from another country and is so humble as to start ministering in New York on the street corner—that's my man. That man is good enough to preach in Glad Tidings. I want you to preach there this afternoon."

I knew this was the Lord's doing. He was opening the door.

"I would be honored," I said, "but are you? ..."

"That's good," he broke in. "I'll expect you at one-thirty."

It was an afternoon of firsts.

There was the first encounter with Robert Brown, a six-foot man, red-haired, slender but powerful in appearance and conduct. “I want you to preach, Mr. du Plessis,” he said, repeating the proposition, “and if you do well, maybe again tonight, and then I’ll talk to you further.”

Intentionally or not, he immediately had me on the spot.

As we mounted the platform, I was aware of another first. More than a third of the twelve hundred people there were black, and the blacks and whites were mixed together. This was unheard of in South Africa.

Again, my message was the basic gospel—“Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” (1 Cor. 2:2). The response, especially by the pastor, was enthusiastic. He strode briskly across the platform and hugged me, planting a big juicy kiss on my cheek. “This man,” he said to the happy crowd, “must come from the best Pentecostal church in the world. He could never have preached a message like that if he didn’t have a sound, solid, scriptural background. Therefore, I give notice now: He’ll preach tonight.” I had passed.

Then the pastor moved abruptly to the podium. “Now,” he said, “with a message like that, there ought to be total response. All those who want salvation, come to me at my right, and kneel at this end of the platform. All those who want healing come to my left and kneel at this end. And all of you who want the baptism in the Holy Spirit, go downstairs.”

To my amazement, they started pouring forward, not just a handful, but dozens. Brown turned to me. “Where would you like to go?”

“Brother Brown,” I said, “those sick people can get to heaven with their sick bodies, but these people can’t get there with unsaved souls. That’s where I begin.”

So I went to the side and began to pray with those who were seeking the Lord. Many were being touched. Suddenly, a woman on the other side of the church screamed and fell over. The pastor came to me. “There’s a woman there, and they say she has epilepsy.”

I went quickly to that side and asked, “Is this girl a member of the church?”

“No,” someone in the crowd answered.

“Do you know if she’s saved?” I persisted.

“No, she’s not.”

“Then it would seem to be the work of the enemy,” I said. So I stood erect and

calmly said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her." She screamed, and squirmed, and then stopped. I knew a devil had come out of her.

"Brother Brown," I said, "there's more. That's only one."

I waited a few moments, and she moved again. "You devil," I said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out."

Another scream. She lifted her head, but then fell back.

"We don't have the complete victory yet," I said. "There are more." And for the third time I commanded the unclean spirits to come out. Then, she sat up quickly and smiled.

"That's the victory," I said, knowing she had been fully delivered.

I was sorry later that this situation had occurred while I was there. In short order, word spread that my ministry was to cast out devils, and, of course, that was not my ministry at all. This woman was not a Christian. She needed deliverance, and then she was saved and healed.

We prayed for many more that afternoon, and that night held another meeting just as exciting and yet with its own special differences. As a result of that unusual day, Pastor Brown opened even more doors for me in America by recommending me as a Sunday speaker for the largest meeting ground of the Assemblies of God, Maranatha Camp at Green Lane, Pennsylvania. The Lord seemed to be directing every step.

With assistance from a pastor in Brooklyn known as "Wholesale Vernon," Henry and I bought a new, black Dodge sedan for a thousand dollars and headed south. The Memphis conference was in late summer. We could wend our way there, staying to the north as much as possible in the hot months and dipping into the south as fall approached. We soon overcame the difficulty of learning to drive on the right side of the road and went to our first stop, the Maranatha Camp. We were well received there, making many contacts that kept our calendar full for weeks and months ahead. In fact, for the next seven months Henry and I were booked solid, reaching into thirty-six states and Mexico and Canada. All of this came without formal help from any denominational organization, although I was in the United States under Assemblies of God auspices.

One highlight of our trip south came at the Potomac Conference near Washington where, during a missionary night, I was asked for a testimony. I told the donkey story and my reputation was secured for the rest of the visit. The story preceded me wherever I went. I was the Lord's donkey, they said, carrying

Jesus back to the Americans.

Another memorable time came in the mountains of West Virginia, a section of the country that was to have special significance for me. This was a camp in a little mining community. I had been advised to avoid it because it was so poor and would afford me very little in the way of an offering. But Henry and I rejected the advice—“we didn’t come to this country to see wealth and riches, but to see everybody, including the mining towns”—and went on to Mount Hope.

I preached morning, afternoon, and night, again on the truth of “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Henry led the singing and gave his testimony. The offering for us proved to be larger than at any other camp, but more important was the way in which the Lord prospered His kingdom there.

But, on to Memphis. My, how we sweltered in the heat. We managed to find an air-conditioned hotel, but the auditorium hosting the conference had no cooling system. The South in late August can be very warm indeed, especially when six thousand people are gathered in one hall for a Pentecostal meeting.

By the time we arrived, the speakers list had been prepared for the conference, which was quite international in flavor, with the Assemblies’ missionaries from all over the world, plus national representatives from Canada, Britain, and even, in addition to me, one from South Africa.

The latter fellow figured in a lesson that the Lord taught me in Memphis. He approached me and said, “Brother du Plessis, I am scheduled to speak on Saturday, and you are booked on Monday.

Now, I have an invitation to go out for the weekend to a very wealthy church and, with the conference expenses, I need some help financially. Will you exchange with me and take Saturday, so I can take Monday?”

I told him I would be happy to if it was all right with the coordinators. But, when my friends heard of it, they were furious. “What’s the matter with you? Don’t you know that Monday is the greatest meeting day of all? That’s the day the elections are held. It will be a huge crowd! On Saturday people will all be going sightseeing.”

There was nothing I could do but shrug my shoulders. I had given my word.

But Friday night, the tables were turned. The leaders announced that they had decided to change things that year and would hold the elections on Saturday. My friends, stunned, turned to me, “David, did you know there was going to be a

switch?”

“No.” Again all I could do was shrug my shoulders. But I thanked the Lord for blessing my willingness to submit and to share.

When I got to the platform, E.S. Williams, the superintendent, intercepted me. “I heard you told a story that shook the Potomac Camp,” he said. “I want you to tell it here.”

“But I didn’t come here to talk about myself,” I protested. “I came to preach and bring greetings from South Africa.”

“You can do it,” he said. “We’ll give you an extra fifteen minutes.”

So with an hour instead of the customary forty-five minutes, I told the donkey story. Once again, the people were stirred, and my word on the lordship of Christ was able to penetrate the depths of their hearts.

At that conference, the Lord took another step in his preparation of me for later ministry on a worldwide scale. Discussion arose early in the meetings, and continued throughout, as to the benefits of a conference of world leaders, perhaps in the following year or in 1939, in London or some other European center. The idea evoked enthusiasm among the leaders at Memphis.

It was during those discussions, late in the conference, that Donald Gee said in front of many of the leaders, “It would be wonderful if the young man among us, Brother David here, who has already been in contact with most of the Pentecostal world, could undertake the role of secretary for such a world meeting.” It was an unexpected proposal, at least to me, but it seemed to receive widespread endorsement. London seemed to be the choice of sites, but no dates were set. The proposal remained fluid, which was fortunate in view of developing world affairs.

Nonetheless, I was grateful for the recognition accorded me by the older brethren.

Chapter 12, Flames Of War

I returned to South Africa from the U.S. in 1938 after several weeks of ministry throughout Europe. Already the stage was set for one of man's great tragedies—World War 2. Hitler and Mussolini had risen to power. The Third Reich had long since amassed enough strength to break with the League of Nations and thumb its nose at other treaties. Still, many of the countries of Europe, having passed through several tentative years of insane complacency, clung to the hope of peace which continually evaporated before their eyes.

Yet to come was the shame of Munich, the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia, and the echoes of the Nazi hymn "Today Germany Is Ours; Tomorrow the Whole World." There was to be the Good Friday invasion of little Albania by Italy and the shocking Soviet-German nonaggression pact. And just beyond those things lay the awesome massing of the German war machine on the borders of Poland, to be followed two days later by Britain and France's declaration of war on the Axis. The flames of war were being fanned, ready to burst blindingly across most of the world.

Our plans for a world Pentecostal conference in the late thirties were not to be fulfilled. A European conference was held in Stockholm in 1938 in an effort to head off any super-union of the Pentecostal movement on a worldwide scale. The Europeans and Scandinavians feared American domination primarily, but were also skeptical about the correctness of any strong amalgamation. So, for a short period in 1938, the Europeans organized to oppose organization by holding the Stockholm conference.

I did not attend but was thoroughly briefed. The most dramatic single proclamation of the meeting was the prophecy by T.B. Barratt of Oslo, an Englishman pastoring in Norway for several decades, that world conflagration was coming and that there would be no 1939 world conference of Pentecostals. The prophecy was fulfilled and the well-intentioned plan for me to be secretary for such a world conference was put on the shelf.

T.B. Barratt was an unusual man whom God used in Europe in a remarkable way. The first step came when he—a Methodist—went to America to raise money for an Oslo church. He heard about the Pentecostal revival and went to a center of activity, Robert and Marie Brown's Glad Tidings Tabernacle in Manhattan. Receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Pastor Barratt realized that what the Norway church needed was more power, not more buildings or money,

so he returned to his adopted land to preach the full gospel of salvation and the life of power in the Spirit.

Meanwhile, Lewi Pethrus, a Baptist minister in Stockholm, heard about Barratt's experience and went inquiring to Oslo. Under Barratt's ministry, he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and became leader of the Pentecostal movement in Sweden.

Barratt and Pethrus continued to work together, leading many pastors and laymen into the life in the Spirit, but Pethrus, the younger man, was truly on fire and his aggressive activity spread the word all over Scandinavia.

Before long, the fires of Pentecost swept down across Europe, into Germany, into the Netherlands, blossoming into a separate movement that flourished for many years. In fact, Barratt could be called the father of the whole European work, a work that flowered and was sustained despite the ravages of two world wars.

As Barratt's prophecy about the coming conflagration of World War II was fulfilled, it was obvious that my ministry was to be in South Africa. The movement there, having sprung from the seed-work of two families from America in 1908, was approaching a crest. Much work needed doing right in my homeland.

John G. Lake and Tom Hezmelhalch, who had been elders in the ministry headed by John Alexander Dowie in Zion City, Illinois, had come to South Africa with their families, knowing virtually nothing of the country but possessing a vision for missionary work. Expecting wild animals and equally wild natives, they were laden with guns and equipment ready for an old-fashioned African safari. They were startled when they landed at Cape Town, a rather civilized place that even then had trains connecting with such places as Kimberley, the diamond center. But they were undeterred and headed for the capital city, Pretoria, which seemed a logical place to begin. But Pretoria did not fit the vision that had come to them in prayer.

Recalling the invitation of a missionary couple they had encountered on the voyage over, Mr. and Mrs. Goodenough, they ventured to Johannesburg, a considerably larger city built along a chain of hills. As they passed over the hills and saw the city, they knew they were in the right place.

They went first to the African church in suburban Doornfontein established by the Goodenoughs. There they were invited to minister. John Lake was a man of great faith and ability to stir an audience. At the very first meeting, spectacular

healings occurred, setting a pattern that was to shape the early Pentecostal movement in the country. One of those healed that first Sunday night was a black housemaid who worked for a wealthy white family. The next morning, the woman she worked for saw she had been healed and questioned her. That night, the employer attended the meeting, and she, too, received a healing. Similar miracles followed and before long, the black Africans found themselves standing around watching their white employers being blessed. So for a brief time, the whites flocked to the little African church to see and experience marvelous healings and conversions.

Lake and his colleagues, under ardent invitation, soon shifted the focus of their activities to the white Zion church called the Bree Street Tabernacle in Johannesburg, from which the seeds of Pentecost were even more effectively spread. Lake was a tremendous drawing card as healing once again proved to be the instrument by which the Lord drew the people to himself. More people came into the life in the Spirit through the healing ministry than any other way in those days. At Bree Street Tabernacle, canes and medical devices were carried off the platform by the truckload, and the word reached far and wide into the countryside. The established churches only gave the work publicity by preaching against it.

It was through these people that my family got into the Pentecostal movement. My father's father became ill in 1914 and dad sent for men from the Bree Street Tabernacle to pray for healing. Our whole family ended up being swept into the Lord's blessing and out of the Dutch Reformed Church.

That work in our country began to be known as the Apostolic Faith Mission. Lake and Hezmelhalch had seen the famous ministry at Azusa Street in the United States, which was called the Apostolic Faith Mission. Although they were not in any way connected with Azusa Street, the name was a popular one, and they took it, later adding the name of the country to it—the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

One of the characteristics of the mission's work in those early days was the custom of baptizing by triune immersion—one dip for each member of the Godhead. Then along came an influential brother who argued that that was not a proper custom. So it was changed to one dip. And in typical fashion for such frail, argumentative creatures as we humans are, the Pentecostal movement split over baptismal practices. Some wanted one immersion, some three. Different personalities, different practices. It must have caused the Lord to shake his head.

Anna and I tried to heal the rift. I had been baptized by triune immersion—in the

name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—she by single immersion. So we felt we were in a good position to mediate, but we did not succeed to any great extent. The split was deep and real and continues to this day.

Actually the Greek word baptizo can convey the sense of an act that is either repeated or permanent. But as I see it, when a ship dips up and down in the sea, it is bapto, but when that ship is baptizo it is sunk. That's baptism—immersed permanently, buried with Christ.

As for the “baptism” in the Holy Spirit, Christ immerses us in the Spirit rather than in water, and he leaves us there. We have to walk in the Spirit. This is our new life.

I got so sick of the battle on the mode of water baptism that I stopped teaching and preaching on it. My ministry was to preach Christ the baptizer. That's the only baptism I've been involved in for years. I haven't immersed anyone in water—whether one dunk or three.

In fact, in Florida one young minister came to me and pleaded, “Won't you baptize me?”

“No sir,” I said. “Paul said the Lord didn't send him to baptize, nor did He send me. “

Over these long years I could have baptized hundreds and hundreds of ministers, but I would have cut my ministry off right there. I would have been drawn into the controversy and destroyed my credibility on Christ the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. People have often confused the issue by referring to me as an “evangelist,” but technically I haven't been evangelizing. I have been spreading the word of Pentecost in the churches. Baptism, it seems to me, is a matter for pastors and not for someone like me who is only passing through.

I came back from the United States and Europe in 1938 convinced of the importance of the camp meetings I had seen at work in America. I was confident that the meetings were a definite cure for the deadening formalism that seemed to be gripping many churches. But I was also keenly aware of the South Africans' suspicion of anything American. They felt they had to be more conservative, much more cautious than the Americans. So I watched my tongue and allowed a year to pass before speaking, and even then I said little about methods used in the United States. I let our cramped Johannesburg quarters, our need of space to hold adequate conferences, do the talking for me.

I merely suggested to the brethren at one of our planning meetings that we have a camp meeting. “Oh, we tried that years ago,” said one leader. “It won't work.”

“But we’re living in a different time now,” I replied. “A second world war is on, and we have to do things differently. Things are going to be scarce. We can’t build a new Central Tabernacle right now, but we need a place to serve the people at conference times.”

They were less than enthusiastic, but at least they were listening. “For example,” I pressed on, “the military has things we can rent—tents and so forth. We won’t have to make a big outlay. We can at least try it.”

Finally, they agreed. “We’ll give you 500 pounds,” the treasurer of the movement said. “Lose it, multiply it, or whatever, and we’ll see just where such camp meetings are going.”

That was enough for me. I got a huge tent and several smaller ones, rented a piece of land outside the city, put up a few temporary structures and arranged for our annual Easter conference, with plenty of publicity in our own publications and mailings.

It was a huge success. We accommodated four times as many people as the Central Tabernacle could hold. And the freedom of the outdoors worked wonders among the people. They enjoyed it and clamored for more.

Furthermore, I not only still had the original 500 pounds, but 3,000 more.

“Okay, David,” one of the leaders said as we assessed the results. “You have proved your point. What do you propose now?”

That left the door wide open, so I went through it. “Give me the 3,000 surplus to make a deposit on a camp ground of our own.”

They were a bit stunned, but my position was strong. They still had nothing to lose.

So out I went, shopping for an appropriate piece of land. I found what we needed—sixteen acres just outside the Johannesburg city boundary, seven miles from the center of town. We bought it.

Then I came across an old steel-structured factory that was being torn down. I bought that, too. And we re-erected it on the camp ground. It was rough, but solid and roomy. We were able to accommodate 4,000 people at once.

As we were standing surveying the layout, one of the elders said with considerable sarcasm, “Are you going to provide parking under the roof, too?”

Ignoring the sarcasm, I said straight-facedly, “No, we don’t want to put too much into it. It’s already going to be too small for the next conference.”

He and the others thought I was crazy. Well, for the first conference, we couldn't accommodate all those who came. It was too small.

Spiritually and otherwise, the development of the camp meeting concept changed the Pentecostal movement in our country. Churches that seemed on the verge of going stale came alive. Revival spread. There were freshness and enthusiasm.

Before long, the district groups wanted to try camp meetings at their own level. They succeeded there, too. Today there are district camps all over South Africa, and many of them are as big as our original central camp was. Later we had to build a new camp tabernacle in Johannesburg, one that seats 8,000 people. We had our center and our campground both.

Wartime in South Africa brought other important changes to the Pentecostal thrust. One involved the training of people for the ministry; the other affected the missionary work and the establishment of local churches.

For some time I had been disturbed by the fact that our young men were not getting solid biblical and ministerial training. I felt we needed a first-rate Bible school badly. The movement had tried such schools previously but they had not worked out. Quality seemed to be lacking.

Next to our campground outside Johannesburg lived an elderly doctor in a big, old mansion. I went to see him one day.

"Doctor, I'm David du Plessis," I began. "We've seen one another from afar from time to time, but we've never talked."

He was a kind, friendly old man with a twinkle in his eyes.

"I'm afraid we've sort of disturbed the peace you once had out here in the countryside," I said. "It was so quiet out here, and now we've brought all these crowds."

He didn't seem concerned. "Well, all I can say is that I enjoy seeing a church that's still alive."

I paused and saw the Lord opening the door once again. "Well," I chuckled, "that church is so alive that we want to buy your property."

He didn't bat an eye. "What do you have in mind?" he asked.

I told him, and there was no hesitancy on his part. He agreed to sell us his house, and we suddenly had a site for a Bible school. That was in 1940.

Anna and I then launched into our first real taste of the kind of community life

that has become so popular in the seventies. We gave up our home and moved into the mansion, along with sixteen students, including married couples and singles. I supervised the Bible school while carrying on my regular duties as general secretary of the movement. With the help of nearby pastors as teachers, we were able to give our students intensive training. Before long, we had prepared fifty men—strong leaders to carry on the work.

But human frailty raised its head again, and some of the brethren voiced concern that the Apostolic Faith Mission was becoming a du Plessis movement, arguing that I should be giving more time to the secretarial role. Furthermore, they said, with considerable justification, I should give more attention to the major spiritual issues facing the overall movement since the president of the mission was aging and becoming weaker in his leadership abilities.

I agreed, and in 1944 left the Bible school, named the Apostolic Bible College. It was well on its way and ready for someone else to take it over. The Lord has prospered the school, with a resultant move toward the center of Johannesburg. The buildings on the campgrounds were given over to a much-needed orphanage and home for the elderly. The camp meeting site, the orphanage, and the old folks home now encompass thirty-six acres and are still growing, ready to burst at the seams.

As secretary, I was able to modify the movement's system of missions throughout the country. We reduced the missionary staff to a minimum, took the work out of the control of Europeans, and put it under the jurisdiction of Africans. The local work, we felt, had to be under the control of the nationals.

Some might say that with this move I unwittingly contributed to apartheid in South Africa, which I never expected to grow to its present state. However, when the problem of separate national development did rise, the churches were equipped to deal with it. Each African nation had its churches; the Indians and the coloreds had theirs.

The Apostolic Faith Mission provided a central conference in which ministers, missionaries and executives—whites, blacks, coloreds, Indians—met together at the top level.

I was allowed even to bring about changes in the mission's constitution to give the supreme decision-making powers to the general conference rather than to the executive council, which was becoming too dictatorial.

And finally we reached the point where every group had its own constitution. In cases, for example, where whites built churches for blacks, the power over the

church resided permanently with the blacks. The whites couldn't take them back or sell them. The authority of the local church was established and prevailed.

The wartime years wrought havoc and devastation around the globe, but for the Pentecostal church in South Africa, God allowed the period of 1938 through 1944 to be one of extraordinary growth and development.

Chapter 13, Coming To Maturity

Much of the world lay in ashes. Devastation covered the earth. Our brethren were suffering, especially in Europe. Germany, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy—fine gardens for the flowering of the Spirit in the thirties—were now in shambles, overrun. They needed help, and the brethren—the Swedes, the Swiss, the Americans, even the war-shattered but triumphant British—rose to the occasion.

The Assemblies of God sent representatives to assess the situation. The conclusion was that a world conference of leaders should be called to see how they could help one another. It was a bold step.

The first move was to invite those who had been at the 1937 meeting in Memphis. My immediate reaction was that that course could prove unsatisfactory. It was based too much on personalities and not movements among the people. I quickly wrote to the leaders, offering the thought that a meeting would truly be a world conference only if all movements cooperated. Individuals would squabble, but movements might be able to take a few steps together.

Shortly after that, a second invitation arrived addressed to the Apostolic Faith Mission, which agreed that, as secretary, I should attend. It was planned for May, 1947 in Zurich, Switzerland.

But all was not smooth, even in the early stages. One group replied, “We appreciate the invitation and intend to come, but we understand another group in our country is also being invited. That being the case, we would ask you to find us accommodations in a different hotel from where they are staying. If possible you should make it on a different street. This would avoid embarrassment from our having to meet.”

It got so bad that a group from one country would send spies to determine where another party from the same country was sitting at the conference, and then the first party would arrange to sit on the opposite side of the hall.

These tensions were silly, but they seemed real to those involved.

I arrived in Zurich a week early and had a chance to talk with Leonard Steiner, the Swiss leader who had been designated as secretary for the conference. He shared some of the problems with me. In fact, I almost got dragged into one of the controversies. It began when Steiner said to me, “You know, don’t you, that

Archibald Cooper from South Africa will be arriving soon? What should we do with you two?"

Cooper represented another movement in my country, and many saw us as competitors.

"Put us in the same room," I replied. "Then he can't talk about me and I can't talk about him."

I had known Archibald Cooper since 1915. I loved him and respected him. I was sure he felt the same toward me. We were in different movements, but we weren't enemies. How Christians so often manifest the spirit of the world in relationships with one another. It must break the heart of the Lord.

The meeting opened in spacious Congress Hall on the sparkling Lake of Zurich, a setting that far exceeded the imaginations of the 2,000 people from twenty-two nations—delegates to the first World Conference of Pentecostal Churches. The name was subsequently changed to the Pentecostal World Conference.

Perhaps because of my role at the '37 meeting in Memphis, perhaps because of my early arrival, I was invited to deliver the keynote address. And the Lord gave me a message that sounded around the Pentecostal world for months and years to come, a message that I repeated in essence two hundred times.

If I were to be asked to give a title to that message today, I would probably call it "Coming to Maturity," but at that time I entitled it "Gather the Wheat—Burn the Chaff."

How vividly I recall standing before that large band of precious, yet quarrelsome Christians. I reviewed for them the fifty-year history of the Pentecostal revival, with its extremes of over exuberance and creeping stagnation. And I laid the scriptural foundation for what we had experienced, reminding them of John the Baptist's words,

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3:11,12).

I then sounded a personal note:

Some years ago I passed through one of those spiritual crises which come into the experience of every growing Christian. I was hungry for a deeper experience

with God. I was tired of the repetition of spiritual manifestations which did not seem to bring edification to anyone but myself. I wanted to see the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in operation in my life. One night in desperation I decided I would not go to sleep until the Lord had given me some very definite guidance. My prayer was, "Lord, where must I go from here? This is not the end of the road, for I have always declared that the baptism in the Holy Ghost is only the beginning and not the end of a closer walk with God. After midnight He spoke to me clearly and said that I needed a baptism of fire. Immediately I concluded that because I was no longer as demonstrative as before and did not shout and speak in tongues as loud and long as I did twenty-five years before, I must have lost the fire. I prayed with all my heart that He would baptize me with fire, whatever that might mean. The yielding of that night brought profound things into my life, and my ministry did change. I was a happy man, but I had no desire to shout and sing and leap before the Lord as I did in my younger days. I was ready to do so, but it seemed the Lord did not require that from me.

After enjoying the wonderful deeper life for a few weeks, I discovered that some very cherished things in my life were dropping off. Some of my brethren seemed to misunderstand me. My best friends seemed most unsympathetic. I felt so lonely at times that life became a burden. Again I sought guidance and light from the Lord, for I feared to trust in man.

One Sunday morning, very early, I made my way into a wilderness and lay myself in the dust before the Lord. I felt as if twenty-five years of Christian life and years of ministry were all in vain. Nothing remained and I was just an utter failure. As I wept before the Lord and humbled myself, a peace that passeth understanding suddenly came over my soul. I lay almost as dead. Then it seemed someone was speaking to me in very gentle tones. He said: "I am answering your prayer. It is the baptism of fire." I complained that I did not feel "on fire" at all.

Then He said: "But the fire does not bring joy. It burns, it devours, it reduces, it purges. The Holy Spirit gives comfort and joy, but the fire cleanses and sanctifies. I am removing the chaff from your life." Once again I began to weep and asked the Lord to show me what sin there was still in my life. Very gently I heard Him say: "Chaff is not sin. I am not removing tares but chaff. Chaff is good and indeed it is essential in order to obtain wheat. When the chaff is removed you will see the wheat."

I shall never forget those wonderful moments in His presence. It seemed that He brought me to a green field. I recognized it as growing wheat. Then I found

myself in a barn and saw bags of wheat. It seemed as if I were listening to a conversation between two persons. As the one passed his hands through the wheat in the bag he told the other that this was clean rich wheat. We left the barn and looked on the field again. "Beautiful green grass," said the one. "No! Beautiful growing wheat," said the other. "How can that be? This does not look nearly like the wheat in the bag." "Yet it is true . . . this is that and that is this. If you will leave this to develop, it will produce wheat such as in the bag, but when you plant what is in the bag, it dies and lives again to produce what you see here."

Again I saw the wheat field. Now it had grown higher and in the gentle breezes the heads of ripening wheat waved to and fro. I heard one say, "Soon it will be ripe and then it must be gathered to the floor where the chaff can be separated from the wheat. The chaff has served its purpose and if it be not removed soon, it will destroy the wheat crop. If, however, you remove the chaff before the wheat is ripe, you will have no crop either. Just one more rain and there will be enough moisture to ripen this wonderful field." I stood amazed. There I saw tall stalks of straw and the ears of wheat were only six inches long. Why, even the wheat kernels were surrounded and covered with chaff. What a process the gathering and threshing is. A threshing floor looks anything but orderly. In the end, however, the winnowing fan separates wheat and chaff and order is restored.

After this revelation I was left alone with my thoughts. What could it all mean? Then I remembered my earliest Pentecostal experience. How often I just wondered whether all the noise and manifestation in a prayer meeting was produced by the power of the Holy Spirit. But why should people want to act so queer and get great blessing out of it? At such times I heard a still small voice say to me, "This is that." I was satisfied, because that was the answer Peter gave on the day of Pentecost. Later on I saw and heard and personally experienced very clear manifestations of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Instead of tongues only, there followed the interpretation of tongues. Instead of only tongues and interpretation, there followed prophecy. In the sermons of my brethren and in my own messages I began to discern moments when preaching was prophecy, moments when there was the word of wisdom, and moments when there was a word of knowledge.

How did all this come about? Where did it begin? This is how I see it now. First stammering lips, then new tongues, then interpretation of tongues, then prophecy, then words of wisdom and knowledge, all by the same Spirit.

"So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and

should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come” (Mark 4:26-29). Just as the growing wheat on the field responds to every little breeze, so young Christians filled with the Holy Spirit will respond to the breezes of heaven. Just sing a chorus over again and they begin to rejoice and wave their hands. I have noticed that the converts of very sedate and calm preachers are just as emotional as the converts of the shouting and running evangelist. Some of these sedate old preachers were, in fact, very demonstrative in their early Christian experience. The precious brother or sister who now brings such wonderful utterances in tongues and interpretation or in prophecy was once as noisy as some of the worst shouters among the young converts. Most mature Christians have found that it took years before they learned to yield to the Holy Ghost so that He might use their lips to prophesy rather than to speak in tongues. Paul thinks that five words that can be understood are worth more than ten thousand words in a tongue that cannot be understood. But then there are usually several feet of chaff before there comes the ear of grain. There might be years of seeming useless manifestations before we ripen into faith that will produce prophecy (Rom. 12:6).

In our Pentecostal churches today, there seem to be two extremes. The Apostle has a word of warning for both. To those who object so fervently against noise and disorder he says:

“Quench not the Spirit” (1 Thess. 5:19).

To those who want nothing but these disorderly manifestations he says:

“Despise not prophesyings” (1 Thess. 5:20).

If you refuse to have seemingly needless manifestations, chaff as you may think, you will never have the gifts of prophecy. If you refuse to let the Lord fan the needless demonstrations from your life and will cling to the initial reactions only, you will never have the ripened fruit of the gifts of the Spirit. The Apostle was quite aware of this, and so he wrote that wonderful chapter 14 in the first epistle to the Corinthians. This chapter will never quench the Spirit, but it will regulate the growth of the saints in the church.

Have you ever watched a modern threshing machine that has taken the place of the old-fashioned threshing floor? There is a lot of shaking and trembling and noise. On the one side there is a mountain of chaff and on the other just a few bags of wheat. What a lot of chaff to produce so little wheat. Put a match in the

chaff and what remains will be nothing, compared to the wheat in the bags.

Let us get the correct perspective of spiritual things. Be tolerant and thank God for the growing wheat. Be in no hurry to separate the chaff. Remember the fan is in His hand. On the other hand, we must not be satisfied with a good old shouting camp meeting. Let us honor the Holy Ghost and give Him opportunities to speak to us, for He came not only to comfort us but to lead us into all truth. If we only make noise in our meetings, we shall not hear His voice. Let us have the waving grain when the breezes blow, and thank God for it, but do not judge those who have no part in such demonstration, for not even a hurricane will make a bag of wheat wave. We need wheat for new fields and we need growing fields for more wheat.

There is nothing that can ever take the place of the Holy Spirit in the church. Let us pray for a greater outpouring than ever; and remember when the floods come, it will not keep to our well-prepared channels, but it will overflow and most probably cause chaos in our regular programs.

In recent years I have become more and more burdened because I find a strong tendency among older pastors to take the fan in their hands. I am told by some that they no longer allow tongues in prayer in public meetings. They will not have the “camp meeting style” of singing and shouting and clapping of hands in their churches. I find many churches where there is never any sign of a truly Pentecostal manifestation. They are afraid of manifestations in the “flesh,” and so they conduct the whole meeting “in the flesh,” but decently and in order. In such meetings I feel as I do in a home where there are no children, no babies that cry. Everybody behaves perfectly, but it is so dull and so monotonous. Babies and children always do the unexpected. What are we doing with our spiritual babies? Where do we train them? In the basement? Will they ever learn that they belong to the family ... the church?

Then again I come to other churches which give me concern. There is no recognition of wheat and there is a premium on chaff—loud talking, shouting and singing for an hour. Everybody is speaking in tongues but there is never any interpretation. It is Pentecostal indeed, but still in the chaff stage—babies crying, children tumbling. It looks bad when adults act like children. Some must come to maturity. There must be tongues with interpretation and there must be prophecy and other manifestations. In such churches I plead that they invite the Baptizer to bring in His fan and then give them a baptism of fire. I have seen too many shouting Christians go to sleep when the Word is preached. They live on “milk” and choke on the “meat” of the Word.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14).*

* *The Spirit Bade Me Go*, pp. 101-106.

Chapter 14, The London Miracle

After the Zurich conference I took a leave of absence from my work in South Africa—I hadn't taken a vacation through all the war years—and traveled from one European country to another. The brethren were kind, eager to hear the message on the wheat and the chaff, and my expenses were met through their generosity. The only problem was the loneliness that often set in, particularly at sunset, because of Anna's absence. She and the children remained in Johannesburg.

And so it was that I landed in London in midsummer with invitations to speak at numerous churches and meetings throughout England. I had already covered much of Scotland and Wales, places I had not intended to reach, but the Holy Spirit directly intervened and sent me to them.

The Lord opened many doors of ministry for me in London, and as the engagements drew to a close, with only one trip to Manchester remaining, I sought the Lord's direction for my next destination.

It was an early Friday morning. "Where do I go from here, Lord Jesus?" I asked. Gently, plainly, and quickly came the answer: "to America."

I thought I must have heard wrong. "Lord, I didn't intend to go to America."

"You didn't intend to go to Wales either," came the reply. "Now I want you to go to America."

I was quietly sitting in my room at the old-age home in Blackheath run by the wife of my host, Assembly of God Pastor F.R. Barnes. It was a large four-story building near the Blackheath church, which also accommodated visitors who were passing through.

I talked back to the Lord. "But I have no finances."

"Book a seat," He said. "I'll pay for it."

As one might expect, there was a long pause. I reflected on the fact that there was an important Assemblies of God general council due to begin in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in ten days. Quite inexplicably, I felt I was to be there.

Taking the train into the city, I walked the streets until my feet ached, looking for travel agencies. Not only did I not have money for taxis or even buses, but also I feared I'd lose my way in such a sprawling city. In Trafalgar Square, I went wearily into every agency I came across, but the answer was the same: "You

can't get a berth on any ship for ninety days." Everything was filled. The confusion of the war still prevailed in 1947 and people were flocking from the ravaged areas. Refugees were everywhere in Europe, trying to find a place they could settle. All I heard was "ninety days . . . ninety days . . . ninety days." And I wanted to be there in nine days.

I ended up in Piccadilly Circus. It was dusk. The day faded away and my hopes followed it. In the twilight gradually easing toward darkness, I stood, lost among the crowds of people striding purposefully toward their destinations, most of them headed toward family or friends, or a night on the town. I stood—discouraged, homesick, miserable. Almost in tears, I said, "Dear Lord, don't you know there are no berths? Have I missed your guidance today? I cannot find anybody, any shipping agency, that will take me." The bright lights of Piccadilly Circus were just beginning to go on. Then I heard within myself, gently, softly, the voice of the Holy Spirit, "I didn't say book a berth. I said book a seat." Darkness deepened, and more lights went on.

"Lord, that means a plane. And I haven't even got boat fare. How can I get plane fare?"

Again, the quiet voice of the Spirit: "I said I'd pay the fare." In the midst of the huge neon lights, one sign blared—"Parry, Leon and Hayhoe."

"Wait a minute," I muttered, half-aloud. "That's the company that booked my seat from Johannesburg. That's the office I was to check in with before I return to South Africa."

I crossed the busy square and went down the stairs into the semi-basement office. One man was there alone, busily arranging papers and folders. He looked up at me as I opened the door. "Good evening, sir."

His cheery manner lifted my spirits. "I'm certainly glad to see this office is still open."

"Oh, we stay open every evening for the benefit of travelers. What can I do for you?"

"Well, I'm a traveler," I said, which was a fact, even though I was virtually a penniless one.

He smiled. "Good."

"Do you happen to know of a fellow from South Africa called David du Plessis?" I asked. "He came from Johannesburg to Europe, and your office handled his arrangements."

“Why yes I do,” the agent responded. “I happen to be the one who is handling his file.”

“Oh,” I said, “so you know him?” The agent nodded as I pressed on. “Do you know, is he considered a good customer? Is he a trustworthy fellow?”

“Oh yes,” he said as he leaned down to remove a folder from a filing cabinet. “We have a note from Johannesburg that says he is a V.I.P.—a dignitary from some church. And we have been instructed to give him the best service we can.”

“Really?” I said. “I’m certainly glad to hear that.”

“Why?” He looked at me a bit quizzically, with a trace of suspicion starting to show in his face.

“Well, I’m David du Plessis.”

“You’re David du Plessis?” he said. The long pause was rather awkward. “Why did you take that approach?” he continued, looking straight into my eyes. “You must want something.” His eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

“Yes, I do,” I said, smiling. “I need a seat to the United States.”

“Oh, I see. “ Again, a pause. “My dear man, if you weren’t du Plessis I’d say, ‘Look, sir, there’s a ninety-day waiting list.’ ” “I know,” I said. “I’ve heard that several times today. But your company doesn’t service just one line, does it? Isn’t there a chance that one of the lines might have a cancellation?”

“Yes, that’s always a possibility.”

“Well, look,” I continued. “I’m general secretary of our church work in South Africa. I’m also a preacher. And I need to get to America for a major conference. It’s very important that I go. ” “I’ll tell you what I’ll do. I’ll try. I’ll do my best. Where can I find you?”

“I’m going to Manchester for the weekend, “ I said, “but I’ll be back Monday morning at this number.” I gave him the Barnes’ number.

“All right, “ he said. “You pray, and I’ll work, and we’ll see. ”

I chuckled. “That sounds good to me.”

I didn’t tell him I had no money.

Monday morning, I got the last seat available on the first train from Manchester to London. The five pounds in my pocket had grown to twenty-five because of the unusually large offering made to me, but I was still woefully lacking in funds to match my plans.

The first thing the maid said to me when I arrived at the Barnes' in Blackheath was, "Sir, a man from the travel agency has been calling and says he must contact you at once."

Mrs. Barnes came into the room to greet me. She was a fine woman—strong, heavy set, very matronly—but rather domineering, I felt. She greeted me cheerfully. "How did it go in Manchester?"

"Tremendous," I said, telling her about the services and the offering.

"Would you like a cup of tea?" she asked, and quickly poured me one. As I stood with the tea, the phone rang. Mrs. Barnes answered it. "It's your man at the travel agency."

I went to the phone, still holding the cup of tea. "Did you get me a seat?" I asked.

"Yes, " the agent said, "but you've got to leave tonight. That's why I've been trying to reach you so desperately. You must go to Brussels tonight and then fly out of there on Sabena tomorrow morning."

There was a moment of silence. Then the young man said considerably softer, "Mr. du Plessis, you must have prayed with great faith because there was really not the remotest chance last Friday night that you would find a vacancy."

I didn't say anything. I merely nodded at the phone.

"When do I pick up the ticket?" I asked.

"That's another problem," he said. "You have to pick it up within the hour."

"Man, that's impossible," I blurted. "I'm in Blackheath. I've got to walk from here to the train station, and then from the London station to your office. If I'm lucky, and get the right train, I can be there in an hour and a quarter at the minimum."

"All right, " he said resignedly. "I'll try to hold it for you for an hour and a half. But you must get here and pick it up promptly. "

I put the receiver down, and walked back into the living room. "Sister Barnes," I said slowly, "I have accepted a seat on a plane to the United States, and I have no money to pay for it. I am in trouble. "

"Didn't you know?" she asked.

"I knew." Frustration was in my voice. "But I also knew that the Lord told me to book a seat. And he told me he'd pay."

I thought for a moment. Mrs. Barnes sipped her tea, rocking slowly in her rocking chair.

“Maybe Pastor Barnes has some money,” I said, “even just to borrow.”

“No, “ she said quickly. “There’s nothing like what you’ll need lying around right now. And if you tried to get it from the church, the red tape would take a week even if there was any to give you. “ “Well,” I said draining my teacup, “there’s only one thing to do, and that’s go to the travel office.”

“You’re going there without money?” she asked incredulously. “Well, something’s got to happen,” I said.

The doorbell rang. And Mrs. Barnes left the room.

She returned carrying a small manila envelope. “It’s for you,” she said. “Maybe the money’s in there.”

“Stop joking, Sister Barnes.” My frustration mounting, I reached for the envelope. It contained a check for £165 17s. 6d. There was a note, too. It was from a Christian brother in York, whom I had met in Wales.

Dear Brother du Plessis:

Do you remember in Wales I told you I believed the Lord wanted you to go to America? Well, He woke me last night at eleven o’clock and told me to get up and make a check for this amount and send it to this address. For if I remember correctly you said this is the address you would be using while you are in England.

If you need this money, then I know the Lord spoke to me. I cannot give it to you because it is from mission funds, but the Lord told me you will be able to refund it. What you need it for, I don’t know. But should you find you don’t need it, please put it in an envelope and send it back to me.

I was momentarily stunned, as I often was in those days when I saw the hand of God working so clearly. But my mind raced to the question, “Will this be enough, and will they accept the check?”

I made it to the Parry, Leon and Hayhoe office in just seventy-five minutes, breathless but on time.

The agent looked at his watch. “You did it. I had six customers waiting for this ticket.” He held up the ticket, which was already made out in my name.

He handed it to me and I stared at the figures: £165 17s. 6d. My eyes filled with tears, and I handed him the check. He never questioned it.

As for my own twenty-five pounds, the agent told me I could take only five pounds out of the country by law. So I had to leave twenty with the Bameses, and I departed for the United States with five pounds in my pocket. And that was immediately reduced by the cost for my hotel room in Brussels that first night. But there was no place in my heart for fear.

It was several years before I repaid the money to the faithful brother in York. I had offered to send it from the United States. But as mission secretary for his church, he foresaw the need for it in America at some later date.

As it turned out, he himself eventually needed the money urgently for a trip he had to make to the United States, where I had banked the full amount plus interest. He wrote to me: "I once helped you to get to America and now I've got to go myself. We are not privileged to take much money out of England. So could you arrange for the money to be available to me, for that will make my trip easier?"

God's plans are certain and sufficient.

Chapter 15, The New York Miracle

Once again, the good people of the Mizpah Missionary Home opened their arms to me. It seemed as though Jesus softly gripped my shoulders and pulled me to His bosom. God's people are everywhere in this world and, despite our times of great hardness toward one another, Christ's love and power are being revealed.

Lacking immediate, precise direction, I went to the Assemblies of God missions office in Manhattan to discuss my plight with an old friend who had shown extraordinary kindness to me in the past. He was Robert McGlasson, a missionary servant who went on to become missions secretary at the headquarters in Springfield, Missouri.

Together we talked and prayed in his office that bright autumn morning about possibilities for my trip to Grand Rapids for the conference that would begin the next week. No course of action was apparent, for I had not been invited to the meeting. I was going on my own, convinced that the Lord had confirmed this plan that was first conceived on the sidewalks of London. But the sidewalks of New York seemed to provide no wherewithal. So there I sat.

The door swung open, and in walked an elderly lady, small and brisk, purposeful in her stride but beginning to show the effects of age. I did a double take.

"David du Plessis!" A smile broke across her face. "Can that be you?"

"In the flesh," I said, rising to put my arm around her.

McGlasson watched, amused.

I had known Fannie Smith in South Africa, and the memory of her in action there made me laugh and wince at the same time. She was one of those unpredictable people who constantly catch you off guard.

When she was past sixty-five, she had felt a call to South Africa, but no mission would accept her because of her age. So she raised the money and went on her own, eventually stumbling onto our mission. That began a relationship full of ups and downs, laughter and frustration, that held together and even mellowed in time.

I became Fannie's good friend and for everything that dear lady wanted, I was the one she turned to. But she got the job done. She often wore me out, mentally, emotionally, and physically, with all that she demanded, for that was her style—keep pushing and maneuvering until you get what you want. But I knew I

couldn't be unkind, no matter how exasperated I became. She was a child of God, and she accomplished more in her old age than many of the younger missionaries did.

She finally talked herself into a little car in which she would buzz about the countryside. That she never killed herself in that old wreck is a miracle in itself. But only good came out of it. She discovered that, although there were African missions all over the place, nowhere was there a Pentecostal Sunday school for children.

"Aha," she said one day, "here's my work!"

She couldn't possibly cope with the situation alone, so she angled herself into some of the meetings for white youths and before you knew it she had enticed some of the more capable young people to come with her and begin teaching black youngsters. She would load that little car up with candy and zip around the villages and rural areas, luring the kids to church with the candy. When she died deep in her old age, she had six thousand children in Sunday school.

She was on furlough that morning in New York. "How wonderful!" she exclaimed, standing erect, eyes twinkling. "The Lord told me to come to this office and said I would meet someone here to whom I must give one hundred dollars. It must be you." There was that stunned sensation again. "That's me," I said, unable to control my spreading grin. "I'm sorry I'm in this predicament but I was unable to bring money out of England, and I need to get to Michigan."

"That's all right," she said as she fished into her purse and handed me a one-hundred-dollar bill. "The Lord is in charge." As abruptly as she had entered, she strode out the door and down into the bustling city, in the eyes of the world a nobody, just as she had been in the distant land of South Africa, but in the eyes of God and certain of His other children, very precious indeed, moving right in the center of His will.

The preliminary discussions at Grand Rapids centered on the effects of the recent world conference in Zurich, and I was immediately asked to repeat the wheat and the chaff message. I did so, and that paved the way for a second invitation to speak to the conference, for which the Lord Jesus unfolded to me a fresh insight. I spoke on the marriage in Cana (John 2:1-11).

"My brethren," I said, "you remember the wedding feast at Cana, at which the Lord turned water into wine. It seems He made something like a hundred and thirty-six gallons of it for the wedding. I am convinced this means that at the last days, when the wedding of the Lamb comes, the Bridegroom will see to it that

there is enough wine.

“We are living,” I continued, “in the days when Jesus—the Bridegroom—is preparing to fetch his bride, and He will have plenty of wine.

“This refers to an outpouring of the Spirit. I absolutely expect an outpouring of the Holy Spirit beyond anything we have known in history. These are the closing days—the days of preparation. We will drink of the Spirit—Jesus will provide it—in quantity and quality beyond our imaginations.”

Again came invitations to minister in numerous places, causing me to preach that sermon many times over, even to the present day.

As the conference drew to a close, I sought out another friend, Gustave Kinderman, the European secretary of the Assemblies. “Brother, can you help me find somebody who will take a passenger to Detroit? That’s my next invitation, and I’d be happy if I can get a lift.”

I didn’t tell him that after paying all my travel, hotel, and food bills, I had only twenty-five cents in my pocket. As an uninvited guest at the conference, I had received no offerings.

“I think I know someone,” he said and darted away across the hall. Ten minutes later he was back. “There’s a German couple, a pastor and his wife, from Detroit who are very anxious to meet you because you’ve been in Germany and all over Europe. They will take you to the house of the pastor who invited you.”

So, once more, I found myself without funds, in a strange city. And alone. In the quiet of night, I cried out to God about being alone. “Why must I go alone? You always sent them two and two. And yet I have no companion.”

There was an answer, and I eventually heard it. “I’m not sending you to heathen. If I sent you to the heathen, I would give you a companion, but I am sending you to the churches. You must always link up with the people you minister to and the pastor of the church, or the president of the seminary, or the leader of the conference. Wherever you go, your companion is the head of the place I am sending you.”

There was purpose.

In Detroit, Pastor Bond Bowman talked during lunch the next day. “David, the Lord has laid it on my heart to take a special offering for you tonight.” He didn’t know I had only twenty-five cents in my pocket. “I expect five to six hundred people tonight, and I’m sure everyone will give at least one dollar.”

The outlook matched the bright, sunny skies.

At five o'clock that afternoon, those skies turned angry and dark, with blue-black clouds sweeping in from the southeast. Day turned suddenly to night, and the worst cloudburst in a generation struck Detroit.

Only one hundred people turned out that night for the meeting. My offering was just over one hundred dollars, enough to get me on a plane to Chicago. There I was placed in a hotel, which meant a bill. I had to wait until the end of that meeting to see what kind of an offering I received before making reservations for a trip to my next stop, Minneapolis. As it turned out, I had just enough to pay for my ticket.

In Minneapolis, I scraped up five cents to telephone my host, Pastor Frank Lindquist, hoping with all my might that he wouldn't suggest I take a taxi to his house. But he cheerfully said he'd pick me up, and I was safe for that meeting.

I had a reservation for a flight to Seattle, the site of my next commitment, but I couldn't pick up the ticket until I saw how much would come in the Minneapolis offering. The airline, for some unexplained reason, kept calling the pastor's house, which I had given as my stopping place, asking when I would pick up the ticket. I hadn't told the pastor of my situation, and soon he and the others began to get suspicious.

Finally, when he heard me telling the caller I'd pick the ticket up the next morning, an alert brother—Fred Squire—could restrain himself no longer. "David, brother, are you in trouble?"

"No, no," I answered, a bit too quickly.

"Do you have enough money for your ticket?"

"Well, no," I conceded. "I didn't have enough to pay for the whole trip."

"You're depending on this offering here, then?"

I nodded and turned to join the others. I was never sure what Fred told Pastor Lindquist at that time. But that night I received an offering large enough to carry me all the way to Seattle. I landed with fifteen cents in my pocket—five for a cup of coffee, five for a telephone call to the pastor there, and five for contingencies.

And so it went . . . Seattle ... to Sacramento ... to Los Angeles. By then, I had quite a few dollar bills in my pocket. I checked into the Lankersheim Hotel, ready for my last appointment. Things were picking up.

Chapter 16, Resignation

Suddenly I was awake. Wide awake. “Where am I?” I lay still in the dark hotel room. I could hear my watch ticking on the bedside table. Reaching with my left hand, I turned on the light for a flash of a second. It was exactly four o’clock in Los Angeles.

The Lord began to speak to me. “I want you to resign from your position. You are due to be back in South Africa five weeks from now. That gives you a full month of notice to the brethren. Cable your resignation.”

The thoughts flowed into my mind with such order, such logic. “Follow me.”

“But I am, dear Lord.”

“To Europe,” continued the instruction. “From here on, follow me. I will guide you—and use you. “ Even in the face of such direct and gentle revelation, I began to fear—even to tremble—as the words flowed in the darkness.

“What about my family, Lord?”

Silence.

Still fretting, I dropped back to sleep until daylight.

At 7:30 A.M., I sent a cable to the Apostolic Faith Mission in Johannesburg, submitting my resignation as general secretary, effective one month from that day. The acting secretary was my close friend, Abelmes Schoeman, and I knew he would speak to Anna about my cable. I needed to let her know, but I didn’t know what to say. Anna had always contended, “You can go where you like, travel where you like, do what you like, but I am going to stay in South Africa.” Her roots were deep.

For most of that day, I prayed. And I waited. What was I to say?

I figured that if I rented the house, I would get enough to continue paying off the mortgage and have some left to help us live. That would be one bit of income. As for what else there might be, I seemed to receive no guarantee.

At exactly four o’clock the following morning, the Lord woke me again. I was instantly wide awake in the darkness. He said: “Send a cable to Anna. Tell her to sell everything . . . and follow you.”

I could again hear my watch ticking. The moment was short,

“To Switzerland.”

“Switzerland!” I said into the darkness. “Sell everything! Well, that will leave me nothing.”

But I knew the Lord had spoken. Off went the cable.

In those days, a letter from South Africa to the United States took at least three weeks to arrive. That’s why I had used cables for the two directions from the Lord. Fortunately, invitations to speak were numerous in Southern California. My ministry seemed to prosper, and I had some money.

In one week, I received a fat letter from Anna. Standing in the hotel lobby, with people all around, I ripped it open and read quickly. One paragraph leapt off the page. I read it over and over.

“I have always told you, you can travel where you like, you can do what you like, but I stay in South Africa. But the Lord has spoken to me. And I feel I must not hinder you, so wherever the Lord wants you to go, please just know that I am with you. I am going anywhere the Lord sends you.”

I learned later that dear Anna had thought my cable was a response to her letter. But those words from her had been on their way for two weeks before I sent the cable. I didn’t have to persuade her. Jesus had spoken.

In quick order, Anna sold everything—the house, the car, the furniture—and began to pack. I went directly to Switzerland, where the brethren told me I was foolish to try to move my family there in the midst of the terrible postwar housing shortage. “Why didn’t you consult us, David?” groaned Leonard Steiner when I arrived on the scene.

I looked him straight in the eye. “Because the Lord spoke. I can see why it wasn’t right for me to consult you. If I had you would have dissuaded me from doing what the Lord wants.”

“But look,” he continued, “here’s Brother Kinderman [European secretary for the Assemblies]—he’s been here a year and is still living in a hotel. It’s expensive. He and his wife can’t find an apartment.”

“Well, I don’t know,” I conceded. “The Lord will just have to supply.”

Having a slight knowledge of German, I picked up the German newspaper one morning in Basel. I prayed. And I turned to the apartment rental section. There was one place for rent. I quickly called, although it was still very early. A woman answered. With a little muddling here and there, my German was sufficient for me to talk to her. “Yes, you’re the first inquirer,” she said.

“Well,” I said as calmly as I could, “will you please hold it? I’m coming right

there.”

I raced to the street car and in short order arrived in front of an old castle. A sign called it “Schloss Klybeck.” It was being remodeled into apartments. This apparently was the place described in the paper.

At last I found the woman. “Yes,” she said, “one apartment is ready.”

Actually, there were three apartments, but only one was finished.

“What about the other two?” I asked. “Could I have them, too?”

She looked at me strangely.

“I’ve got friends who are desperate,” I rushed on. There were Kinderman and his wife and then John Lindvall and his wife. John, a retired army chaplain, was on his way to Switzerland for studies and ministry.

She thought a moment. “I don’t see why it wouldn’t be good to have you and your friends here together. But the others won’t be ready until next week.”

We agreed, and I rushed out to find Kinderman. He couldn’t believe it when he saw the three apartments. “This is absolutely remarkable!” he shouted. “I’ve been watching papers and doing all kinds of things and haven’t been able for a whole year to find an apartment. “

He paused, and added, “We’ll take the top one.”

I laughed. “Okay. Anna and I will take the bottom one and the Lindvalls can have the middle.”

Gustave continued to shake his head. “And you don’t even speak German properly.”

I proceeded to London to meet Anna and the children—Conie, David, Riche, Peter, and Matt—spent one week with the Barneses, and then headed for historic Basel. I was very grateful to the Lord that we had a furnished apartment and a refrigerator full of food waiting for us. Friends had brought in more than we needed. And the du Plessis family was comfortably settled in the beautiful country of Switzerland.

Leonard Steiner was passing through days of disenchantment following the first world conference of Pentecostals and the conference in Grand Rapids. He had been convinced that American churches would move quickly with money to help meet some of the postwar needs throughout Europe. So, in addition to his own pastorate, he had agreed to direct the churches’ efforts growing out of the world conference. The calls for help were being sounded. But no support arrived. The

Scandinavians seemed to be operating on their own, and there was no help from America or anywhere else. Steiner was a discouraged brother. There seemed to be no way to get the churches to work together, and he was ready to give up. But I confronted him in an effort to rouse him and keep him on the track. “You can’t give up. You’re supposed to already be working on a second conference in 1949.”

But he was adamant. “I won’t do it if this is the way it’s going to work out.”

“But you can’t stop trying,” I insisted. “I’ll tell you what. You just tell me what to do and I’ll do it. I’ll take over the work of the office on the condition that you are the chief and I’m working for you.”

“But who’ll pay for it?” he asked.

“Don’t worry. The Lord will take care of it.”

Steiner finally agreed, writing to all the leaders that du Plessis was acting as secretary, working closely with him, and that they would be hearing from me.

In fact, Sweden eventually sent a woman to work as office secretary. She was brilliant and hard-working. Kinderman also chipped in with us, and we four worked together on the next world conference. Thus I actually backed into the secretaryship of the second world conference. In addition to this, I was traveling most weekends to churches and meetings throughout western Europe.

It was in the midst of this activity that a darkening cloud would occasionally cast a shadow over my mind. We received word that Smith Wigglesworth had died. What about his prophecy over me? There I was, working hard and with considerable success, but I was as far away as ever from the denominational churches. My major work seemed to be in the world Pentecostal conference effort. Perhaps Brother Wigglesworth had misread his vision. Perhaps the prophecy meant the Lord was going to shake up the Pentecostal movements and blanket the world with that. Had our tough, but faithful brother missed it?

The afternoon sun was getting low on the horizon as Lindvall and I drove along the winding road, bound for Paris from the meeting of the general council of the Assemblies of God in the south of France. We had been invited to speak and minister in Paris.

Approaching an intersection, John began slowing down. He pulled to the side of the road and looked at me. “Do you really want to go to Paris?” His wife was expecting a child, and I knew he wanted to go home to Basel. But I seemed to feel an even stronger tug than he did.

“My dear friend,” I said, “if it were left to me I would drive to Basel, not to Paris.”

“That’s all I wanted to know,” John said and turned the car onto the road toward our home. We were not expected for three more days, so our wives were in for a surprise.

I let myself in the door of our apartment, and Anna was surprised. But it was anything but friendly surprise. Her face was rigid and, to me, she looked miserable.

“What’s the matter?” I asked innocently, kissing her on the cheek, as her mood seemed to preclude anything more serious.

“You’ll find out.”

“Are you sick?”

“No,” she said. “Not really.”

“Any of the children sick?”

“No.”

Frankly, I was getting a little aggravated. I looked around the apartment. Anna was still seated on the living room couch.

“Where are David and Corrie?” They were our eldest.

“They’ve gone to the post office.” She wasn’t saying any more than she had to.

“At nine o’clock at night?” I asked. “What are they doing there?”

“David expects a letter.” Since we had a box, it was entirely possible that he could get mail even at that hour.

“Is he getting serious about someone?” I tried, weakly, to inject a note of levity.

“No, he just says that there will be a letter for you.”

“For me? I don’t understand.”

Suddenly the two of them walked into the apartment. Corrie broke into a run and threw her arms around me. I couldn’t tell if she was crying or laughing. David just stood smiling at me. It was rather a foolish smile.

“What is the matter?” I demanded of the three of them.

Corrie began talking rapidly, almost a babble. “Tonight, at supper, mother gave us the solemn notice that there isn’t a crust of bread, or meal, or porridge, or milk, or anything, for breakfast in the morning. ‘This is the end,’ she said. No

money. Not a cent. And she said she's going to write home for the fare and take us back to South Africa."

"Well, this is serious," I said, trying to smile and lighten the dark air.

Young David, who continued to wear rather a silly grin, hardly waited for me to finish. "But I told mother you always said that when we used the last ten cents, the next hundred dollars is on its way."

He handed me an envelope. "Daddy, forgive me, but I opened the letter. It has a hundred-dollar check in it."

His grin looked as though it would spread all the way to his ears. But there were tears in his eyes at the same time.

"Well," I said, "that's just fine. I've got some cash on me, so we'll have a grand breakfast in the morning. Everything that everybody likes."

The battle was over. The tension slipped away. The Lord had once again shown that His salvation includes salvation every day, every hour.

The next morning I got up before anyone else and went to the nearest shop, the kind European cities seem to have on every corner. We ate royally, and everyone was happy—especially Anna and I.

Later that day, I visited a physician who had become a good friend. Without a greeting, he said, "You're in trouble. I know it. You were to be in Paris."

"The Lord told me to come home," I said.

"Is your wife in trouble?"

"Nothing serious—at least now," I replied.

"You needed money?" he pressed on.

"I didn't, but *she* did, or thought she did. She had just run out of cash and out of food."

The doctor burst into tears. I was confused. "What a fool I've been," he cried. "The Lord told me to send your wife twenty francs. But then I began to reason: 'David isn't here, I'm a doctor, I send Anna twenty francs, what would she and everyone else say?'"

"That would have been easy," I replied. "You could have said, 'The Lord told me to send it.'"

"I don't know that kind of language," he sobbed. And an important point was driven home about us longtime Christians. We tend to develop a jargon that

some people are uncomfortable with.

“But if I had sent that twenty francs,” he continued, “you would have been in Paris ministering.”

“It does no good to think like that,” I said. “The Lord wanted me home, and I came home.”

Nonetheless, the distressed good doctor pressed eighty francs upon me, somehow trying to compensate for what he sensed to be disobedience to God’s direction. I wasn’t sure of the correctness or incorrectness of accepting the money, but his distress was so great that I felt compelled to do so. With it, I paid the rent for the apartment, and the du Plessis family seemed in good shape.

That episode took place on Thursday. The following Saturday, early in the morning, a young boy delivered two hot loaves of bread and assorted confections to our apartment. He was a smiling, good-natured young man, but became enigmatic as we began to talk.

“There must be some mistake, “ I said. “We didn’t order this. “ “We know,” he said. “Somebody else did.”

“Who was it?”

“Not allowed to tell.”

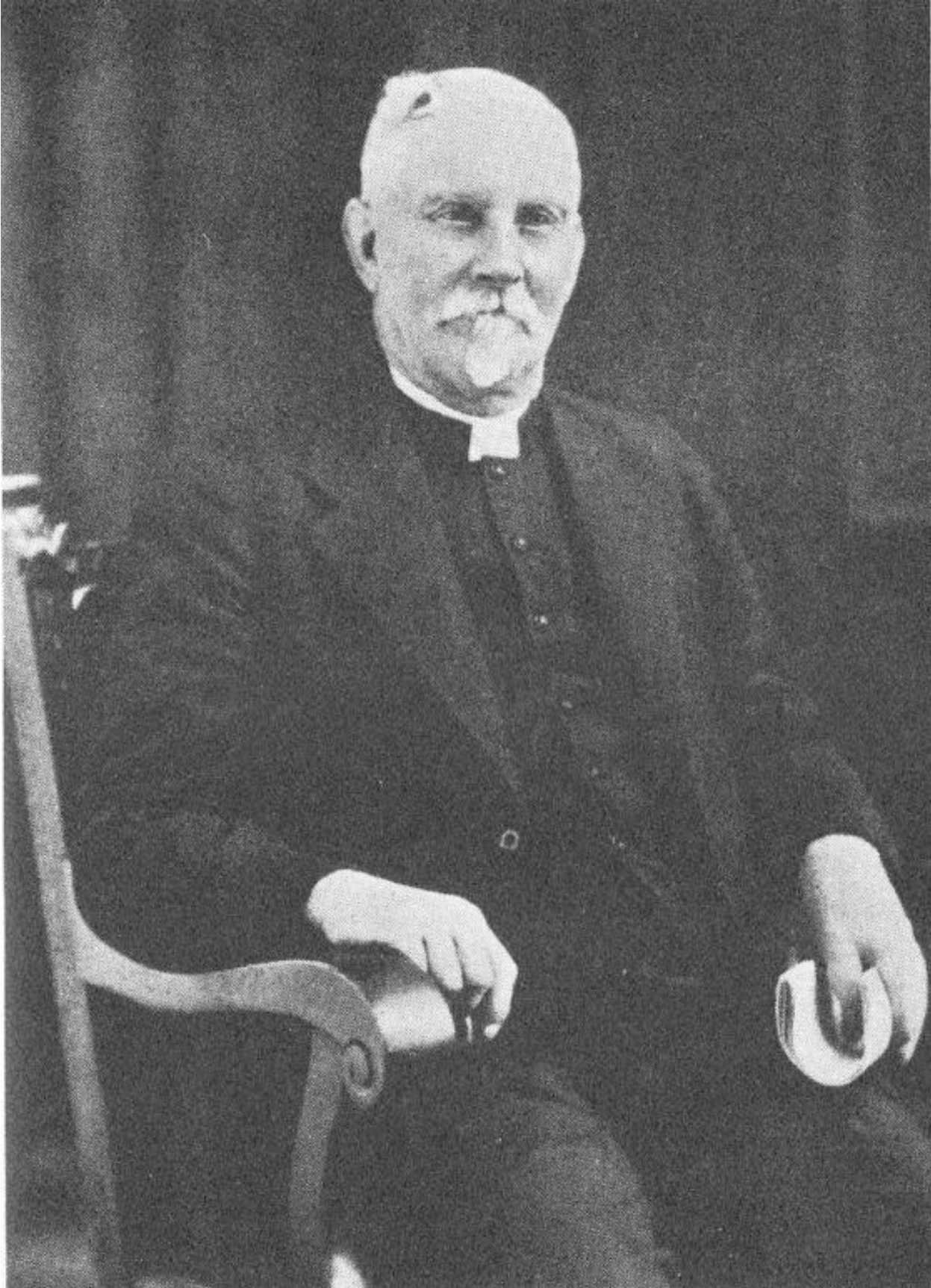
“Well, what bakery?”

“Not allowed to tell.”

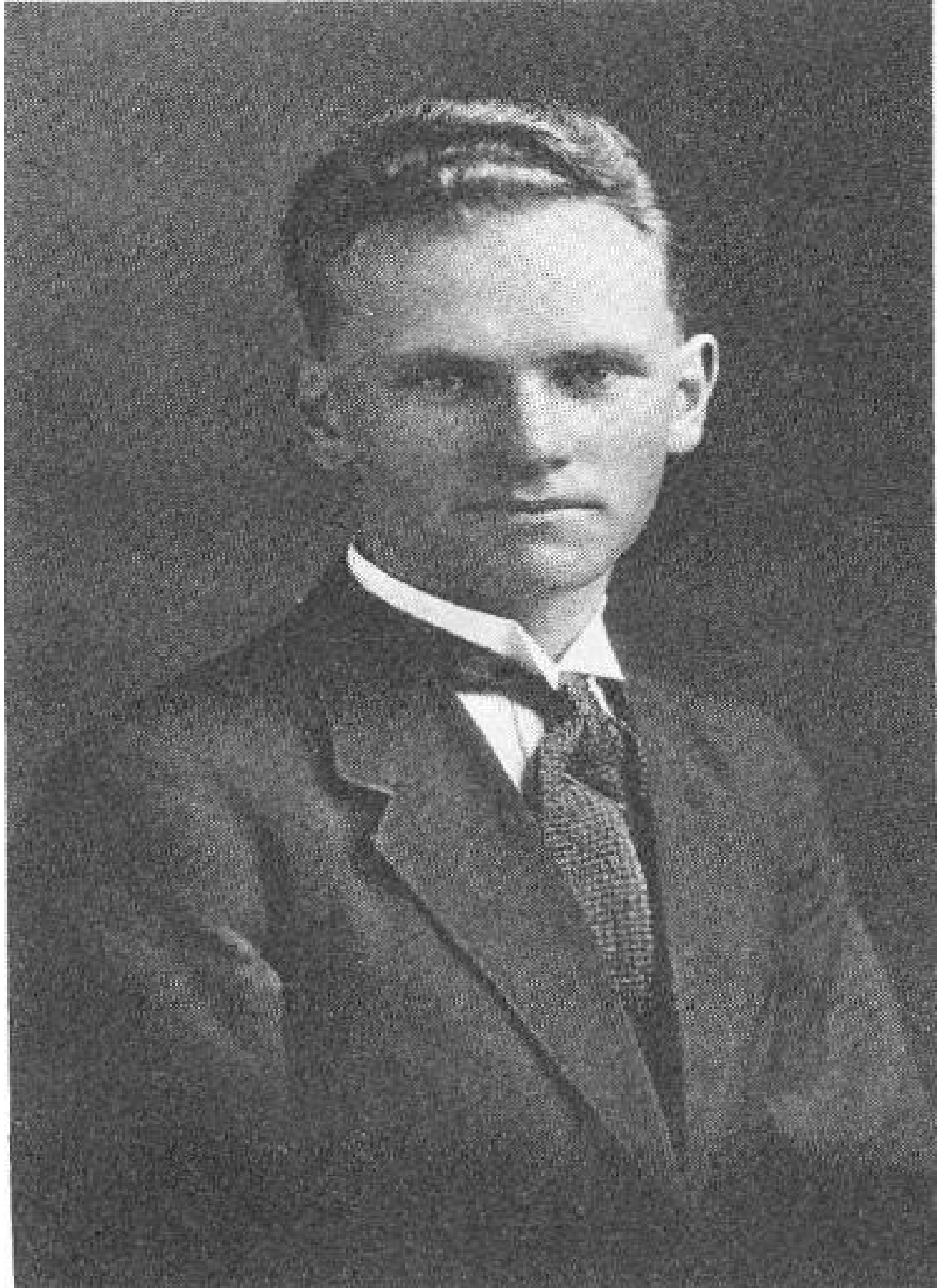
There was nothing to do but accept it.

Monday morning he returned, again bearing two hot loaves, but this time no confections. He refused to talk. The same thing Tuesday. Then Wednesday. Every morning—two hot loaves. On Saturday, it was hot loaves, plus confections, enough for Sunday, too. We had enough bread to feed the Kindermans, the Lindvalls, and us, too. In fact, we had too much. So I confronted him after a few days and told him, “One loaf a day is all we can manage. “ So, from then on, it was one loaf a day and two on Saturday, plus confections. It lasted as long as we were in Switzerland, and until this day we don’t know who sent it. I accused the doctor. “I don’t know anything about it,” he said.

Our bread was free, and our water was free. “It is just like the Bible,” said Anna. “The people of Israel were assured of their bread and their water.”



Pieter Louis Le Roux was president of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa from 1914 until 1943. For fifteen years David du Plessis served under him as secretary of the movement. Le Roux was the first missionary student trained by Dr. Andrew Murray. He, in turn, profoundly influenced du Plessis by the example of his life.



David du Plessis at age sixteen.



David and Anna on their wedding day, August 13, 1927, in Pretoria.



The young couple in 1928, shortly after they had stepped out into full-time ministry.



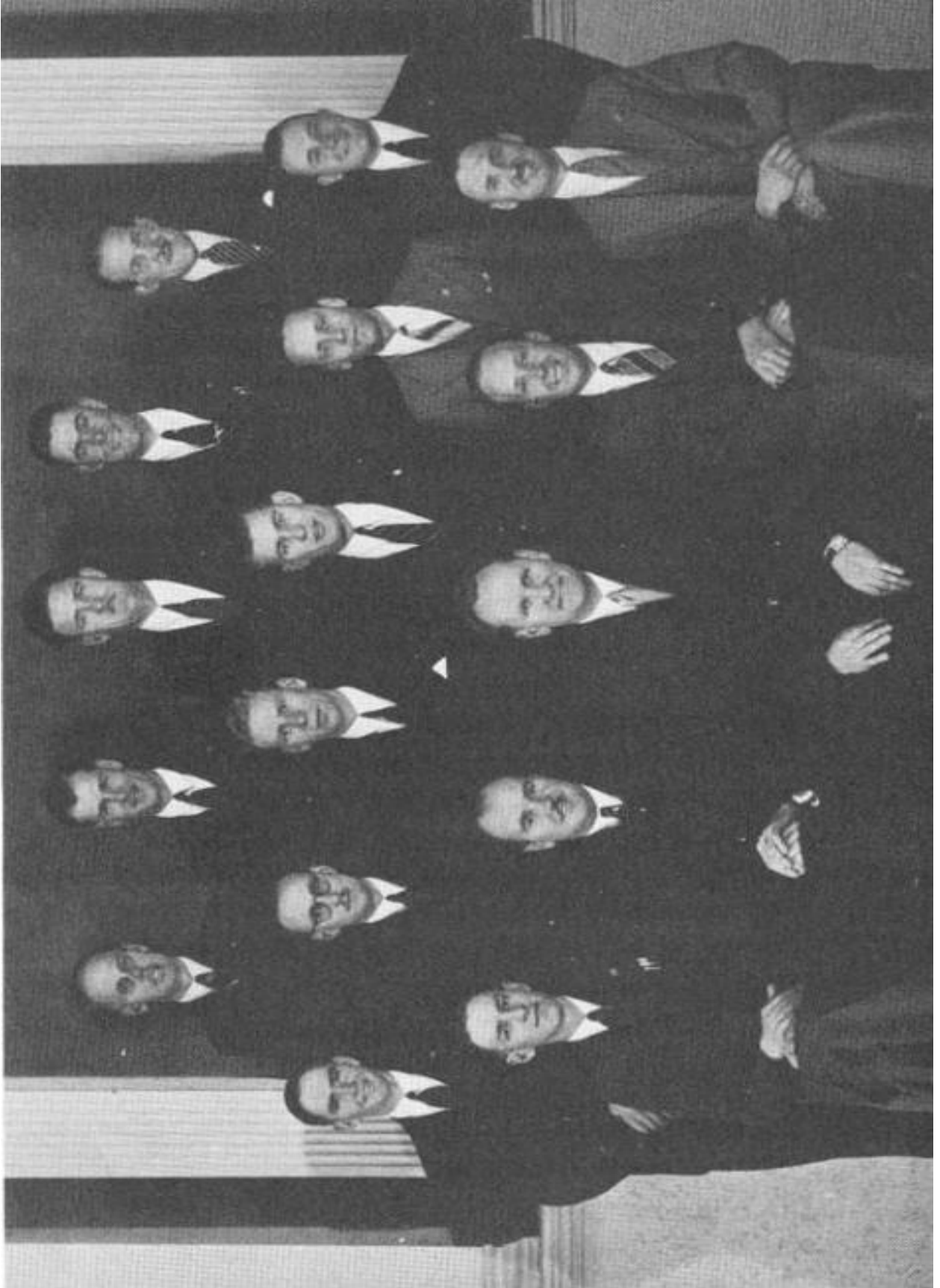
David with his elders and deacons in the Apostolic Faith Mission of Bethlehem, South Africa, in 1932.



This is Smith Wigglesworth as he looked in 1936. With him are his daughter, Alice, and her husband, Jimmy Salter, of the Congo Evangelistic Mission.



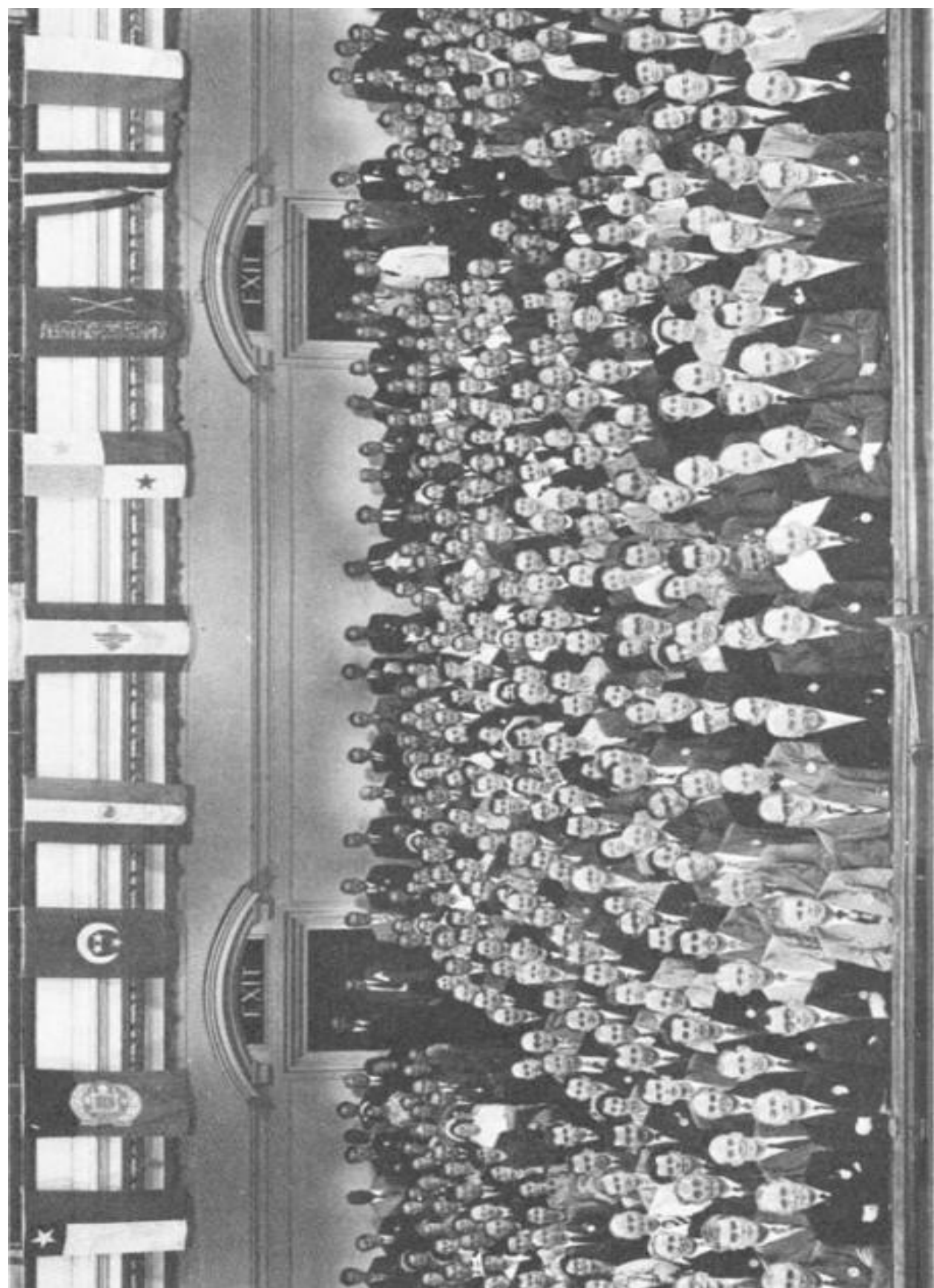
David (R.) and his companion, Henry Stewart (L.), visit Pastor Wesley Steelberg (center) at the Highway Tabernacle in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1937. It was to be the first of many overseas tours for David.



As president of the Apostolic Faith Mission's Bible School, David poses with his students in 1944.



At the close of World War II, when building materials were almost unobtainable, David stands with the crew at work on the Apostolic Faith Mission's camp tabernacle in Maranatha Park, Lyndhuest, Johannesburg. Today the site contains an orphanage and a home for the aged. The old tabernacle, seen here in construction, has been replaced by a larger structure which seats ten thousand.



Du Plessis sits front row, center, with the delegates to the Second Pentecostal World Conference, held in Paris in 1949. This was the congress David organized from a hospital bed in West Virginia.



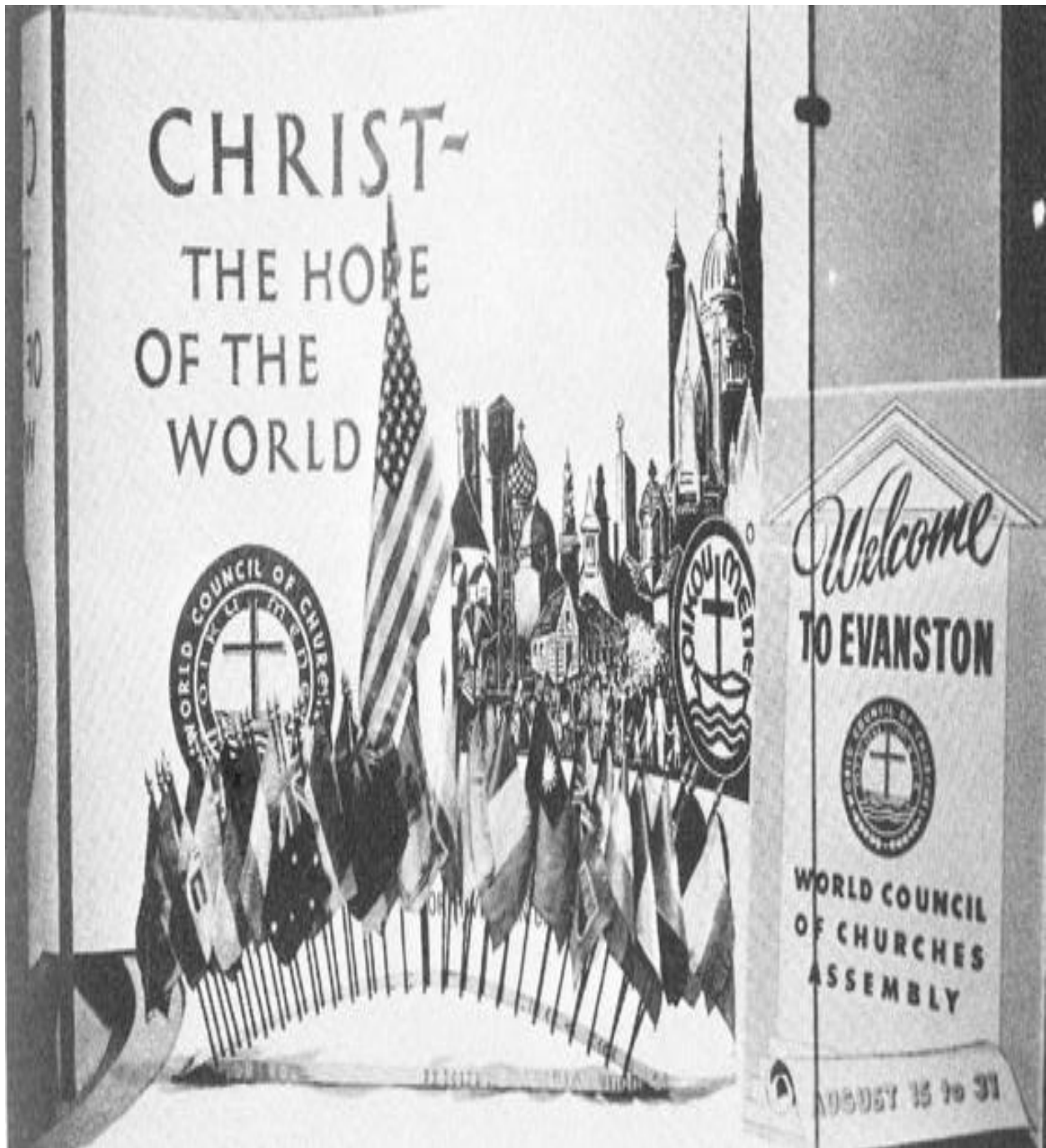
Weltmissionskonferenz in Willingen

Juli 1952

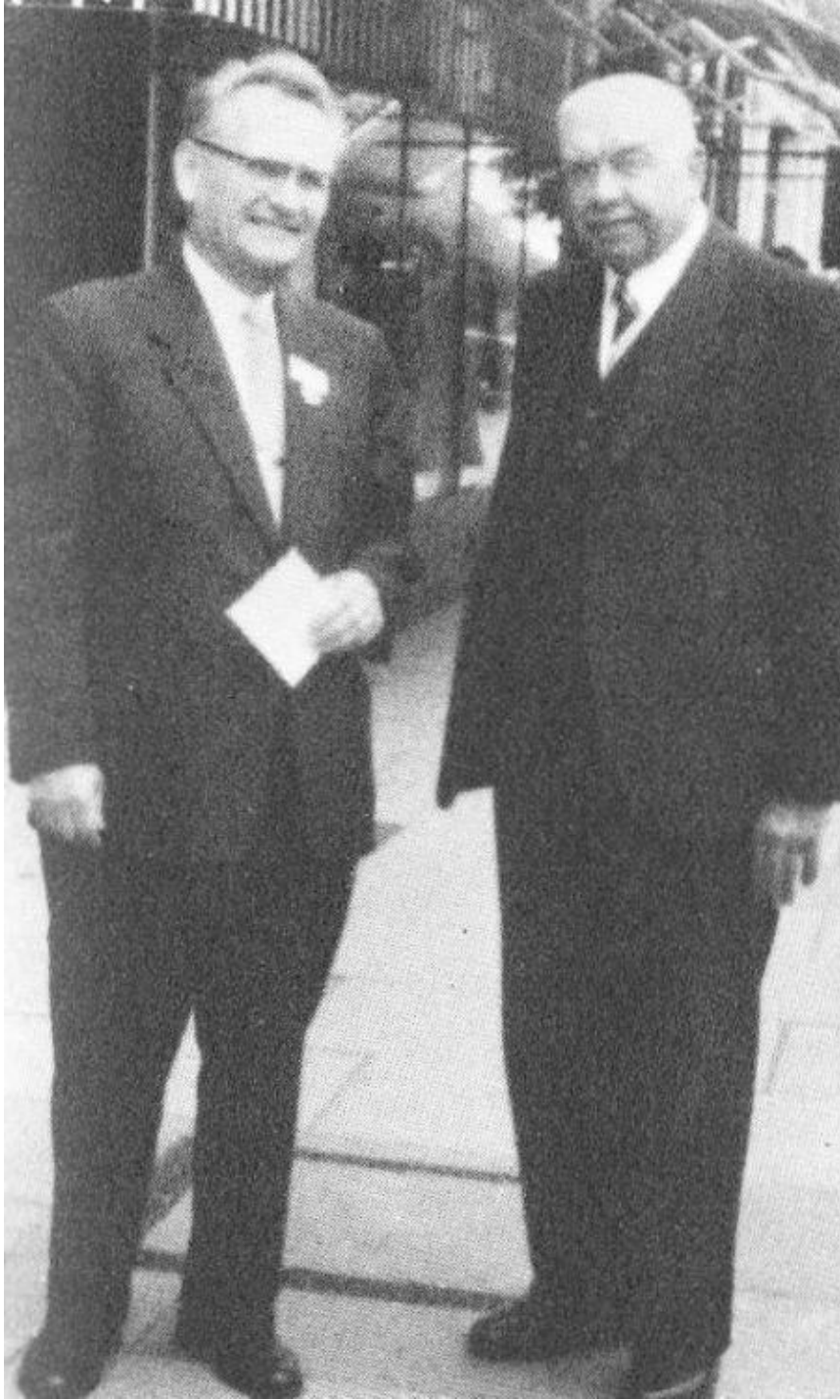
In 1952 du Plessis went from the Third Pentecostal World Conference, in London, to Willingen, Germany, to attend the World Missionary Conference of the International Missionary Council. It was his first encounter with the Protestant ecumenical movement and led to his participation, in 1954, in the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston, Illinois.



The du Plessis family in 1952. Back row (l. to r.): David, Jr., Corrie, and Riche. Front row: Matthew, Basil, Anna, David, and Peter.



This was the welcome sign that greeted the delegates to the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1954.

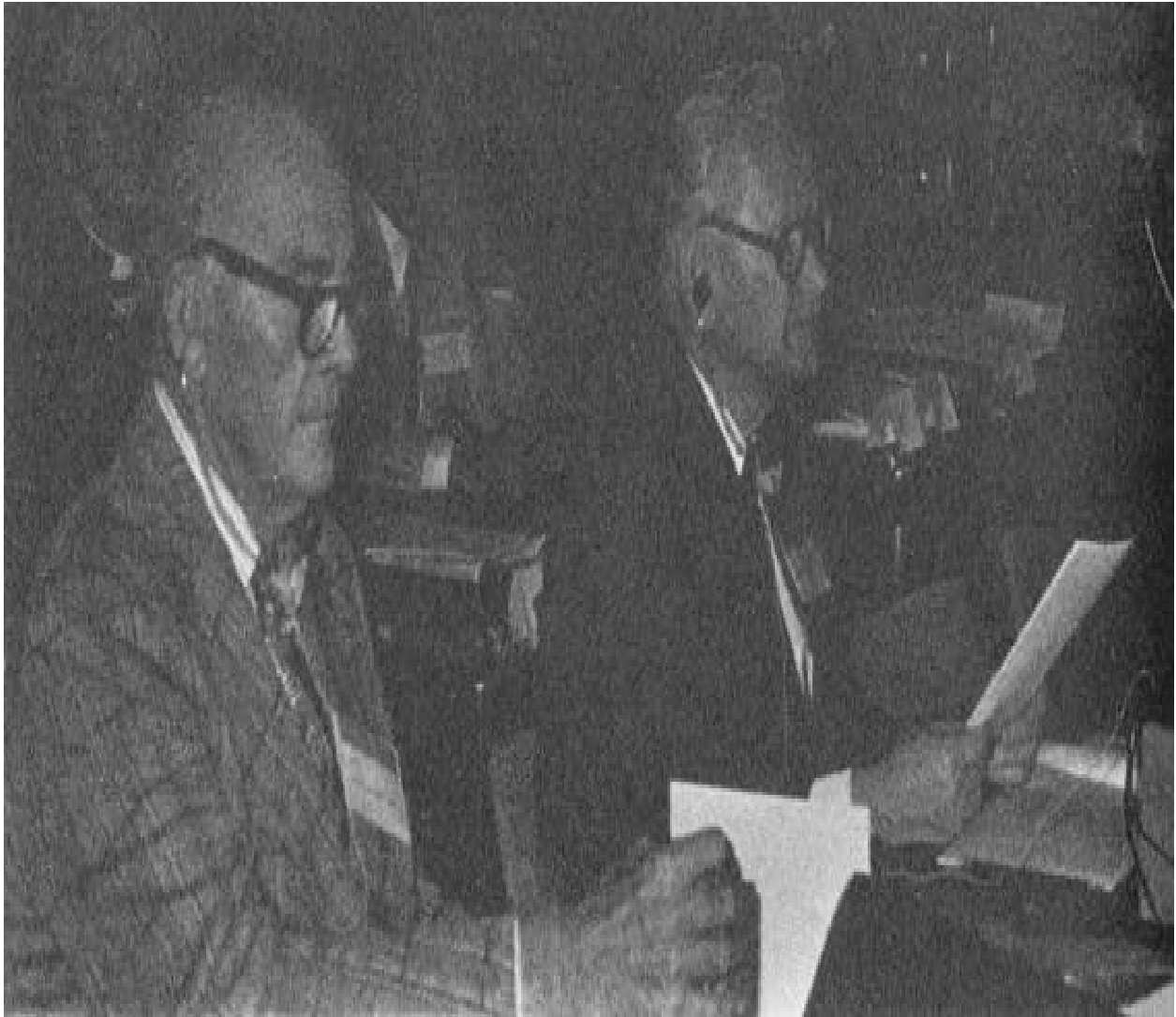


David's good friend, Donald Gee, visited him during the meetings of the World Council's Commission on Faith and Order in St. Andrews, Scotland, August, 1960. It was a warm gesture from a fellow Pentecostal. During the meetings David met a priest, Fr. Bernard Leeming, who opened the way for him to attend the Vatican Council in 1964.



Here David stands between two Pentecostal bishops from Chile when they were

the first to bring a Pentecostal denomination into the World Council of Churches, in New Delhi in 1961. Today seven Pentecostal groups are members of the W.C.C.



At the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi, 1975, David is seated beside Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, a former Secretary of the W.C.C.



In a happy mood with Dr. Billy Graham during one of his Los Angeles campaigns.



David in Stockholm with two grand old men of Pentecost, the late Lewi Pethrus (second from right) and Joseph Mattson-Boze (extreme right). Mattson-Boze and du Plessis were born on the same day. On David's left is the new pastor of Philadelphia Church in Stockholm.



The participants in the Roman Catholic/Pentecostal dialogue in Schloss Craheim, June, 1974. Back row (l. to r.): Monsignor Balthazar Fischer (R.C.), Dr. Leonard Lovett (Pent.), Dr. Russell Spittler (Pent.), Canon Giblet (R.C.), Pastor Justus du Plessis (Pent.), Dr. Francis Whiting (Baptist), Fr. Simon Tugwell (R.C.), Dr. Rodman Williams (Presbyterian), Fr. Pierre Duprey (R.C.), Dr. Heribert Muehlen (R.C.). Front row: Dr. John McTernan (Pent., secretary), Fr. Basil Meeking (R.C., secretary), Dr. Kilian McDonnell (R.C., co-chairman), David du Plessis (Pent., co-chairman), Dr. Arnold Bittlinger (Lutheran), the Rev.

Michael Harper (Anglican).

Chapter 17, Disaster

The new '48 Packard engine was powerful and smooth, like a PT boat. It felt solid as my hands gripped the steering wheel and I peered into the drizzle and fog of the October night. Paul Walker slouched in the front seat beside me, alternately dozing and talking in bursts about our meeting earlier that night. It was pleasant talk. But my concentration was on the winding, curving road, Highway 11, twisting through the mountains of southern West Virginia. The defroster hummed airily behind the clack. . . clack. . . clack of the windshield wipers.

“I told you it would help if you visited some of our churches so you can get to know them and them to know you.” Paul, an old and reliable friend, was head of the missions department for the Church of God. He was helping me immeasurably as I traveled about the United States trying to bring unity among the Pentecostal denominations and factions. It was essential that we move toward unity if we were to have another world conference the following year.

“You’re right,” I said, continuing to stare straight ahead. The tricky highway was completely foreign to me, and the headlights were little help. “Tonight’s meeting was excellent. The people seemed to be open to the Spirit and the unity He can bring to us. ” We had been up in the northern part of the state and were eager to get back to the Walkers’ home in Beckley, West Virginia, for a few hours of sleep before we headed toward Kentucky for another meeting.

I was really having a hard time seeing. The fog and rain seemed worse. Paul saw my anxiety. “Let’s pull into that old truck stop right down the road, for a cup of coffee,” he said, raising himself in the seat. “It’s just down there. Then I’ll take it for a while. I know the roads a bit better than you do.”

It was a welcome suggestion.

The coffee, sweet and creamy, felt good in my stomach as we swapped sides in the front seat and Paul prepared to head us back into the deepening mist. I wasn’t exhausted, just very comfortable, as I lay back in the seat, stretching one leg out and curling up the other. “You get some rest now, brother,” Paul said. “You’ve got another busy night tomorrow.”

It was past three o’clock. I eased down gradually to someplace between consciousness and sleep, contented and peaceful.

Suddenly, unknown seconds or minutes later, I was snapped awake by Paul’s cry

of “Lord Jesus! . . .” It was barely out of his mouth when my ears, my brain, my whole system of senses were crushed with a shrieking crash of metal against metal, immovable matter against immovable matter. My consciousness was smothered in a smashing roar. Suddenly there was blackness.

Paul said nothing beyond calling to the Lord. He had been squinting into the impenetrable wall of moisture, straining to catch a glimpse of the white bridge that he knew lay somewhere out there in the darkness. We crested a hill and started down toward the river. The car accelerated slightly. The headlights were dimmed for better visibility in the fog.

Suddenly terror leapt at his throat. He gasped for air. Right in front of the car was a huge black mass that sent tingling needles into his scalp. It was a train locomotive. His right foot jabbed at the brake pedal. The car skidded sickeningly, as though speeding up, on the wet road and slammed full force into the locomotive and coal tender.

This was coal-mining country. We had smashed into a shunting engine used to jockey around coal cars, working day and night. Residents in the sparsely settled area had often complained that the engineers stopped the locomotive on that road at all hours.

Apparently I had fallen asleep with my left leg still stretched out. The impact slammed the front seat forward and my leg doubled up under the dashboard and snapped just above the knee. The upper half of my body plunged forward and my head smashed through the windshield.

Paul, meanwhile, suffered a searingly painful injury, losing his right kneecap. He remained conscious.

The soft drizzle beating upon my face in those predawn minutes of horror apparently awakened me. I was lying on my back on what turned out to be the full-length rear seat cushion, which had been removed from the twisted, shattered car. I could hear the hissing of steam and a jumble of voices, but all was blackness. I liked the cool drops falling gently on my face.

But I knew someone was near to me. I could hear breathing. And something seemed to block the cool drizzle. I could hear a voice, but I had to work to figure it out. It was a low masculine voice. It was saying, “What is your name?” It repeated the words, and I knew they were being spoken to me.

“David du Plessis,” I said through lips that seemed awfully heavy.

“Where do you live?” the gentle voice asked again.

“In Switzerland,” I said.

“Where is your family?”

I thought he meant my parents. “In South Africa,” I said. My lips were very stiff. His presence seemed to pull away. I was afraid he was leaving. In fact, he stood up, looked at the growing crowd and said, raising his right hand to his head, “He’s mixed up.”

The man with the low voice was the doctor stationed at the mining office nearby. He had raced to the accident scene in time to supervise the removal of my broken body from the demolished auto, avoiding further damage to my smashed leg.

Once again, he leaned down, blocking off the refreshing drizzle from my face, which I was later told was frighteningly slashed and covered with blood and glass splinters. My eyes apparently were filled with blood, and it was assumed they might have been destroyed.

I felt him drawing nearer and I spoke: “What happened?”

“You’ve had an accident,” the voice said, “and you’re hurt badly.”

“Who drove the car?” I asked, rather oddly.

“We took your friend, Paul Walker, out from behind the wheel,” the doctor said. “He’s banged up pretty badly, but he’ll be all right.”

I thought for a moment. It was hard to concentrate. “Oh yes, I remember now. “With that, I dropped back into unconsciousness.

Something seemed to glow in my mind. I tried to open my eyes. That hurt. My eyes didn’t open. But I was in a room, and there was light. I could tell people were moving about me. There was a voice I recognized. But the strong one was new to me. It seemed to be coming from just above me. It was another man’s voice. The low, gentle voice wasn’t there. This one was strong, higher pitched.

“Hello, my friend,” it said. “I’m the senior doctor here at the hospital and I’ve been looking you over.”

“Hello, doctor,” I tried to say, but it came out between my thick lips as a grunt. “We had an accident.” It was just a sound.

But it produced a reply. “Yes, you had quite an accident. You managed to get pretty banged up, I’m sorry to say.” He paused. “And I’m also sorry to say your leg is very bad.”

Other people were in the room, and he seemed to be talking to them. His voice dropped. "I'm afraid this leg is so bad we'll have to amputate."

There was a gasp, and the voice that had seemed familiar spoke excitedly. "Doctor, if you knew who this man is, and what he is, and what he's doing, you'd do everything in the world to save his leg and his life."

My mind was foggy. But then I remembered. That was Mrs. Walker's voice.

"He's a great churchman," she continued, and her flattery made me chuckle inside. "And I'm sure the churches will take care of all the expenses."

"Oh, indeed," I chuckled to myself again.

"It's not a matter of. . .," the doctor began, but he stopped. Someone seemed to enter the cluster of presences I sensed around me.

"Yes, doctor," the senior doctor's voice sounded. "This is the man from the accident. "

There was a long silence. The only sound besides breathing and the brushing of clothes I could hear was an infrequent "hmmmmm, hmmmmm." I could smell musty tobacco smoke in the clothes of the man speaking the "hmmmmm." Very masculine. I could also feel the quick but painless movement of his hands along the lower half of my body.

"I've fixed worse legs than that," a firm, rather youthful voice said. "We had much worse than that in France. " It developed that he had returned home from military duty only months before, having served in Europe during the last part of the war.

"Okay, then, it's your job," the senior doctor said, fairly cheerfully, I thought.

At that moment, another voice turned up. This one moved very close to my face. "Oh, man, what a face." I can only assume that he didn't know I was hearing everything he said.

"Well, that's your job," the voice of the senior doctor said firmly. The additional voice was that of the plastic surgeon.

They put me to sleep with anesthesia, and that's all I remember. I was told later that all that discussion had taken place about five o'clock in the morning.

There was the whoosh of a speeding passenger train. It was racing through a long, black tunnel. In a split second it burst through the mouth of the tunnel into the sunlight.

In a flash I was awake. I was looking straight ahead at a rising field of white. No

colors, just white. It was the bed sheet over my legs, which seemed to be lifted. My eyes followed them upward and focused on the pastel green fields beyond. Those were walls. But I couldn't turn to look further. Something made my face and neck stiff. And something seemed to be framing my eyes.

A figure came into my peripheral vision. It was a man dressed in white. He spoke. "Hello, preacher. How are you?" He was one of the doctors.

My voice was brittle sounding. And my lips had to struggle to move. "Just fine, thank God, if you'll tell me what this is all about."

"Don't you remember?" he said. "You've been in an accident."

Several seconds went by.

"Oh, yes, I have a faint recollection someone told me that, but I must have passed out."

"Yes, to say the least," the doctor said. "You've been out for twelve hours. It's five o'clock in the afternoon. Your friend says you haven't moved."

Suddenly I remembered Paul. "Where is my friend?" I asked a bit fearfully.

"He's right across the room behind that curtain, doing just fine."

In the meantime, the doctor had been very gently working around my face. He was, in fact, removing the heavy exterior bandaging. He was talking, but extreme concentration showed in his round face.

"We put thirty-seven stitches into you, you know," he said evenly, his lips pursed as he removed the cloths and peered into my eyes.

"Well, that is something," I said. "Thirty-seven? But what is all that down there?" I continued.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean down there with my legs and feet," I said.

"Can you see that?" he asked, again evenly.

"You mean my feet; why, yes, I see that they're all rigged up and sticking up into the air."

"That's good," the friendly, round-faced doctor said enthusiastically, his face brightening noticeably. "We were afraid for your eyes. We just didn't know how much damage the glass had done. "

"Well, I would say I'm all right there," I said, "but what about my legs?"

“That’s not my department. I’ll let the other doctors explain all that to you.”

As it was explained, surgery had been required to get at the break in my upper left leg, which was then reset apparently very nicely. But a pin and weights were required to hold the leg and stretch it for proper healing. The scars still show.

I was immobile but physically comfortable. Mentally, however, was another story. Above everything else was the thought of my family—Anna—three thousand miles away in Basel, Switzerland, and still dependent on me.

I calculated the days. It was October 8. The next day was Anna’s birthday, and she would know something was wrong when she didn’t receive a cablegram from me. I had to get in touch with her.

Paul agreed to call for his assistant to come and write a letter for me.

“I suppose, dear Anna, that the thing we always feared has happened,” I dictated. “I am in the hospital, recovering from an accident. But it didn’t happen in an airplane, and Brother Wigglesworth’s prayer and prophecy still hold up. It happened in an automobile. Praise the Lord, I was not driving; Paul Walker was at the wheel and I was his passenger.

“But don’t worry. I’ll be all right soon. I feel fine.”

However, the young assistant unexpectedly enclosed the clipping from a local newspaper that concluded, “As the paper went to press, the preachers were still in very critical condition.”

Anna, who was carrying our youngest child, Basel, and already suffering many ill effects, thought the worst. “Just like him,” she told the children. “Nothing’s wrong. With him nothing is ever wrong! Here he is, in the hospital, and we have no income. We have nothing. We will have to go back home.”

In a very real sense, we had reached bottom. I knew it. She knew it.

But in her misery, she still managed to pray and later described it to me. “All of a sudden, I felt I must live. I was often in such pain that I had to go up the stairs on my hands and knees. But then I knew that for the sake of you and the children, I must push on, I must live.”

Corrie and David confirmed the intervention of God. “All of a sudden,” they told me, “Mummy was able to do things she had been unable to do for several days. And she was able to go to bed and sleep.”

Meanwhile, the brethren in the United States met in Des Moines, and the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America was born. Their first action as a body

was to collect \$400 to send to me immediately and to agree to give me \$250 a month until I recovered. At last, the Pentecostals did something together! And I received the blessing.

I received other offerings and was able to send Anna more than a thousand dollars. My letter said, “You can now choose. You can take the money and go home, back to South Africa, or if you want to please me, you will come here. I want you to come here. Even if we have to go back to South Africa, I want you to come here.”

A battle took place deep within Anna. She was alone. She yearned for the security of her homeland. Our prospects were desperately bleak. But, again, she prayed and went to the travel agent with our eldest son, David. The agent asked her where she wanted to go. David looked into her face. “To America,” she said, fighting against her emotions. David blinked back tears.

She and the five children were booked aboard a vessel carrying war refugees to North America. Because she was a paying customer, she and the children were given a private cabin. Their destination: Quebec.

From there they traveled aboard a train with a defective heating system that nearly baked them alive before they encountered the friendly face of Robert McGlasson at New York City’s massive Grand Central Station. He took them all under his wing and sent them by car to the town of Somerset in the southern tier of Pennsylvania, where a missionary cottage in a Church of God camp was turned over to them as a home for the immediate future. The brethren there treated them with genuine affection, and the youngsters tentatively began to reach out with the roots that were to sink deeper and deeper into a new homeland. It was in that cottage that our youngest child was born. We named him Basel Somerset.

Thanksgiving Day was just two days away, so Anna and the children drove south across the western tip of Maryland and into West Virginia. They crossed the New River into Beckley in time for the transplanted du Plessis family to eat its first American Thanksgiving dinner together. Turkey with cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie were new to us, but we adjusted instantly with a hearty smack of the lips—hospital, bandages, and traction devices notwithstanding. Our thanks to our heavenly Father and to the Walkers came easily.

Chapter 18, Revolution

Lying in the hospital, unable to move, unable to do any work except correspondence by way of a dictaphone from Paul Walker's office, I had plenty of time to listen to the Lord. Paul and I talked a lot, examining over and over the causes for our accident and searching for meaning to it all. We knew we were fortunate to be alive.

I also had many quiet moments during that confinement, which was perhaps the most extended period of silent prayer in my life. I prayed for hours upon end—for Anna and the children, for our future, for unity among Pentecostals, for the fast-approaching Second World Conference in Paris, for understanding about the Wigglesworth prophecy in Johannesburg twelve years before—an event so powerful at its birth and yet beginning to dim ever so slightly because of time and distance.

Shortly before his death, I had had my last discussion with the British evangelist of reckless faith. In the few minutes we had together, he had spoken softly to me, “My brother David, I've had no further word from the Lord. But I am absolutely sure that what He revealed in South Africa is coming and that you are the man for it.”

In the hospital, it was during prayer over this, after He had managed to quiet my racing mind and spirit, that the Lord opened one of those conversations so real and clear yet so doubted by the world.

I was praying in tongues quietly to myself so as not to disturb Paul. The midafternoon winter sky was gray outside my window. The colorful fall season had passed and snow had blanketed the countryside. But my conversation with the Lord then and there provided all the colors any human being could desire.

“The time for the fulfillment of the prophecy Smith Wigglesworth gave you has arrived. It is time to begin. I want you to go to the leaders of the churches.”

I argued back. “Lord, what can I say to those dead churches?” “I can raise the dead.” As simple as that.

“But, Lord, they are enemies.” I almost whined.

“Yes, but I have told you to love your enemy.”

Ignoring the truth of the Scripture in my frustration, I continued to argue. “How can I love people like this? I can agree with neither their doctrines nor their

practices.”

“ Well, “ the Lord said firmly deep inside me, “you will have to forgive them!”

“Dear, Lord”—it really was a whine by then—“how can I forgive them if I can’t justify them?”

“I never gave you authority to justify anybody. I only gave you authority to forgive. And if you forgive, you will love them. And if you love, you will want to forgive. Now you can choose.”

The conversation was over. But the battle had only begun. A small light had gone on, enough to show me that I knew very little about forgiveness in the eyes of the Lord. In the days ahead, I had to wrestle with the Lord, to learn, to go through the internal pain of a genuine revolution. A new king had to be put into power over that part of my life.

As I lay there in the nighttime, with the lights off, Paul asleep, I saw how wrong I had been. I had been expecting Jesus to use me, as a Pentecostal, to shake the churches. I thought I would pound home the truth, tell them just where they were wrong, shake them in righteous indignation. But the Lord said, no, that’s not the way. “The revival will occur if you forgive. If you fight—nothing.”

During that time the Lord sent me again and again into chapter 13 of the First Letter to the Corinthians, the most powerful words ever written about love. I read, and I prayed, and I thought. “Can this really be?”

Love is so important that it is beyond our understanding as ordinary human beings. It is more important than talking in tongues to God. More important than talking directly to God. It is more important than prophesying, than receiving a word of knowledge or a word of wisdom directly from God. It is more important than healing the sick, than moving mountains. “Can this really be?”

It is more important than selling all you have to feed the poor. It is more important than giving your life in the cause of social justice. It is more important than your devotional life, than your preaching ministry. All is meaningless without love. “Can this really be?”

In that room of green walls, white ceiling, bedsores, bedpans, and endless hours, the Lord spoke: “You must love those people you minister to. Don’t ever minister to anyone unless you love him.”

During that time, the life of Teddy Hodgson kept crowding in on my mind. Teddy was a marvelous man, an Englishman, who went into the heart of Africa as a missionary. He gave his life, literally, dying with another Pentecostal

missionary at the hands of cannibals in Zaire. I know with all my heart that he loved those cannibals right to the point of death.

I remembered that he had arrived as a missionary and almost immediately was loved by the natives. Before long, hundreds of natives would be waiting at sunrise on the compound lawn for him to come out and minister to them. They would parade before him with their sores and sicknesses. Not being a medical man, he would bind them up with a bit of first aid, and then pray for them. Very quietly, the miracles began to happen. People were healed. And, of course, the crowds increased. It got so bad that he couldn't even make trips into other areas to minister. He couldn't go anywhere. From daylight to dark, he ministered to the needs of those poor people.

Finally, his health reached the breaking point, and he was forced to plan a trip home, for rest. As he prepared to leave, he told all the saddened people that they must cheer up, a real medical man was coming, a good brother in the Lord who would be able to do so much more for them. And he left.

The new man arrived and undertook the same work, but treating the people with real medical knowledge. The first morning, the Africans were there in droves. The next morning, there were fewer. The next morning, fewer. And, finally, within a week, there was no one. The doctor was dumbfounded. What had he done wrong?

He spoke to an African evangelist, asking where the people had gone. The man replied, "I don't know." Now when an African says, "I've forgotten" or "I don't know," you might as well give up. He's not going to say any more. When he says, "I've forgotten," he believes that an act of God took the thing out of his mind and that it's useless and wrong for him to try to remember it. It's a good excuse for anything. And when he says, "I don't know," it really means he doesn't want to tell and is not likely to do so.

The evangelist said, "I don't know." But the doctor was new, and ignorant of the nuances among natives. In a few days he spoke to him again. "Please tell me," he pleaded.

"If I tell you, you'll be offended."

"No," the doctor responded, "I can't be offended. I'm a child of God."

The evangelist relented. "Well, I have inquired as to how your work was going. The people's answer was this: 'The first missionary served us in love. The doctor has no real love for us. He serves us purely out of a sense of duty—with no love.'"

“But how can they tell that?” the medical missionary asked.

The evangelist hesitated, and said quietly and solemnly: “They looked into the windows of your soul, and they saw duty, but no love. With the other man, it was all love. He loved them.”

A very simple, pragmatic understanding of what God had done in my life through the accident came several months later during preparations for litigation among the insurance company, the railroad company, and Paul and me. As a result of that litigation I was awarded \$10,000, one third of which went to a lawyer who represented me. I was told that I should have received much more, but I was unwilling to press ahead and to spend such large amounts in legal fees. Furthermore, I was advised, I had recovered so quickly—miraculously—by the time the trial took place that the railroad and others had absolutely no sympathy for me.

But the significant part of the litigation came in the preparation. Each of the parties to the case employed a surgeon, a bone specialist, and a psychiatrist, all to examine me. To my lawyer I insisted that my psychiatrist be a Christian; otherwise he would never understand me. He found a good Christian man who agreed to take on the case.

The day of his examination, after several hours, I said to him, “Doctor, you’ve asked me everything except the date of my death. You must have come to some conclusion. What did this accident do to me?”

He smiled, leaned back, and was silently thoughtful for several seconds. “It has mellowed your spirit, and slowed your pace.” It was a good answer. “I see, and what will that do?”

“You won’t be so demanding—of yourself mainly, and of other people.”

He struck home. “You won’t be such a perfectionist any more.”

“Well,” I said after a moment, “that’s what I asked the Lord for—to change me to fit the ministry he was calling me to. I was foolish enough to say, ‘Lord, do it, even if you have to break me.’ So He broke me.”

The doctor’s smile enlarged into a wide grin, and he nodded. “But,” I added hastily, “He didn’t hurt me.” And that was the truth. When the doctors had examined me and asked how I was enduring the pain, I said quite candidly, “I’ve never had any.” “What?” the man who fixed my leg said. “Come on, preacher, you know where liars go.”

“I know, but I’m not going there. I don’t have pain.”

But the psychiatrist had perceived the truth of the accident. My character, my nature, had been changed. I was embarked on the path of love and forgiveness—two jargon words in much of Christendom, but two words on which the fullness of life hang.

I was to learn the truth of the Lord's words found in verses 24 and 25 of chapter 11 of Mark's Gospel:

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (italics mine).

At a later time, I was to have a crucial exchange with the Lord that went like this:

“Lord, my prayers are not getting anywhere. I'm not getting answers. I don't have enough faith, Lord. Please give me the gift of faith.”

“It isn't your faith. I can see faith even if it's as small as a mustard seed. No, it's something else. ‘When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any.’ That's why your prayers aren't answered. You go about with a lot of aughts against a lot of anys. “

And, similarly, was the lesson from Matthew 18:18:

Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

I was to learn—the long, hard way—what this means. By hanging onto my judgment of another person, I could bind him to the very conditions that I'd like to see changed. By my unforgiveness, I stand between the other person and the Holy Spirit's work in convicting him and then helping him. By stepping out of the way, I am not necessarily saying, “He's right and I'm wrong.” Forgiveness means, “He can be as wrong as wrong can be, but I'll not be the judge. “ It means that I'm no longer binding a certain person on earth. It means I'm withholding judgment.

It was a hard moment—followed by great healing light—when the Lord made me face up to my judgmental attitude, the one that was blocking any effective ministry by me among those I thought to be wrong in their ways.

“You're not forgiving,” He stated flatly. “You're a public prosecutor, judging everybody in sight. But I want you to be a public defender—not a public

prosecutor. “

Chapter 19, The Bridge

“It will take two years for you to recover.”

Week after week slipped by, and the words of the doctor rolled around in my mind. I pressed ahead on work for the 1949 world conference. Many times, working late into the night, I took the microphone of the dictating machine beneath the covers so as not to disturb Paul as I prepared correspondence for leaders around the earth. I just dictated as the Holy Spirit inspired me. In the truest sense, that conference was being organized from a hospital bed.

But all was not serene. The organizers and the non-organizers were battling fiercely again. Many were predicting the Paris conference would collapse. Donald Gee, the British Pentecostal leader, wrote to me in the hospital voicing this concern:

“I understand you’re a weakened man because of the accident. I’m concerned about that because a great disappointment might be too much for you to bear. And I want to warn you now that, from rumors I hear, the conference might be a fiasco.”

I quickly wrote back to him: “Brother Gee, Jesus could cast a legion of devils out of one man, and I think He can settle a legion of difficulties for the Pentecostals. And, remember, I’m not coming alone. The Lord is with me. Don’t worry.”

So, my problem, then, was to make sure I was out of the hospital and strong enough to make the trip. It would not be easy.

I began the groundwork immediately. Early in December I nonchalantly said to the doctor, “I would like to go home. This leg of mine is fine.”

“But, preacher, it hasn’t had time to knit properly yet.” “How is it possible then,” I pressed on, “that I can move it around easily and can even pull up that fifty-pound weight you’ve got hung on it?”

“Oh no!” Alarm showed in his voice. “You’re not doing that are you?”

“You mean this?” I moved my leg back and forth in the bed and then with a steady, even motion caused the leg weight to rise four or five inches.

He stared at the weight, then left the room briefly and returned with an X-ray machine and a technician.

An hour later, the doctor returned. “Only about one inch of the crack remains open. It’s practically healed.”

That fact was the subject of much discussion for the remainder of that day. Everyone who came in said, “This is a miracle for a man your age.”

Finally the doctor said, “All right. If you can get an ambulance to come and fetch you, you can go.”

“Hallelujah!”

In Somerset, Anna arranged for an ambulance, and I was on my way. Two strapping fellows manned the ambulance, one driving and the other sitting in the back with me. Four inches of snow covered the ground, and more was falling. The trip turned out to be far more hazardous than any of us had expected.

Out of the night—seemingly out of the darkness of the past—came the sound of a train whistle. A chill crept up the back of my neck.

“Man, I hear a train whistle. Are we coming to a crossing?”

“Don’t worry,” my companion said with a smile. “Frank knows, what he is doing. He’s a man you can trust and he’s wide awake.”

Suddenly the driver jammed on the brakes and the ambulance lurched and skidded. I nearly went through another window. I heard a train roar past, just feet away.

“Look,” I said, with a trace of anger rising in my throat, “I don’t need any help back here. You go and sit in front with Frank, and help him.”

He followed my order. And about daybreak, they carried me into our temporary home in Somerset.

Several days later I called David to my bedside. Since arriving home I had complained so loudly about the monstrous cast running from my toes to my hip that the doctors finally relented and gave me a cast designed to keep me from walking on my left leg. It ran from the foot to just above the knee.

“Listen, son,” I said to David, “go buy me a pair of crutches, adjustable ones, and we’ll see if we can rig something up for me to start getting around with.”

With the new crutches in hand and a pair of pants suspenders, David and I drilled a hole in the case and made a sort of sling to hold my leg out of the way. It was a strange-looking rig, but I began to limp around, growing more skilled and stronger every day.

I continued to lay plans for the Paris conference, but first I wanted to go to

Chicago for a meeting of the National Association of Evangelicals. It would be a good chance to meet with the brethren and also to test my mobility.

I went by train and returned by airplane, convinced of my ability to cross the Atlantic to Paris. In fact, when I astounded the doctor with a report of my junket to Chicago and convinced him of my agility on crutches, he gave in and approved my flight to the Second Pentecostal World Conference.

In Paris, I was a hero on crutches, a wounded soldier from the fields. I had all the sympathy one could hope for from that collection of Pentecostals, but they had very little sympathy for one another. The clash occurred at the outset, the organizers against the non-organizers, the Americans against the Swedes, and so on.

As for me, I was mellowed, a new man, so full of love from my new-found experience with forgiveness that I refused to be drawn into a quarrel. Things were so tense and so filled with fears of loss of individuality, of conformity to man rather than conformity to the Lord, that some factions couldn't even eat together. Their hostility had to be bridged.

I met privately with several of the brothers who trusted one another and still had some trust in me, posing a step toward reconciliation. "Could some of you who are respected and influential suggest that the arguments stop, even for just a few hours, and that a committee be appointed just for one evening to seek solutions for these problems and bring forth a report?"

In desperation, these leaders agreed and the idea was posed to all factions. The eyebrows of suspicion went up immediately. "Are you trying to organize under the table?"

"No," we replied. "We'll simply let the committee meet overnight. Tomorrow it will produce a report."

Finally it was agreed. Donald Gee, chairing the conference session, leaned over toward me and said, "The chair has to appoint the committee. I don't have any leading as to who is right. Put some names down on paper."

After the full session, some of the others approached me. "So it's you who nominated the committee. We saw you writing. Don't you know that this will never work? You've put the two champion fighters on the committee. They'll battle all the way."

"Yes, I know. That's just what I wanted. When they've got to disagree before a small committee, it won't be as easy as to disagree before a big audience."

But the skeptics continued. “You won’t get a wink of sleep tonight.” I was one of the twelve on the committee.

We secluded ourselves in one of the smaller meeting rooms of the conference center, slightly uneasy about our purpose as well as about one another. One of the stronger brethren quickly broke the ice. “Well, what do you have in mind?” The question was directed at me.

“Someone has got to take the lead,” I said. “We need a chairman, somebody to make the report.”

They all looked at me. “It was your idea, ” the first speaker said, and they all nodded.

“So you want me to take the chair? So be it.”

I jumped right into the heart of the matter, turning first to the one who had been described as the Swedish champion fighter, Joseph Mattson-Boze. “How far, Joe, would you go at working out a plan for us to meet in fellowship and to discuss our common problems, to try to help one another, without calling it an organization? How much could you do without violating your conscience?”

There was a long silence. Then he began, slowly at first, but warming to his vision for mutual assistance and fellowship without sacrificing autonomy.

When he had finished, I turned to the Englishman, Fred Squire, who was the leading champion for organization. He said quite simply and openly, “If that’s what Joe feels will satisfy the Scandinavians—and I think he’s made a fine proposal—then I’m sure that will satisfy me, and I’m confident it will satisfy the British and the Americans.”

And just that quickly, it was settled. The two champion debaters were reconciled, finding that they were not nearly as far apart as their loud public words had made them seem. We carefully, but speedily, drafted a report and went to bed. I got more than a wink of sleep.

The next morning, the full conference of about two hundred people approved the report item by item and almost before we knew it we had acted to perpetuate the Pentecostal World Conference. We would meet every three years, and I was to serve as secretary for the 1952 conference in London.

At the conclusion, Donald Gee laid a strong hand on my shoulder and said, “David, your brethren in South Africa believe your revision of the constitution was your greatest victory, but I have to believe now that this was your greatest. We don’t have a constitution, but we have a basis for fellowship. Praise the

Lord!”

My view of the episode was a bit different. I saw the Lord giving me grace among these brethren as something of a first step in my progression toward forgiveness. I knew that if I was to have any success at all with what the Lord had directed, if I was to be able to forgive the old main line churches, I had to first forgive these Pentecostal brethren, and bring them to a point of understanding one another.

I saw clearly how forgiveness was the substance of my ministry. Without it, my ministry would die.

Back at home the first steps were taken to keep the du Plessis family in America permanently. The Church of God offered me a Bible professorship at its school, Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee, which in turn set off six weeks of legal procedures, including a prolonged stay in Canada to obtain a residence visa, that led to our entry into the United States.

From the college in Tennessee, I was able to carry on my teaching duties—during which a marvelous revival broke out, unlike anything the school had ever known—and at the same time plan and coordinate the world conference in 1952. The students were a big help in the vast amount of paper work, scheduling, and business activities needed to arrange such a meeting for five hundred Pentecostal people.

It was a busy time and a delightful way to begin that slow and often discouraging family process of putting down roots into a new land. This, now, was our country.

But the Lord was still talking to me about the main line churches. I wasn't doing a thing in that direction. I had no connections anywhere. And I didn't know how to get any. I needed a starting place.

The Church of God brethren, with whom I had been so intimately involved even before the car accident, were actively urging me to join them officially. After all, they had come to my aid during a time of disaster and I was working for them at their college. But they, like other Pentecostal groups, still viewed the old denominations as the enemy and would not go near them. I couldn't very well join up with them, agreeing to abide by their views, and then run off and become involved with the World Council of Churches or some such band of “reprobates.” Furthermore, I still held papers from the Apostolic Faith Mission and that was all I needed to maintain my status in the Pentecostal World Conference.

I began to see that I was making a mistake in locating at any of the Pentecostal centers in the United States—Springfield with the Assemblies of God, Cleveland with the Church of God, or wherever. It was going to be necessary for me to draw near to the centers of power of the old established churches and their organizations without restriction and without offending any group with which I was allied. It was equally clear to me that eventually this would mean New York City.

With this sparkling clear direction, albeit a bit frightening, I resigned my position at Lee College and, with the quiet concurrence of Anna, moved to Stamford, Connecticut. The Lord was so merciful, settling us in a fine house in a lovely community within striking distance of the towering, sprawling metropolis.

One day I read in a newspaper that Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary and one of the most respected Presbyterian leaders in the world, had described the Pentecostal movement as the greatest blessing that had come to Christianity in this century. It was a strong statement and, according to the paper's account, was attracting widespread attention. But I was troubled—perhaps overly cautious. It was Dr. Mackay who had previously said the Pentecostals in America were “the fly in the ointment of Protestantism.” I was curious as to what he really believed. Perhaps this was an open door.

I telephoned him at Princeton. “I want to thank you for your kind words about the Pentecostals. I had previously read something about you that wasn't like that at all. You must have changed your mind. “

Without hesitation, he heartily replied: “I certainly did.” He candidly stated that he had been wrong before, primarily through ignorance and misunderstanding.

“Well,” I said as our brief exchange drew to a close, “I am the secretary of the Pentecostal World Conference and I would like very much to meet you—to talk to you about it.”

Again, the reply was hearty: “Come on. Come on. Have lunch with me and we'll talk.”

It truly was an open door.

I went to Princeton and quickly established a friendship that never diminished. It was one of those rare and precious relationships in which both parties fully perceive the truth about the other—differences and all—and are in a twinkling of an eye united forever in the Spirit. Dr. Mackay's advice and guidance were immeasurably helpful as I moved carefully along the path the Lord was opening before me.

A few days after the meeting with Mackay, the Lord spoke clearly again. “Tomorrow is the time to go to the World Council headquarters.”

I had been waiting for the door to open further. I had a bit of an entree because of Dr. Mackay—he was well known at the World Council of Churches—but I had hoped for something more official than this. Nonetheless the word was go, so into Manhattan I went, by train and then subway, to the World Council offices on Fifth Avenue.

I introduced myself to Dr. Rosswell Barnes, fumbling around for a good reason as to why I should be breaking in on them. But I needn’t have worried. I was a Pentecostal, a curiosity. They were glad to see one in the flesh. And they were anything but ogres. They didn’t have tails, and I didn’t swing from the chandeliers. I spent a full day with them.

Immediately after that, Bill Wilson, missions secretary for a group of smaller New England Pentecostal churches, came to me from East Providence to say that the Lord had spoken to him and his brethren regarding the trouble their missionaries were having obtaining recognition in Kenya and other East African countries. This was an extremely difficult time for the Pentecostal missionaries in that part of Africa. Their freedoms were restricted, and they could get none of the influential bodies to help them. Wilson said the Lord had told the brethren to go to me for help. There was no further elaboration.

“Bill,” I said cautiously, “the only connections I have that might be of some help are in the World Council of Churches, and the Lord must know that. Does that trouble you?”

“We didn’t know anything about that,” he said. “We only know that the Lord said for us to come and consult with you about it. As far as I’m concerned, you can do what you like if it will help.”

So back I went to my new friend, Dr. Mackay. He was the president of the International Missionary Council, the original body from which the World Council grew. The former was the missionary, evangelizing branch; the World Council became the supportive, sending agency. Mackay directed me to Charles Ranson, secretary of the I.M.C., and he opened up his services to me.

“All you need to do is get your movement to write a letter about the predicament in East Africa, and send us the letter along with your recommendation. “

That was quickly done. Ranson then forwarded the letter and the recommendations to the council’s London office, which in turn approached the British colonial office. The British sent the matter to Kenya with a

recommendation that those Pentecostals be given official recognition and liberty to conduct their work.

In two months, the matter was resolved. The despised World Council of Churches had rushed to the rescue of the Pentecostal brethren.

When I expressed my gratitude for this assistance to Dr. Mackay, he suggested that I follow up that contact with a visit to the world conference of the International Missionary Council in Germany. That meeting was to follow right on the heels of the 1952 world conference of Pentecostals in London, and it would be no trouble to extend my trip to Germany. But I agreed with more than a little fear and trepidation. That would be the powerhouse of the main line denominations, attended by the leading figures in that part of Christendom.

Chapter 20, Widening The Scope

In London came the end of another phase in my life. It was a time of sadness in many ways, but I was certain the Lord was directing the change.

I met with the leaders of the '52 conference and stood before them with love and humility in my heart. "I don't feel the Lord wants me to go on carrying this burden any longer. I think the world conference is set for the future. I believe it is right that I should resign."

The roomful of brothers looked solemnly at me. They were silent. I went ahead without waiting for word from them.

"I've had to carry everything by faith. Through my ministry, I have to raise enough money to care for my family, to pay for my traveling, and to pay for the expenses in connection with this conference. I have no support. When Lee College began to pay me, all the churches that had helped me through my crisis stopped their support.

"I repeat: I believe it is time for me to resign. I don't want to be elected secretary any more. I will gladly help in any other way I can, but I cannot continue in this leadership post."

One of the brothers finally spoke up, and the Lord gave him wisdom. "Brother David here knows that it is time for him to get off. If he kept in this position there's a danger he'd become our pope."

I believed he was right. The world conference was established and broader leadership was required. Furthermore, I knew God was calling me in another direction. I had to obey.

I walked uneasily into the institute providing facilities for the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Willingen, Germany. I felt like a lamb going into the midst of wolves. When the desk clerk asked me how long I would be staying, I said, "Three days." I was willing to take cold shoulder for three days but not for eleven.

When I walked into the auditorium, where the meetings had begun the day before, people were milling about, obviously taking a coffee break. I heard my name spoken, and I turned. There was Dr. Mackay practically running toward me, arms outstretched. He was still the president of the I.M.C.

"It's my great Pentecostal friend, David du Plessis," he exclaimed loudly, with

an emphasis on “Pentecostal.” He grabbed me by the hand and put his left arm around my shoulder. “How are you, my friend?” He virtually shouted, this time emphasizing “my friend.”

He pulled me toward a line of people waiting for coffee and walked me down it, just as though it were a reception line. Before we were finished I had requests for enough interviews to fill much more than three days. I finally excused myself and hurried back to the room clerk’s desk. “Would you please change my reservation from three days to eleven days? I’m going to be here longer than I thought.”

There were 210 delegates from all over the world at that meeting, missionaries from every Protestant society conceivable and many nationals. It was genuinely ecumenical, enough to bring a smile to Wigglesworth’s face. I was amused by the thought that when the Pentecostals got together for a world conference, they said God was behind it; but when the world council got together, it was the devil.

I met for interviews with 110 of the 210 delegates. “Okay now, “ they would usually say, “ start at the beginning and explain Pentecostalism to me.”

And I would plunge ahead, unfolding the Pentecostal message on the work of the Holy Spirit to all who wanted to hear. It was at this stage that the tag “Mr. Pentecost” was pinned on me, and it held fast even though the Lord very soon led me to alter my message significantly.

Among those I met with was the secretary of the World Council, Dr. Willem Visser’t Hooft, a fine, old Dutchman who warmed to me quickly when he found I could speak Dutch. We had first met briefly on one of my visits at the World Council headquarters in New York. My motivation had been eagerness to meet the man Carl McIntyre felt was so subversive that he should be banned from the United States. At the time of our meeting in Willingen, Visser’t Hooft confided that he felt the Pentecostals, with their spirituality, were a force that could help the World Council. Could this really be as bad, I thought, as what I had heard in America—that the council was in fact the beast coming out of the sea of humanity?

Then, very quickly and quietly, another door was opened for me along my pathway to the main line churches. Dr. Visser’t Hooft took me aside. “Can you come to Evanston, Illinois, in 1954 for the second assembly of the World Council of Churches?”

“I might be able to come, but how am I going to get in? You only recognize church executives, and I’m certainly not that. And you don’t have any

Pentecostal movements with you. And besides I'm no longer secretary of the Pentecostal World Conference."

He was puzzled. "What do you do then to support yourself?"

"Well, one thing I'm doing is working with the Far East Broadcasting Company. " I was in fact working with them, trying among other things to establish more ecumenical contacts for them since they needed the help of all churches in their ministry, both in programing and in finances.

"Aha," Visser't Hooft said, "that gives me an idea." He looked me right in the eye and jabbed a forefinger into my chest. "Would you agree to serve on the staff of the World Council for the period of the assembly?"

I nodded. Was this really happening?

"Okay, then, we can give you free board and lodging, but no more, and you'll work for us. You'll be right on the inside, which is just where you want to be."

"All right," I said, "but what do you want me to do?"

"I want you to do just what you did here. Just talk to everybody, every bishop, every archbishop and whoever, and tell them about Pentecost. You've talked to over half the people here, and that half has told the other half what you said. We've been having Pentecost discussions for breakfast, coffee, lunch, afternoon tea, and supper. I overheard someone last night spouting off about this. 'What's happened to us?' he asked. 'A Pentecostal shows up and everybody's talking Pentecost!' "

He paused, and again jabbed his finger into my chest. "Now that's what I want you to do in Evanston. Tell them about the Holy Ghost!" His face beamed.

When I arrived in Evanston, they immediately assigned me to the press section, with the task of rounding up the non-English-speaking delegates for radio and television interviews and for press conferences. I chuckled when they described the job. They had put me in touch with the world, it seemed. And furthermore, with the press badge, I could go anywhere— leadership meetings and all. I was busy night and day.

And my old Pentecostal heart was warmed by one of the keynote speeches at the assembly. It came from Dr. Edmund Schlink from Germany. "We can never have unity and love one another unless we meet one another at the foot of the Cross under the Blood of Christ," he declared.

His words set off sparks among many of the militant liberals. "We thought we had left this kind of sentimental mush back in yesteryear, and here it comes up

again as a new discovery.”

But I said to myself, “If Edmund Schlink can preach like that, on the Blood of Jesus, then I’m safe.”

Such episodes were starting to work in my spirit, however, and I could sense that the Lord would have me modify my approach. Up to then, I had been just a curiosity, an artifact from another world, but that was not what the Lord was calling me to be. I prayed hard about this. And eventually, the mind of Christ began to break through. He actually reprimanded me. I was not to be merely a Pentecostal agent. “You are giving the impression that the Holy Spirit is all,” He said, and I winced. I knew the Holy Spirit does not speak of himself. He speaks of Jesus.

Over a period, it became clear to me. I began to change the message; instead of talking about the Pentecostal experience, I talked about the baptism in the Holy Spirit by Jesus. When the curious came to me, and after Evanston they came more and more, I said: “I will only discuss with you what Jesus Christ does. For there can be no such thing as Pentecost unless we go to Him as baptizer.”

The central theme of my message became Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. With that thrust, I began to see fewer and fewer cases of people entering into a “spiritual” experience by some special technique or something else of their own doing. Rather I found them turning to Christ the baptizer, and their experiences were wholly validated by Scripture.

But still I found I was not breaking through all the way. There was a missing ingredient. I knew about it all the time but had not brought it fully into the picture. There was much prejudice among the people I was being allowed to minister to. They were prejudiced against one another, against Pentecostals, against Roman Catholics, or against something. They needed to experience forgiveness.

Eventually I began to see that the road for me was to confess publicly, at every opportunity, my own wrong attitudes of the past and to proclaim the way I had gotten out of them. I began to give my testimony about the Lord’s leading me to forgiveness and genuine love.

That was the answer. As I told my story, the people saw their own prejudices, resentments, and hostilities far better than they could have had I launched into a tirade against them.

Right up to the present day, I hardly ever minister without first giving a brief resume of my life, emphasizing the experience of forgiving “aught against any.”

This was the message of Jesus— forgiving from the Cross, imparting the Spirit, and directing us to continue that ministry of forgiveness. Then comes the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Then come the miracles.

Chapter 21, Truth On Fire

In 1956 I was invited to a retreat in Connecticut to speak to ecumenical leaders from all across America. It turned out to be one of the greatest experiences in my ministry.

Twenty-four leaders were comfortably seated around me. They had invited me to bring them the truth about the Pentecostal experience and the Pentecostal movement. I was asked to be frank, devastatingly so, if necessary.

I could remember days when I had wished I could get my hands on such men to denounce their theology and pray the judgment of God upon them for what I considered to be their heresies and false doctrines. Here was such an opportunity, and they had said, “Be devastatingly frank.” I prayed, “Lord, what would you have me to do?”

That morning something happened to me. After a few introductory words I suddenly felt a warm glow come over me. I knew this was the Holy Spirit taking over, but what was He doing to me? Instead of the old harsh spirit of criticism and condemnation in my heart, I felt such love and compassion for those ecclesiastical leaders that I would rather have died for them than pass sentence upon them. All at once I knew that the Holy Spirit was in control and I was beside myself, yet as sober as a judge (2 Cor. 5:13). Thank God, from that day on I began to understand what it meant to minister along the “more excellent way” (1 Cor. 12:31). This indeed is the technique of the Holy Spirit.

For seventy-five minutes I poured from my heart all that the Spirit gave me. Never have I known a more attentive audience. If things were happening to me, I realized the same Spirit was doing things to my listeners. This was evident when the time came for questions and answers. There was an unaffected desire to know all about the gifts and ministries of the Holy Spirit. The promise of Jesus was made so real to me:

“But when they shall lead you . . . take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost” (Mark 13:11, italics mine).

Then came a question that presented an opportunity to be “devastatingly frank,” but I had no desire to belittle or criticize or hurt anyone. Silently I prayed. The question was: “Please tell us, what is the difference between you and us. We

quote the same Scriptures you do, and yet when you say those words they sound so different: We say the same things that you do, but there seems to be a deeper implication in what you say. You have said nothing with which we want to differ and yet there seems to be a distinct difference somewhere.”

What was I to say? What was the truth? The Spirit came to my rescue, and I said: “Gentlemen, comparisons are odious, and I do not wish to injure anyone’s feelings or hurt your pride. But the truth as I see it is this: You have the truth on ice, and I have it on fire.”

“That is too deep for me,” said one. “Please explain.”

“Gentlemen, we have been dealing with the ‘meat’ of the Word,” I answered, “so please allow me to illustrate what I mean.

I live in Dallas, Texas, where it can become very hot. We have a deep-freeze to preserve food in bulk. When meat is at a reasonable price level, we buy half a steer. Thus I know there is the very best grade of Texas-steer T-bone steak in that freezer. If any of you were to visit my home, I would like to serve you such a steak. Suppose I take it out of the freezer and place it on a plate before you; could you eat it? Of course not. It is just a frozen chunk of meat. But we could discuss it. We could even record the facts: It weighs about twelve ounces. It contains so many calories. There are several vitamins in it. We know the butcher who sold it. We may know the ranch that raised the steer. We may know the pedigree of the steer and its age, and so forth. Then we could go the other way and decide, if you eat it, it will satisfy your hunger. It will add to your weight, and so forth. But after half an hour of good ‘beef discussion,’ it is still there and we are still hungry. Our minds have been fed with information but the beef was not enjoyed.

“Now what shall we do? Something needs to be done to that meat to make it edible, and make our facts real. I give it to my wife. Without inquiring about our collected facts and information about the steak, she places it over a fire. Within a few minutes the atmosphere in the house changes and everyone knows something is cooking. My little boy comes in and shouts: ‘Mom, something smells good and I am starving.’ We are all served a nice hot steak off the fire, and we say, ‘That just hits the spot.’ Is my little boy going to get sick because he does not know all the facts about the beef?

“You know, gentlemen,” I continued, “here we have the elements of a good Pentecostal meeting. There is an atmosphere. Everyone knows something is happening. The old alcoholic that sits there does not have to listen to the theology of saving grace; he is not told the theology or the doctrine of

regeneration. He gets the ‘hot gospel’ stated in facts—God loves you. God will save you. Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you will find. Do it now.

Jesus is here to meet you. He will give you the water of life and you will never thirst again—and the sinner accepts the invitation. In a few minutes he rises from his knees and knows something has happened to him. In his life something has ‘hit the spot.’ He is now a changed man. There will be plenty of time to teach him the doctrine and theology of his experience later on. After all, I submit there was a Pentecostal experience of the baptism in the Holy Ghost in the lives of the Apostles before they ever developed or framed the doctrine and the theology. They had experience and no doctrine. Today most people have doctrine and no experience.” I paused. “My friends,” I said, “if you will take the great truths of the gospel out of your theological freezers and get them on the fire of the Holy Spirit, your churches will yet turn the world upside down. The Church does not need better theologians but rather men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:5)—men who will say: ‘Our sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Cor. 3:5-6).’ ”

After this, one of those dear men said: “Why did I not meet someone like you many years ago? I realized my ministry was not a success, but I could not find the reason for my failure. Now I discover my spiritual temperature was not right. I lacked the power of the Holy Spirit. “

I walked alone into the Upper Octorara United Presbyterian Church near the little southeastern Pennsylvania town of Parkesburg. A tall, lean, professorial-looking man with brown hair greeted me just inside the door. He was James Brown, pastor of the church and a professor at Lincoln Seminary in nearby Oxford, Pennsylvania. I had heard from Bob Rice, a Korean missionary, in Philadelphia that Jim had been the most liberal of liberal churchmen until his recent rebirth in Christ. He reportedly had undergone a dramatic conversion and was seeking God’s way for him.

He escorted me into a warm, darkly decorated meeting room filled with twelve or more people. They were some of Jim’s faculty friends, a few doctors and other professional people, several of his church leaders, and the church janitor. We soon found out that the janitor and I talked the same language. He was with me all the way.

Jim opened the conversation. “Mr. du Plessis, we have become persuaded that there is a baptism in the Holy Spirit, and we want to know about that, with the confirmation of tongues. We want to know how we can get all the gifts of the

Spirit.”

“Well now,” I said, “that’s a tall order. Why do you want to know all that?”

Jim was deadly serious. “We’ve heard that the Pentecostals got stuck on tongues only—or just about—and we don’t want to get stuck. We want to go on.”

“All right,” I said, standing up behind a long table near the center of the room. “Let’s consider chapter 12 of First Corinthians, which says the rest is all yours. In so many words, it says the manifestation is given to everyone, for the common good of all, to profit withal. And then it goes on to say that ‘all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.’ ”

I paused. They were serious-faced, fully absorbed.

“That does not mean He gives this gift to this one and that gift to that one. It only means He uses a person to manifest certain gifts under certain circumstances. He supplies the gift. Through whomever He will.”

I spent well over an hour covering verse by verse those Scriptures that opened their eyes to the full potential of the life in the Holy Spirit. Much of the time they were very grim-faced, extraordinarily determined. But occasionally a smile broke across their lips as the lights of understanding clicked on.

Sitting close to me was a professor named Andrew Murray. I was fascinated by the fact that he should bear the name of the great South African man of God I so revered. As the questioning unfolded after my talk, he finally raised his hand and said:

“I don’t have any question about what you said, but I am deeply impressed, and mystified, by what you did. I don’t know how you do it.”

“I’m not sure I know what you mean,” I said as he paused.

“Well, in the beginning you said to us, ‘Watch tonight. I believe the Spirit will use me tonight to impart gifts of the Spirit to you. I cannot minister otherwise.’ And then you said, ‘Many of the things that will happen you will be able to recognize as manifestations of the Spirit. If I speak a word of knowledge, don’t think it’s my natural mind. It’s not mind reading, or auto-suggestion,’ you said, ‘it’s the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, and He gives me a word to speak that would seem to suggest that I know what I’m saying and to whom I’m talking.’

“Have I quoted you correctly?” he smiled.

“Yes, that’s pretty close.”

“Well,” he said emphatically, “that’s the point. You did something I don’t understand. As you began to speak, I framed a question in my mind. The moment I framed it, you turned around, looked at me, and gave me the answer, just as though you had heard what I was thinking. I nearly fell off my chair. In fact, you did that three times. How in the world did you know where to look?”

“My good friend,” I said, “that was the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. He knew exactly what you were thinking, and He was ready to answer.”

Having said that, though, I was struck with wonder at the accuracy of the Holy Spirit. He never misses. Sometimes we do, but not so with Him.

The point was driven home just as forcefully sometime later when I was speaking to a large group of Roman Catholics in France. I talked about the day of Pentecost as described in the Book of Acts.

“On that day,” I said, “Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. This proves to me that Mary was one of the recipients of the baptism in the Holy Spirit—she whom God had so signally blessed. Even she accepted the ministry of her son. And I like to think of Mary as the first lady who ever spoke in tongues.” There were many women in the audience, many of them nuns. Most smiled broadly.

“Now you Catholic sisters,” I continued, “I know you think very highly of Mary. Can you now see that, if Mary needed this baptism, you need it, too?”

“And you may be the mother superior,” I pressed on, “but you are not superior to Mary.”

After the meeting, an elegantly dressed woman, obviously highly refined, approached me and asked softly, “Do you know me?”

“No, I’m afraid I don’t.”

“Did you see me in the meeting?”

“No.”

“But,” she said, flushing ever so slightly, “you pointed your finger at me, and you talked to me.”

“I did?”

“You said, ‘Mother superior, you need the baptism.’”

I began to smile. “Are you a mother superior?”

“Yes.” She blinked her eyes. They were full of tears. “How could you tell?”

“It was the Holy Spirit,” I said, sensing God’s great love all about us. “It was a

word of knowledge from Him. He spoke directly to you.”

I talked alone with Jim Brown after our meeting. I knew the Lord wanted me to give him—and all like him—advice that, despite its merit, would be badly misunderstood and criticized by many of my brethren.

“Brother Brown,” I began, “I have a word for you. During the discussions tonight, the Lord told me to warn you against leaving your church, your denomination.”

He was startled. “Well, that certainly answers one of the questions I was going to put to you. I was wondering, where do I go from here? I wanted advice from you on the best Pentecostal church to join.”

“That’s the last thing you must think of,” I said. “The Lord wants you here.”

“But they won’t keep me in the Presbyterian Church,” he moaned.

“I have just met with the leaders of the historic churches. Aren’t you United Presbyterian?”

“Yes.”

“Well, isn’t Dr. Mackay the president of a Presbyterian seminary? Call him. He’ll tell you that the church leaders—the National Council leaders—have promised me that henceforth the baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the consequences, including fellowship with Pentecostals, is no longer out of bounds for their ministers, their missionaries, or their members.”

I learned later that Jim, having just received the baptism, called Dr. Mackay, and the grand old man confirmed everything I had said.

It was not long before I had the opportunity to say the same word to an Episcopal clergyman, Dennis Bennett. I had never met him, but a letter from him told of the great difficulties he was having in his California church. My advice was: “Whatever you do, don’t leave the church. Ask for another appointment, if necessary, but don’t quit the Episcopal church.”

And that’s the way it went with Dennis. He took a new post in Seattle and has served the Lord mightily as an Episcopal priest.

And there were others—Howard Ervin and Francis Whiting, among the early ones. They were both Baptists whose work has influenced thousands.

The Lord was placing his people in all the churches, historic and otherwise. And my opportunities to be of service to them were mounting year by year.

Chapter 22, The Lonely Road

My official relationship with the Pentecostal groups underwent a gradual decline through the fifties and into the sixties. With hindsight I can see the sovereignty of God through it all, for myself and all the brethren, but the days, months, and years were often painful. We must never forget during our sufferings that “every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit” (John 15:2).

For the 1955 world conference in Stockholm, I didn't receive an invitation. Furthermore, I had no money. But I wrote to the leaders and told them they could count on me for any service they required, whether then or later. One of my main concerns at that time was an apparent tendency to ignore the independent Pentecostals in favor of organized movements such as the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, and the like. I feared that the world conference would become merely a fellowship of organizations and not a fellowship of local churches.

An upshot of my offer to assist in any way possible was a letter from the 1955 leadership asking me to act as secretary for the next conference, in Toronto in 1958, since I then lived on that side of the ocean. And that became the stage for a most disappointing moment in my life.

My ecumenical work had increased, and word of it was spreading rapidly. It produced a cool breeze in Toronto, a chilling breeze of strangeness, even alienation. I learned that official discussions were being held and I, as secretary, was not being notified. A new system for nominating board members and officers was also instituted. And when the nominations were returned, I had been eliminated. I was not even a committee member. The system had allowed exclusion without bringing matters into the open.

When questions were raised such as “Why isn't Brother du Plessis included?” the reply was “Oh, new men must be added and, besides, we can't have too many from America.”

I went alone to one of the board members and asked him, “Why are you crucifying me?”

“That's too hard a word,” he replied.

“All right, then, what causes you to take an attitude that, in effect, cold-shoulders me and pushes me out altogether? You know I had to give up the top leadership

job, but I never dreamed I'd be cut off altogether.”

The brother was in pain, but finally blurted out: “You are so interested in the ecumenical movement in the liberal churches; you seem obsessed by it. And the other thing is that you are too interested in the Pentecostal independents.”

“Oh, I see.” That was the sum of it.

The Lord had made it plain to me that He was interested in those independents. They were part of His gathering-in. But at that meeting in Toronto there were dozens of pastors from independent Pentecostal churches, and they were being ignored. The fellowship of the world conference seemed to have abandoned its concern for the local churches.

My loneliness deepened. I had spent ten years striving for unity among Pentecostals. But now the host country seemed to be fully in charge of each conference. The stronger organizations were dominant and there was little plurality of leadership in an interactional sense. What had happened to our early vision?

Clearly, I was alone. The road was lonely.

I could not remember any time in my life when I had felt so sad and discouraged in the ministry. It seemed that I had wasted ten years. I felt I had come to the end, but the end of what?

Before long, however, deep down in my heart, I began to hear a gentle voice. For several days at a time, it seemed to say: “Trust in me and don't despair. Other doors will open. You will see completely unexpected and new things happen during 1959.”

Yes, it was clear—“1959.”

The year 1959 was truly a remarkable one. Completely unexpected and new things broke forth. I lectured on Pentecostal issues at Princeton Seminary—the well-known annual missions lectures. I lectured at the Evangelical Congregational School of Theology in Myerstown, Pennsylvania; at the Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut; at Union Theological Seminary in New York; at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches at Chateau de Bossey in Switzerland; and at the Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas.

Added to the list was a three-week visit during May on the campus of Princeton Seminary as the guest of my good friend, Dr. Mackay, the president. And that visit was to be followed a year later by another, as the guest of Dr. Mackay's

successor, Dr. James McCord. My ties to Princeton continue to this day to be among my most cherished relationships.

Another new and thrilling experience came at the eighteenth council of the Presbyterian World Alliance in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1959. I attended as a Pentecostal fraternal delegate with some six hundred others from fifty-six countries representing forty-six million Calvinists. Again, it was Dr. Mackay who played a major role in my expanding opportunities. As president of the council, he introduced me with these remarks:

“Whatever else history may have to say about our friend, this fact will surely be recorded. This is the first confessional body that has extended recognition to the Pentecostal movement as a sound Christian body. The records will also show that Princeton Seminary was the first institution to recognize this by inviting our friend as missions lecturer.”

In my heart, I thought: How wonderful. Calvinist churches—the Dutch Reformed church among them—were the first to dis-fellowship members with a Pentecostal experience at the turn of the century. Now, fifty years later, they recognize this as the work of the Holy Spirit.

And these were not isolated events. They were happening all over the world. The climate in the churches was rapidly changing.

Fall was beginning to break across the land, with its magnificent colors and invigorating evenings, when forty ministers from all parts of the United States gathered in retreat on a beautiful old farm near Columbus, Ohio, in 1962. There were Congregational pastors, Reformed, Mennonite, Lutheran, Episcopal, Baptist, Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, and myself, Pentecostal. It was my first truly ecumenical, charismatic or Pentecostal meeting of ministers—the first of its kind, I believe.

Our organization was simple. Dean John Weaver of St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Detroit had been instrumental in securing our meeting site, so he was the host. I was the convener. And that was all. The program was simple, too. The Holy Spirit led us into a strong bond of love through testimony, teaching, Holy Communion, and deep sharing of one another’s lives. Each one received a new and fresh message for his church and for the world, a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles.

Late the last night of the retreat, I called Anna at our home in Oakland, California, where we had finally settled after considerable moving about the United States. I wanted to share this great new ecumenical experience with her.

She answered the phone, and before I could say anything, she burst into tears. “David, what in the world is happening?” “What’s wrong?” I thought, and dread rose in my throat.

“We’ve just received a letter from Springfield [the Assemblies of God headquarters] and they’ve dis-fellowshipped you. They’ve withdrawn your credentials, your recognition. I thought it was settled, but now you’re out,” she sobbed.

Through the recommendation of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, I had received ministerial credentials from the Assemblies for my work in the United States. It provided a good base for my ministry, even though it was then taking me outside of classical Pentecostal circles. And there had been considerable controversy in recent months over my activities, even suggestions that I should withdraw, but I had not expected this. I had, in fact, in a recent letter, assured the brethren that I did not wish to resign or withdraw. I threw myself upon them, never believing at any time that they would drop me because of a ministry into which the Spirit bade me go.

I collected my wits. “Anna, dear, don’t worry. Please read me the part about my removal.”

“It says, ‘It is the decision of the Executive Presbytery that your relationship with the Assemblies of God as an ordained minister is now terminated.’ ”

So that was that. I tried to console Anna, but she was heartbroken. Even my words about the retreat failed to rouse her spirits. I hung up the phone and stood still for several minutes. “This is a lonely world,” I thought. “It has many lonely roads.”

The following morning we held our closing session, devoting most of it to prayer. It was there that the Lord soothed my battered heart, although I had said nothing about the Executive Presbytery’s action. His instrument of mercy was Frank Downing, a Southern Baptist.

“I see a vision,” said Frank slowly. “I see a house . . . a house with two floors ... a row of windows on the top and some windows below . . . and there’s a beautiful snow-white cloud just resting comfortably on the house . . . and in the cloud I see a sign . . . ‘God is love’ ... it says, ‘God is love’ ... oh, this is a beautiful sight ...”

He paused, as though the vision had vanished. But he continued:

“That’s Brother David’s house... it has the shingles like his . . . oh, the Lord says this house is His house and His blessing will rest upon it.”

There has seldom been a truer prophecy. I perceived this, and it was not necessary even to share with those forty brothers the disappointment I had gone through.

When I later spoke with Anna, I said, “My dear, I am so blessed. I don’t care what they do. They can never separate me ‘from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 8:39). Just don’t feel badly. Don’t think about it, and don’t talk about it.

“We must never forget, “ I added, “forgiveness is the substance of my ministry.”

Three weeks later, I was genuinely able to manifest that substance with the following letter to the general secretary of the Assemblies of God, the Reverend Bartlett Peterson:

Cordial Christian greetings.

Your letter of September 14, informing me that “it is the decision of the Executive Presbytery that my relationship with the Assemblies of God as an ordained minister is now terminated,” came to me as somewhat of a shock. I never expected such action from my brethren under these circumstances. From the depth of my heart I pray: Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

For days, indeed ever since that night when over the phone my wife informed me of the verdict, I have been praying to find the answer to all this. I think this morning very early the Lord showed me the whole picture.

At the close of 1958, after the Pentecostal World Conference in Toronto, Canada, the Lord clearly told me to resign from every position that I held in any society, and to follow Him wherever He may lead. I did so. But I did not consider my holding credentials with the Assemblies of God as a position. So I did not resign from the Assemblies. Now this has caused trouble and heartaches. In the case of Abraham and Lot, there came trouble between the shepherds. In our case trouble between the councils. The whole matter revolves around the N.A.E., the General Council and the N.C.C. and W.C.C. From presbyters that attended the meeting I learn that it was repeatedly confirmed:

We have nothing against the ministry of our brother. So the objection remains against the field of labor.

In June my brethren gave me the choice between ceasing this ministry of Pentecost in ecumenical circles, and withdrawing from the Assemblies as a minister. The Spirit bade me go and I dared not agree to stop this ministry, and

then again I did not want to withdraw from the Assemblies of God, for that was my only link with the Pentecostal movement. I feel that the Pentecostal revival outside the churches is the same as, and partly the cause of, the Pentecostal revival now inside the churches. However, more than ninety per cent of the churches and ministers that now welcome and receive the baptism are in the N.C.C. and the W.C.C. It is quite evident that Evangelicals will associate with Pentecostals but will not accept the Pentecostal experience . . . even after twenty years.

The technical link may be broken, but the bond of love no man can break. Kindly take note that I intend to work with my brethren in the Assemblies and all Pentecostal movements, just as much as, and maybe more than, in the past. The will of God is unity in the Spirit, and that is a far greater unity than General council, World Council or any council.

I remain your brother in His love and service,

David J. du Plessis

Chapter 23, The Roman Catholics

Once again, the World Council of Churches—the enemy to so many—was God’s instrument for opening the door to places formerly untrodden by people like me. That door was found in the small city of St. Andrews, Scotland, an ancient port on the North Sea rich in Christian history dating to the early twelfth century—a history both inspiring and awesome. On a high cliff overlooking the North Sea stands a memorial to the honor of martyrs of the Reformation era.

To this quaint university town I ventured by invitation of the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches. The purpose: to consider “Jesus Christ, the Light of the World” in preparation for the third assembly of the World Council in New Delhi in 1961. And I, the Pentecostal, had been asked to speak.

Once again, I was thrust into the company of men and women from main line, historic churches all over the world. And, once again, liberalism flowed everywhere, but God’s people were there. And He knew them better than I did.

As a Pentecostal, I felt a little crimped when they asked me and the other speakers to hold our talks to an hour. In my circles of the past, that would hardly allow enough time for a proper introduction and warm-up. But I agreed to try. And for the first time I asked the Lord if it was okay to work from some notes. Again, that went against the classical Pentecostal grain. But, if I was going to be limited, I wanted to make sure I covered as much ground as possible. So I wrote down the questions, and the answers, that had already been put to me in my conversations with delegates, weaving them in with my proclamation of Jesus Christ as the baptizer as well as Lord and Savior.

Standing before that marvelous international, ecumenical blend of about one hundred and fifty people, I concluded my prepared remarks:

“I am not here to confront you with Pentecostalism. I am not here to plead for it. I am here to confront you with Jesus Christ, the light of the world, yes, but also the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. I would like to challenge the churches as to why Christ is never mentioned as the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. As far as I can see, Jesus never turned this ministry over to the church. It is a ministry that He kept for himself. “

The applause was warm and, as far as I could tell, sincere. They had listened, and many had heard.

But then came the questions. And sure enough, they went down that old familiar road: “What about tongues?” Soon the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey, a powerful, even intimidating man, rose to ask me: “Do you think tongues are important?”

The Lord blessed me with a light response. “Who said they are not?”

“Well,” he said, his British accent glorious and lucid, “don’t most theologians agree that it is the least of all the gifts?”

“Yes, I agree with that, too. That’s why I think it is important that you begin with it, if it’s the least. Shouldn’t we always begin with the least?”

He smiled warmly, his naturally reddish complexion deepening perhaps a degree, and he waved his hand ever so slightly. He didn’t utter it, but I seemed to hear “touché.”

In the short interval between my speech and the following one, the Archbishop, splendid in his red vest, came to me and shook my hand. “I heckled you, didn’t I, my good friend? And you handled it wonderfully well.”

I felt that our friendship was sealed. He was a wonderful man—a genuine man of God.

The evening’s program concluded. And people milled about, talking excitedly, greeting old friends; good-natured banter prevailed. Dozens approached me, shook my hand, and congratulated me on my presentation, some asking very probing questions. The Holy Spirit was at work.

A man wearing a clerical collar approached. “He looks like a Catholic,” I thought. He strode right up to me and almost embraced me.

“Will you accept the sincere thanks and deep gratitude of a Catholic priest for bringing to our attention this baptism in the Holy Spirit? I always thought I had the Spirit, but you’ve convinced me tonight that I’ve missed the baptism.”

“Well thank you very much,” I said. At this later date it’s virtually impossible to understand the way I felt at that moment. This was a Catholic priest. I hadn’t even known Catholics were there. I was tense, even afraid. “You’re very kind.”

“I’m Bernard Leeming,” he said. “I’m from England— Oxford.”

“Nice to make your acquaintance.”

“About this baptism,” he said, dropping all formalities, “can you give it to me? You’ve got it.”

“I know I have,” I answered. “But it’s impossible for me to pass it on to you.”

“You mean you can’t lay hands on me and give it to me?”

“No, this doesn’t come by apostolic succession—although it does bring apostolic success. You’ve got to get it from the Lord Jesus. He’s the only baptizer in the Spirit.”

Disappointment and puzzlement were all over his face. “Well, I would like to talk to you more about it. Could we talk in the morning?”

“Certainly. That would be fine.”

On my way to my room, I was talking to myself. “Watch out, David. You don’t know what this old fox has got up his sleeve.” My prejudices of the past were swelling within me. But the truth of the matter was, I was afraid.

With a desperate wrench of the will, I swung my mind away from the past. “If you have aught against any . . . aught against any . . . forgive us our debts as we . . . forgive . . . forgive . . . love your neighbor as yourself . . . love . . . forgive. . . .”

We met at breakfast the next morning, arranging to sit at a table by ourselves. A cloud seemed to hang over the priest.

“Well, professor”—I had learned he was a professor at Oxford and a personal representative of Pope John—“did you sleep well?”

He shook his head. “Frankly, no. I could not sleep. My mind raced all night.”

“Did I disturb you?”

He looked straight into my eyes. “Thoroughly.”

He paused, then continued: “I’d never heard Jesus Christ called the baptizer before.”

“Oh?”

“No. So I turned to the Scriptures. It’s true that I didn’t find ‘baptizer’ but I found that He ‘baptizes.’ Indeed, I found it over and over—in Matthew 3:11, in Mark 1:8, in Luke 3:16, John 1:33. All four Gospels said John baptizes in water but Jesus will baptize in the Holy Ghost. Every time.”

It was inappropriate for me to say anything. I smiled.

“In John 1:33,” he continued, “it says, ‘He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.’”

“When I saw that I said, ‘What’s the sense of arguing with David, he’s got God

on his side.’

“But that wasn’t enough, I saw in Acts 1:5 that Jesus himself said John baptized in water but that the disciples would soon be baptized with the Holy Ghost. And that meant that not only God the Father said it, but Christ said it, too.

“And then to top it off, Acts 11:16 has Peter telling of the work in the house of Cornelius: ‘Then remembered I the word of the Lord . . . John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.’ And who was it but the Holy Spirit that said that to Peter. After all, Jesus had said that the Spirit would remind them of the things He had said. So, don’t you see? You have all three agreeing with you—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They’re all on your side!
“

He was excited, exasperated, and eager. All I could think of to say was, “You’ve given me real encouragement, Father.” “Okay,” he said. “That’s good. But Rome must hear this. I don’t think even the Holy Father himself knows about this. I worked there for eleven years, and know everybody who is anybody, and I know Pope John personally. You must go to Rome and tell the Holy Father!”

Again, I couldn’t think of much to say. But my thoughts were racing: “Me! Go to Rome! That’s impossible.”

But to Father Leeming, I said, “Well, I prayed for you and the Holy Father just last night.”

He smiled, and his eyes were moist. I didn’t tell him that I had prayed because I was scared. I’d never met Catholics before. I still couldn’t believe the Lord would make me go through this.

But the priest and I had become fast friends, and he maintained contact with me by letter until we met again—in Oxford at the Roman Catholic seminary. There, in the ancient university town, the professor pulled me aside. “I’ve told Rome about you. I told them I had met a man full of the Holy Ghost and full of power. And, my brother, I told them about your love. You must come. The churches must hear your message.”

The knife sunk deep into my heart. He thought I was a man of love. Did my heart deserve that conclusion?

“I will stop in Rome on my way back from New Delhi—if you think I can do any good.”

The door to Rome was open.

Chapter 24, The Purge

I stood in the center of the main terminal at the sprawling airport. It was midday. As we had landed in the silver, four-engine airliner, the sky was bright, pale blue, with an intensity like the stark, unfiltered sunlight of the desert. It was one of Rome's finest, sunbathed days.

I ran my eyes over the hundreds of people striding purposefully across the lobby and at the scores standing idly about the vast room. I examined the brightly colored, plastic chairs. That's peculiar, I thought. Didn't they receive my letter? I had written from the World Council meeting in New Delhi to advise the Assemblies of God office that I would be there for a few days.

There was nothing to do but take a bus into the city. From there I checked into the Continental Hotel and called the Assemblies of God office. I broke the ice by asking if there was any mail for me.

"Praise the Lord, Brother du Plessis!" came the reply. "We were worried about you. Yes, there's a letter here, from your wife, it seems."

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Why were you worried about me?"

There were three seconds of silence. "Well, Catholic priests have been all over the place looking for you. Are you in trouble?" "No," I chuckled, "not me—they are."

"What's their trouble?"

"They want to know about the baptism in the Holy Spirit." "Are you sure?"

"Absolutely. They're serious. But about the letter, I'll come by to pick it up if that's okay. By the way, did any of the priests leave a message?"

"Yes, there was a Dr. Murray. He left a telephone number." The priest was Father Robert Murray, a vivacious young man who instantly communicated a warm, open personality even by telephone, "How glad we are that you have arrived," he said. "It's good to hear your voice."

"Well, thank you very much. I understand you have been trying to reach me at the Assemblies of God office."

"I certainly have," he laughed. "I'm afraid I've been something of a pest. But you're a man I want to meet, the sooner, the better. You see we got a letter about you from Oxford. Father Leeming says you're a man full of the Holy Ghost and

love. As I said, the sooner the better.”

“How soon would sooner be?”

“Twenty minutes.”

“Well, I have nothing to do right now,” I said. “Why not come on? I’ll be waiting.”

I put the phone down. “Oh Lord.” I seemed fixed in one spot, unable to move. “Dear Lord Jesus, he expects a man full of the Holy Spirit and of love. “ I felt a gigantic weight exactly on the top of my head. And I seemed to be smothering. “Oh, Lord, I’ve never loved Catholics. And you know that. Help me. I wasn’t taught that way. The only kind of love I’ve shown is to love to get them out of their church.”

The weight was unbearable. “And this man expects love. How can I love him, Lord? Look at the history. Look at what they’ve done.”

The Lord spoke. “I’ve never made you a judge of history. I’ve said love them and forgive them.”

How? “Lord Jesus, you’ve got only twenty minutes. Purge me. Cleanse me. Purge me of all my prejudices and bitterness. Help me overcome the past. You healed me of my bitterness against the Protestants. Please help me with the Catholics.” •

My desperation bordered on panic. “Please do it in a hurry. I don’t want to be a disappointment. I don’t want to fail him.”

I wept before the Lord.

There were three raps at the door. I opened it and all the poison—the prejudice, the mistrust, the fear—flowed out of my body. The weight atop my head was gone. I knew in that instant I was a new man. That happy young fellow across the threshold was seeing a new crop of the fruit of the Spirit.

Father Robert Murray thrust his hand into mine and stepped vigorously into the room. My heart soared.

“Mr. du Plessis, I’ve come. And you must pray for me.”

“My dear brother, I need your prayers just as badly as you need mine.”

And I threw my arms around him. He hugged me tightly. And we both wept. And then we prayed, as God’s blessings flowed all around us.

For several days after that we walked about the city, visiting the many sights and

institutions I had never seen, talking and wrestling over what God was doing, over the Scriptures, over the life in the Spirit.

“David,” he said, after several days, “I have never known what it is like to be led of the Spirit. I didn’t understand it. But I’ve watched you.” He chuckled. “And the funny thing to me is you don’t seem to fret; you just go ahead, easily and comfortably, no wringing your hands or tearing your hair. And you always do the right thing.”

He chuckled again. “And when I ask you how you know what to do, you say so matter-of-factly, ‘I just follow the Lord.’ It can’t be that simple.”

It was my turn to chuckle. “But it is just that simple. And, brother, it’s going to work for you, too.”

“Oh boy, I don’t know,” he laughed loudly. “You scared me to death yesterday when you insisted on going to see that bishop. You didn’t ask me any questions, you know, about how to greet a bishop—do I kiss his hand, or what—and what to say to him. And when he walked into the room, you just stood up and gave him that big smile and said, ‘I’m so happy to see you. I’m here on a friendship visit.’ And the old bishop just smiled.”

I couldn’t keep from laughing at the priest’s joy and good humor.

“And all the way through the conversation,” he added, “you said the most beautiful things—and absolutely nothing to antagonize him. You even went into the things that are right in his field—his specialties.”

I spent many hours at night in Rome considering the difficulties that lay ahead for Protestants and Catholics in matters of trust and forgiveness. I was convinced that the future held much anguish. But I was equally convinced that this was a path the Lord would take us over. He had mercifully revealed to me His power to do this, even to the crustiest of hearts.

And in those hours alone with Him, He reminded me of how hard it must have been for the early Christians in Jerusalem to trust Saul of Tarsus, even when his name had been changed to Paul. But Jesus, by His Spirit, had prevailed. He had established that this fire-breathing persecutor was His chosen man, and forgiveness flowed—quickly.

As I pored over the Scriptures in my wrestling, I needed to know how to counsel people. My eyes quickly landed on the first assignment that Jesus gave to the very first men whom He regenerated by His Spirit on the day of His resurrection:

“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain

the sins of any, they are retained” (John 20:23).

And I was immediately taken to His warning read so often by so many of us:

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:14, 15).

I am certain the Lord spoke to me about the many burdens of unforgiveness and suspicion that had lain on Catholics and Protestants for so many centuries: “The souls and bodies of Christians will live when all learn to forgive

The phone rang. A voice on the other end said in heavily accented English, “Mr. du Plessis, while you were out, you received an urgent call. A Dr. Strandsky said he needed you as quickly as possible.” It was the desk clerk.

Dr. Strandsky—the name meant nothing to me. I dialed the number. “Dr. Strandsky, please.”

Thomas Strandsky came on the line. He was the secretary for Promoting Christian Unity, a new secretariat headed by Cardinal Bea. He was an American, and was to rise to leadership in the Paulists. His voice sounded urgent.

“Mr. du Plessis, I need to see you. If you cannot come here, I’ll come to you.”

“Is something wrong?”

“Oh no,” he said, “quite the contrary. You’re the one man I need to see, and I find out you’re here in Rome.”

“Where is your office?”

“At the Vatican.”

Whoops! The word almost came out of my mouth, but I restrained it, I think. The Vatican! Do I dare to go there?

“Well, Dr. Strandsky, I expected to leave tomorrow for an audience with Queen Wilhelmina in Holland that is coming up next week. But, I tell you what, I’ll make a call and see if I can stay a couple more days.”

The meeting in the Netherlands was important. But I could sense another door opening in Rome. It was then Thursday.

I told the taxi driver to take me to the Vatican. It was another beautiful day, a Friday, in Rome. Although I had walked through it with Father Murray, I was still unprepared for the awesomeness of the piazza that gives access to the

magnificent palaces and office buildings of the Vatican. The beautiful fountains, the semicircular colonnades and statues, in marvelous marble, were more than the natural senses could take in. The sunlight highlighted the whiteness—actually the off-whiteness—of the spectacle as we approached.

I stood in front of the office building. I could almost hear the whir of my mind. I definitely could hear my heart. “What if I’m out of the will of the Lord?” I thought. “If I am, the Holy Spirit may forsake me, and I’ll feel. . . just sick. . . I’ll be sick when I get inside. “ That was dumb thinking, but the emotions can lead to dumb thinking sometimes. Once more it hammered at me, “What if the Holy Spirit won’t go inside?” But I straightened, and started up the stairs. “That’s ridiculous,” I said aloud.

Inside the office building, I encountered priest after priest, all in clerical garb. The simple interior of the buildings contrasted with the ancient splendor of the exterior. Much of it was just like any office building anywhere else in the world. The offices were not nearly as lavish as many offices of Pentecostal groups I had seen.

I took an elevator to the third floor and walked into Tom Strandsky’s office. It looked like the office of a Pentecostal editor. Books on Pentecostalism and all aspects of the movement were scattered everywhere—all over the desks, the tables, the chairs. With a glance, I could see that some were favorable to the Pentecostals, while others were not. I had never seen such a collection.

“Dr. Strandsky, I’m David du Plessis.”

He was a vigorous, cordial man.

“Forgive me for being so nosy, but what’s going on here?” I asked, waving my arm across the expanse of books.

He laughed with gusto. “Looks like a disaster area, doesn’t it? Actually, it’s the hottest thing going around here. I’m studying all about Pentecost.”

“Why’s that?”

“The Holy Father said that for the renewal of the church there must come a new Pentecost. We have been instructed to study everything we can lay our hands on regarding the Holy Spirit, and especially Pentecostals. “

I laughed. “That’s marvelous.”

“And that’s why I wanted to see you,” he interjected. “I’m looking at everything on the modern Pentecostal movement. We were told you were the only one who would talk to people outside the movement, and especially to Catholics.”

“Where did you hear that?”

“Well,” he smiled, “we went to Geneva to the World Council of Churches asking where we could find a Pentecostal. ‘There’s only one man who will talk to you,’ we were told—and that’s you! And when we asked about your status, we were told, ‘He has no status. He once did, but he lost it.’ So I figured, ‘That’s our man. If we invite him to the Vatican, nobody can object.’ Therefore, Mr. Pentecost, here we are!”

For hour upon hour, I answered questions from Strandsky and his associates. I emphasized my standard message of Jesus the baptizer, the need for forgiveness, the manifestations of the Spirit, the importance of tongues, everything. They soaked it all in.

“Okay,” Tom said at last, “you’ve got to meet Bea—Cardinal Bea. He really wants to see you, and he’s the head man on this. Can you see him tomorrow?”

Cardinal Bea, a rather slight man who was beginning to show his advancing age, welcomed me into his quiet, immaculate living quarters. Everything was perfectly in place. The cardinal himself, a German, was just as orderly. Things were gently under control.

“It was very good of you to come, Mr. du Plessis,” he said. “I’ve heard so much about you.”

And I had heard much about him the previous day. As a Jesuit, he was not supposed to have been elevated to the rank of cardinal, but Pope John had broken that tradition, along with numerous others. And he was known as a man of prayer and a man of the Bible. In fact, he was reported to be an extraordinary Bible man.

As with so many of the other church leaders the Lord had taken me to, we seemed to strike up a friendship immediately. In the spacious living room of deep, dark colors, rich in age and beauty, we talked at length—again with primary emphasis on Jesus and Pentecost. Present throughout was Monsignor Schmitt, who occasionally made notes on a pad.

“My dear friend,” the cardinal said, “what do the Pentecostals want to say to Rome?” He was looking ahead to the historic Vatican Council, then in the planning stage.

“Cardinal . . .” I hesitated. “I have to say that the Pentecostals have no intention of talking to Rome.”

His face betrayed no emotion. “Well, then, David, what do you want to say to

Rome?”

He was totally serious, continuing to peer into my eyes.

“All I want to say is this: Make the Bible available to every Catholic in the world—in his own language. If Catholics will read the Bible, the Holy Spirit will make that book come alive, and that will change their lives. And changed Catholics will be the renewal of the church.”

He stared right at me. Then with a sudden move of his arm—in fact his whole body—he thumped the arm of his chair and bounced to his feet.

“Now that’s what the Holy Father wants to know!” He almost shouted.

He swung abruptly toward Monsignor Schmitt. “Write that down. Yes, that’s it! Write that down.”

I learned sometime later that a few pastors, including some from Pentecostal churches, asked officials at the Vatican, “Why do you people make so much of David? In the Pentecostal movement, he has become a mere zero.”

My Catholic friends related the episode to me in passing. I couldn’t become angry. In fact, I laughed and said, “A zero? That’s good news. If I’m a zero, and Jesus is one, that makes ten. I wish I were two zeroes, and that would make a hundred.”

But I did, of course, have moments of regret that some of the brethren felt that way and, further, voiced it. But my heart of hearts knew that it was far better if I were looked upon as a zero. That way, I was free. I could serve the church.

Of course, that non-status meant I was entirely on my own financially. I never received a cent from the Roman church or any other for visits there. I went at my own expense and I could say exactly what the Lord gave me to say. If I stepped on toes, I was still free.

Chapter 25, The Rattle Of Bones

It was early morning in September, 1964. I was one of the first to arrive, even before the huge doors opened. My special pass for that session of the historic Vatican Council—set in motion by the beloved Pope John XXIII and carried to fruition by his successor, Pope Paul VI—assigned me to a very good seat in cavernous St. Peter’s Basilica, just to the left of the papal throne. I went directly to it. There were few people in the observers’ circle at that hour.

I sat virtually alone as the special mass was celebrated. It was the right time to be alone, for my thoughts and emotions were so mixed. I was certain I could feel the fresh breezes of the Holy Spirit in that colorful, yet sadly solemn, and heavily liturgical moment in church history.

Yet, as happened every morning during my weeks there, I felt myself melting and breaking, actually weeping openly as the mass unfolded. I wasn’t precisely sure why I was weeping so heavily. But I found myself grieved. “Have I grieved the Holy Spirit by coming here?” I thought.

But suddenly I knew that my grief was not out of order. My heart was breaking over this hierarchical assemblage, not because I was out of God’s will, but because my spirit was seeing beyond those three thousand theologians, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and others. My spirit was seeing the six-hundred million souls from around the world that this council represented. Deep inside I was crying, “Lord, what is to happen to them? Are they to perish because the establishment has so often gone astray? There is so much at stake, dear Lord.”

And my tears continued. But they were not bitter. I was aware even at that moment that the purging of my bitterness and suspicion had been complete. I knew they were tears of compassion, and for that I was grateful.

As I sat alone, the Holy Spirit gave me another of his precious lessons. The words formed in my mind. “When Jesus saw the temple, He wept. It was not until after He had wept that He went into the temple and whipped those defiling it. Don’t ever try to whip anybody—to reform them—until you’ve wept.”

I saw it clearly. I was in good company with my weeping—Jesus himself. And it continued.

One highlight of that opening ceremony for me came when Pope Paul addressed the gathering. The slight, almost delicate pontiff spoke solemnly in Latin—the language of most of the council, but also expertly translated for those of us who

had never learned it. Occasionally the faintest of smiles played on his lips, but for the most part he was deeply serious, infrequently raising his hand for emphasis.

I was deeply stirred when he seemingly addressed all of Christendom, “We ask forgiveness and we offer forgiveness.”

As the words came through our interpreter in careful, but accented English, I felt a tightening in the pit of my stomach. I recalled the words of the late Pope John: “Let us talk things over and be friends.”

Friendship was blossoming into forgiveness and, hopefully, then into love.

In my first introduction to the Vatican, three years earlier, I had found a change of climate. Now I was discovering clear signs of a spiritual springtime.

And that springtime brought other surprises. I listened raptly to men speaking with deep, deep feeling about their yearnings for spiritual renewal, the need for new life within the church and all its people. Even though my bitterness was gone, I still found myself surprised by such words—from Catholics. “I didn’t know they talked that way, with that spiritual quality,” I thought.

Quite unplanned, my summation of my experience at the Vatican Council—both then and later when I returned for other sessions—came during a brief exchange with a bishop.

“How does a Pentecostal feel at a conclave like this, with all these bishops and bigwigs?” His good-natured sarcasm was aimed at the hierarchy, not at me.

“I’ll tell you the truth, and I’ll make it scriptural,” I replied. “I feel like Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones.”

His smile vanished. “Pretty dead, huh? To tell you the truth I don’t feel so good either.”

“ Oh, you misunderstand me, ” I said quickly, waving a hand to cut him off. “I didn’t say I was feeling badly. Why, I don’t see how Ezekiel could have felt bad. He must have been as excited as I am.”

“You’re excited?”

“Why, of course. Of course. The bones are moving—they’re rattling.”

He hesitated a moment. “I know that’s what the Scripture says, but are you sure? Are they really moving?”

“Bishop,” I said with a smile, “aren’t you moving?”

Again, silence. And then a smile. “Mr. du Plessis, I’m so glad I talked to you. I thought the council had to move me. But now you tell me it’s the Spirit who’s moving me. This is wonderful! This is good news!”

And that was a discovery for many people like that good bishop, Catholics and Protestants alike. A lot of them attributed their feelings and emotions, as well as any progress, to councils and conferences and meetings. It seldom dawned on them that God was still on His Throne and that the Holy Spirit was doing things that no council or meeting could do.

The decade of the fifties had been busy years. My opportunities for ministry had been great, and my traveling was constantly growing. But the magnitude of what the Lord had shown Wigglesworth about me was beyond my comprehension at that time.

In the sixties and the seventies, for example, I averaged 100,000 miles of travel each year, and it would have been impossible to select a broader range of people to minister to. Counting the years of the fifties, which by comparison turned out to be modest, I estimate that the Lord has taken me more than a million miles in the last twenty-five years—most of it by airplane, as foreseen by Wigglesworth. This includes fifty-six countries and America’s fifty states. During those periods when I was in the United States, I crossed the country on the average of once a month.

And miraculously, again as foreseen by Wigglesworth, I was never sick while traveling. The one time when I did become quite seriously ill came while I was at home. The moment I started traveling, I was perfectly well again.

One of the things for which I am deeply grateful was the Lord’s kindness in allowing me to fellowship with, and minister among, the Pentecostal brethren, including those in the Assemblies of God. Despite the necessity for the Lord to separate me officially from organizations, and the coolness that did develop at one period, I was received across the country and around the world by most of the Pentecostal brethren as the years flowed by.

Besides this, my activities spanned all the historic churches, ministerial meetings of every description, Camps Farthest Out, Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowships, Christian Business Men’s Committees, retreats, charismatic conferences among the major denominations, independent church conferences, World Conferences on the Holy Spirit, and television and radio shows around the world.

The year 1963 presented a good example of the variety of work the Lord led me

into. I was away from home—in Oakland, California—for two hundred sixty nights, ministering day by day and night by night, reaching into seventy cities, twenty states, and six foreign countries. I preached or lectured three hundred thirty-three times but, of course, had no record of the hours spent in individual ministry on top of that. The audiences varied from eight to eight thousand, and the ministers' groups ranged from four to four hundred. I had no precise record but knew for certain that scores of ministers and hundreds of members of historic churches received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Of course, all of this was multiplied by the marvelous miracle of mass communication—television, radio, and tape recordings. I can only estimate conservatively that the message the Lord gave me was carried to several million by these media.

My diary showed the following itinerary:

January—Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, California.

February—California, Oregon, Texas, South Carolina, Georgia, and the District of Columbia.

March—Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, California.

April—Colombia, South America, California, Texas, Arizona.

May—Colombia, South America, California, Oregon.

June—Washington, Texas, California, Illinois.

July—New York, Texas, California, Vermont.

August—Vermont, Massachusetts, California.

September—The Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy.

October—Switzerland, the Netherlands, Britain, New York.

November—Texas, Canada, Oklahoma, California.

December—California.

Throughout these years, right up to 1976, the Lord has been most kind to me in another precious way. Frequently he has given me special visits to my native land, South Africa, and on numerous occasions Anna was able to accompany me. Travel with Anna, in fact, picked up steadily as the children reached adulthood and her responsibilities were eased. Before that, she had felt her duty was with the children. I could do without her for a while, she said. But there was

never the least trace of tension between us over my constant travel. The ministry was blessed. I knew it, and she knew it.

Over the years people talked to her about this. One woman approached her at a reception and asked, “How in the world can you allow your husband to travel like this?” she asked.

Anna, quite innocently, asked, “What do you mean?”

“Well, you know, there are women all around, and things like that. You know—the temptations.”

Anna could hardly keep from laughing right in the woman’s face. “If I’ve got to watch him—if the Lord’s watching him isn’t enough—then I might as well give up. He’s working for the Lord, and I trust the Lord to take care of him.”

But, when our youngest child, Basel, flew off to Vietnam in the late sixties, the very next day Anna began to travel with me as much as possible. She disliked the short trips, the hotels, the packing and unpacking, but on the longer stays she enjoyed herself.

In 1964, for example, she wrote to friends about our trip to South Africa and countries in Europe:

I must tell what a great thrill it was to be able to travel with David to South Africa and Europe ... it was no sightseeing trip. Yet, I never thought one could see and hear so much of the work of the Lord in so short a time. What a thrill all the meetings were and what an experience to be part of it all.

For so many years I have been happy to stay with our six children and just enjoy the news from David’s letters as he faithfully wrote me all the details. Besides, for all these years I have read the letters of friends that wrote to testify of the grace of God through the ministry of my husband. But now it became possible for me to meet in person so many of the friends whose letters I had read, and what a thrill it was. It was most exciting to see many of the places and churches about which I had read for years. . . .

I hope you can imagine my feelings when I arrived back in my homeland and at the airport caught sight of our mothers, and brothers, and sisters-in-law, and all the children that were born or had grown up during the sixteen years of our absence. Then again in the camp meetings and in the churches that we visited it was so good to see multitudes of old friends. I thank God for letting me see them all once again.

Then came the very interesting travels and meetings through Europe and

England. I always knew that David kept busy as he traveled, but I had no idea he worked so hard all the time. I marveled at the spiritual and physical strength that the Lord had given him. It was a thrill to see so many church leaders and ministers listening with rapt attention to the message of the Holy Spirit. Believe me when I tell you, this is indeed a wonderful ministry. Please pray for us. . . .

David will be leaving again in a few days for a three-month trip. As always we shall miss him so much at home, but for the last thirty-seven years we have always tried to keep in the center of God's will, without complaining. He has been so faithful in providing for all our needs. God bless you and reward you richly for all your love and kindness.

One of my most unusual experiences during these years of great adventure came during a trip to the Far East, particularly to Japan. I was astounded by data provided to me showing that after more than a century of Christian missions in Japan, less than half of one per cent of the population could, by any stretch of the imagination, be called Christian. Following World War II, upon the plea of General Douglas MacArthur, a score of different missionary societies—Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists, Fundamentalists, Baptists, Pentecostals—managed to send a few hundred missionaries.

But one of the great tragedies of Christianity again manifested itself. Instead of cooperation, there was competition. Instead of study of the Bible, there were studies of doctrines and teachings of men. The Japanese people at first were impressed, but soon they became confused and, finally, divided as they accepted the ways of the missionaries. The Oriental religions marched on, meanwhile, accompanied by atheism and religious fads.

But in my dismay over the trend in Japan, I learned of the Original Gospel movement, a work begun by the Lord through Professor Ikuro Teshima. He had been a seeker of truth for many years, and had been involved with the No-Church movement, but found no peace of mind. In desperation, he began a fresh study of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. There, he gleaned the fact that the early Christians had fellowship from house to house, and were all witnesses. Stimulated by his findings, he began to encourage his Christian friends to open their homes for gatherings of fellowship and witnessing. Soon, they were renting public auditoriums for weekend meetings to enlarge the circle of fellowship. Then came conferences for teaching and further witnessing.

They formed home "tabernacles" for prayer, study, and fellowship, and by the mid-sixties there were hundreds of tabernacles with thousands of witnesses all over Japan. By the middle of the sixties, tens of thousands, even hundreds of

thousands, were being affected by the gospel.

It was into this setting that I was invited to minister in 1965.

I got off the train with a bag in each hand at the railway station in the city of Katsuura. It was marvelously modern and clean. A crowd of several hundred people milled about the platform. When several of them rushed up to me, I learned that those hundreds were there to greet me. I couldn't believe it. My heart thumped wildly and my throat tightened with emotion.

Within minutes, as I arrived at my hotel, I was swamped by one thousand waving, enthusiastic Japanese gathered to welcome me. The bonds of Oriental love encompassed a deeply moved South African-American.

That afternoon I was introduced to 2,500 people jammed into the largest hall of the big, modern hotel. I was the only foreigner. As I waved my hand across the vast expanse of happy, smiling faces, they broke into their theme song, "There Is Power in the Blood." They sang it and sang it and sang it, over and over. I didn't understand their words, but I knew their hearts. Jesus was not a denominationally-torn Lord to them. He was the resurrected Christ, not a theological personality. And He was in them and among them.

I began my ministry to them by preaching Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. In subsequent sessions, I preached Jesus the Savior, the Healer, the Baptizer, the Coming King. I was astounded at the inspiration and liberty I experienced among those dear brothers and sisters. Salvation flowed, healings came, immersion in the Spirit occurred throughout the huge hall. Those who came to the meetings not knowing the Lord were confronted with indisputable evidence of the living Christ.

At that conference and in meetings in Kyoto and Tokyo, I found many of the wealthy people, those from the old aristocracy and the new middle class who were joining the poor in their search for God. I also encountered ministers from the historic churches, as well as priests from other religions, at meetings. Many found Christ and became true witnesses. I was impressed by the de-emphasis on the background of these Christian witnesses. Most of them had come out of deep sin, out of heresy and blasphemy; some were rich, some poor; some were educated, some not. But they seemed to immediately erase all that and become truly one.

I carried many unusual memories, many thoughts about the true, universal church as I flew back across the Pacific from my first venture into the Orient.

The Lord was generous to me and my family during these years in domestic

ways, too. He eventually took us to the place that we feel is perfect for us—Oakland, California. But there were intermediate stops, all with a purpose. From Stamford, Connecticut—where we sank moderately deep roots in the early days of the ministry—He took us to Dallas, Texas, after Anna had begun to suffer from severe back problems that we attributed to the cold winter and the snow.

Gordon Lindsay, the noted editor of *The Voice of Healing* and founder of a society of divine-healing evangelists, was God's instrument for bringing about the move to a warmer climate in Dallas. My experience in missions proved helpful to him, and we were able to travel together in virtually all parts of South America.

But the Lord had other plans. In six years, as Anna was beset with skin trouble from the heat, the door to Oakland was opened.

I was invited by Paul Schoch, pastor of the First Church of the Assemblies of God in Oakland, to take care of his church for three weeks so he could make a missionary evangelistic trip to the Orient. "Bring your family," he said. "Live in the parsonage. The church will pay you and you'll have three weeks of a change of scene."

My family had never been to the West Coast, so I accepted.

In our first week there, I learned that the assistant pastor was preparing to leave and needed to sell his house. Out of curiosity I drove out to take a look at it. It was very appealing. And I sensed another opening door.

Just to test the waters, I inquired about cost and financing and had a builder take a look at it. "You couldn't do better for that money," he said. "Take it if you can."

Within four days, with the prospective profit from my Dallas house and an advance from an elder of the church, I had acquired a home in the old German area of Oakland. In three months, I had repaid the advance and the du Plessis family was at long last settled down in the sunny state of California. The blessings of the Lord were rich indeed—in body, mind, and spirit.

Chapter 26, Dialogue

June is a delightful month in the sparkling, blue and green paradise that is called Switzerland. And few places could be more delightful than the left shore of the long, slender Lake of Zurich, reigned over serenely by the city of Zurich at its northern end. It was to this left, western shore, at the town of Horgen, that eighteen men from the broad spectrum of Christianity gathered. The year was 1972. Just ahead lay the turmoil of the seventies—the landslide re-election of President Nixon in the United States; the century’s biggest political scandal, tabbed Watergate; worldwide economic stress; violence and devastation in Northern Ireland and southern Africa; terrorism around the world.

But Zurich-Horgen, Switzerland, on June 20, 1972, was a scene of peace. The trumpets of publicity sounded in every quarter of the globe, but not there.

I called the meeting to order—twenty-five years after the first Pentecostal World Conference just ten and a half miles away in the city of Zurich, when I had been the keynote speaker. I was seated at the head of a horseshoe arrangement of tables around which were clustered representatives of the worldwide Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements and the Roman Catholic Church. By my side was my co-chairman, Father Kilian McDonnell, executive director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in Minnesota. He represented the Catholics, I the Pentecostals.

At an exploratory meeting the previous year, the Vatican group had wisely suggested that the first meeting be held on neutral ground—neither Catholic nor Protestant—and that the Pentecostals be recognized as hosts. That way, the reluctant classical Pentecostals would not be skittish about going into “enemy territory” or even being the guests of the “suspect” Catholics. That meant I was to open things up.

“Gentlemen,” I began, “we might as well jump right in. You all know what we’re here for, and the sooner we get underway the better.”

All faces were turned toward me, faces of many close, longtime friends and an equal number of faces that I was seeing for the first time. My eyes roamed over the group, picking out the Pentecostal-charismatic representatives—Rodman Williams, an American Presbyterian educator and scholar; Arnold Bittlinger, a Lutheran professor from Germany; F.P. Moller, the head of the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa; John McTernan from Rome, the secretary of the

Pentecostal team; Russell Spitler from California; John Meares from Washington, D.C.; Michael Harper, the popular British Anglican; Athanasius Emmert from West Virginia, a Greek Orthodox priest; Jean-Daniel Fischer from France; Pastor Holscher from South Africa. All the delegates were there.

The Catholic delegation, some of whom I did not know, was made up of Canon J. Giblet from Belgium; Donatien Mollat from the Vatican; Heribert Muhlen from Germany; Father Garrigues from France; and Pierre Duprey and Basil Meeking, both from the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

Turning to the papers in front of me I began, “Most of you have probably read that this meeting—this dialogue, we call it—had its roots back in a report from Cardinal Willebrands, who is president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. In that report to the bishops, the cardinal said as follows—and I’ll read it, or part of it:

‘The problem of establishing an ecumenical contact with the Christians who do not belong to any of the churches and ecclesial communities created by the Reformation of the sixteenth century, remains an open one. I am thinking of those who are sometimes called “conservative evangelicals,” for example, the Pentecostals, Seventh-Day Adventists, and others. As a result of their fanaticism and their refusal to join any form of institution they are often considered as sects. They represent a large and growing group of Christians. In Latin America they constitute between eighty and ninety per cent of the non-Catholic Christians.’

“And it goes on in that vein.

“Well, as you know, I responded to that report by writing to Cardinal Willebrands and telling him that I thought this problem could be overcome—that a dialogue could be established to break down the barriers. And I included the neo-Pentecostals, the charismatics, in the suggestion.

“I won’t go into detail on the exploratory meeting that followed. Many of you were there—Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist and so on. But the idea was accepted. And here we are.

“If the Lord wills, this will be the first of a five-year series of dialogues between representatives of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and the Pentecostals and charismatics.”

Father McDonnell gave his opening remarks as the Catholic co-chairman and for five days we worked and debated and prayed in that small meeting hall of the delightful hotel at Horgen. The restraint and slight tension of the opening meeting eased noticeably as we came to know one another, and before we knew

it, we were even able to argue—to disagree occasionally—in a spirit of love and understanding.

The only other participant—an unofficial one—was a Roman Catholic priest, Jean-Paul Regimbal, from Quebec. He was our translator, operating from a glass cubicle in a corner of the room and translating either into English or into French, as required. He proved to be invaluable, with his knowledge of languages, his grasp of the Scriptures, and his understanding of the charismatic renewal. And we knew he was God’s man for the job because of the miraculous chain of events that had led to his undertaking the job.

Jean-Paul, aware of the impending dialogue, was praying alone one day about the meetings. He felt the Lord speak to him that he should go to Zurich-Horgen. But he had no financial means. Before long, a woman arrived at his office to tell him the Lord had instructed her to give him a sum of money—the amount needed to pay his expenses to Zurich and back.

Thus, without clear knowledge of why he was to go, he arrived at our meeting place and introduced himself. Well, we had nothing for him and, of course, we couldn’t permit him to participate in the meetings. He had not been invited.

Then our translator arrived, a woman from the World Council of Churches. Our hearts sank when we heard her work. She had no knowledge of the Bible, let alone the Pentecostal movement. She just couldn’t keep up with us.

Then we realized Jean-Paul, fluent in English and French, was our man.

Our designated subject for that first five-day meeting was the scriptural basis of the understanding both sides had of the fullness of life in the Holy Spirit. We heard papers on this theme from Canon Giblet from the Catholic University, Louvain, Belgium; Dr. Williams, then of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Austin, Texas, and soon to be president of the Melodyland School of Theology; Professor Bittlinger of the Ecumenical Academy,

Schloss Craheim, Germany; Father Mollat from the Gregorian University, Rome; and Dr. Moller, my old friend from South Africa.

We began to see that there were areas on which agreement might be found. One was the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer—the way in which this was experienced. Another was the manifestation of that experience through the charismata that can build up the life and unity of the Christian community. Quite expectedly, this meant we devoted considerable time to the gift of tongues.

One strong point of emphasis developed. It was that in the New Testament, the expression “to baptize in the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to the baptism of Jesus,

who gives the Holy Spirit to the people of God, the church. We fully agreed that all men and women are called to enter into this community through faith in Christ, who converts them, makes them disciples through baptism, and makes them sharers of his Spirit.

Hallelujah! The ground for agreement was magnificent!

As we drew near to the end of our discussions in this first phase, we went line by line over an official statement that concluded as follows, indicative of the enormous stride forward we had taken:

In the Pentecostal movement particular stress is laid on the full participation in the reality of being 'baptized in the Holy Spirit.' This is understood as occurring in a decisive experience whereby the Holy Spirit takes hold of a person, an event that empowers and transforms his life, and gives him a new perception of the whole reality of the Christian mystery.

The participants in the dialogue were able to agree that it is the Spirit of Christ who makes one a Christian, and that the life of the believer is "Christian" inasmuch as it remains under the influence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The dialogue in this present phase is not intended to take up questions of church union nor to enter into the problem of ecclesiastical structures. Rather it aims at discovering what unity already exists in the life, spirit and experience of the various traditions represented around the conference table.

I concluded my participation in these first historic discussions with this reflection: "Personally, I would consider this first session of the dialogue a very outstanding success, and it should help greatly to clear the atmosphere in Roman Catholic-Pentecostal fellowship and in the charismatic movement in all the historic churches."

The final event in this meeting was a banquet that provided an unexpected, moving climax. We eighteen participants were joined by Eugene Carson-Blake, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and other high-ranking officials from his organization, as well as by leading Roman Catholics and representatives of the Swiss Pentecostal movement. We broke bread together, prayed together, and even laughed together. Such a mixture of Christians was rarely seen even in those days of rapid change.

In the ensuing five years, we convened our Catholic and Pentecostal groups to press ahead with our search for understanding and unity in the Spirit. Next came Rome, then Schloss Craheim in Germany, then Venice, and finally, back to Rome again. New ground was broken, new light was shed. And love and

understanding flourished.

Typical of the sort of fulfillment we found were expressions in the official documents prepared at the end of the sessions.

For example: “The discussion took place with a grateful awareness of recent developments both in the Roman Catholic Church and in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements which make for new understanding and which are overcoming former divisive difficulties. This was especially clear for the realm of worship. In Pentecostalism there is a growing emphasis on the community aspect of worship, with the discipline it implies, and in the Roman Catholic Church a new awareness of spontaneous prayer.”

And this: “A recurring emphasis throughout the meeting was the will of Christ for the unity of his followers and the power of the Holy Spirit to make this unity effective in their lives and in the Christian community. The insights and riches of each group of Christians are needed for the wholeness of the Body of Christ.” As we reached the end of our five-year cycle, many of us wondered, “What now? Is it all over?”

But there was a growing desire on the part of the group at the Vatican for a new five-year cycle. Quite to my surprise, the Catholic brethren spoke of a special need to pursue dialogue with the classical, more experienced Pentecostal brethren. “We have dealt fully with theological and psychological issues,” they said. “Now we must deal with practical issues. These can only be discussed with men of ripe experience.”

There was a feeling that the mixing of Pentecostals and charismatics from the historic churches onto one team had been extremely useful in the first stages but that the mix had ultimately resulted in a certain ambiguity. “If there were more classical Pentecostals from the big churches,” the Catholics said, “the Pentecostal participants could feel and act more as one body in the discussions.” They pressed especially hard for representatives from the Third World Pentecostal churches.

They recognized that the established Pentecostal churches had much to share in terms of church operation, missionary work in all lands, persecution, steadfastness through three-quarters of a century, and ecclesiastical approaches.

Immediately after our final session in the first phase on May 29, 1976, the question of a new cycle was still in the air. I felt we should continue, but I had no definite commitment from the Vatican.

But by the fall a letter had come from Cardinal Willebrands confirming that we

would initiate a new five-year round in early October of 1977. I immediately set to work lining up the Pentecostal team.

My relationships with my classical Pentecostal brethren continued to improve as the years passed by and true ecumenism was seen. The Lord did some powerful work in all of us. One of the most moving events from my point of view was the issuance of a “Charismatic Study Report” by the executive presbytery of the Assemblies of God. It hailed “the winds of the Spirit” that are “blowing freely outside the normally recognized Pentecostal bodies.”

“The Assemblies of God wishes to identify with what God is doing,” it declared, a bold and courageous statement that thrilled the hearts of millions and, I know beyond doubt, brought a joyful smile to the face of our Lord Jesus. The report read as follows:

There is thrilling evidence that God is moving mightily by His Spirit through all the earth. The winds of the Spirit are blowing freely outside the normally recognized Pentecostal bodies. This is the time of a greater fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy. Thousands of people have prayed for years that this would come to pass. The coming of the Holy Spirit upon so many and in such a broad sweep of the church world is God’s way of counteracting the liberalism, secularism, humanism, and occultism that plagues our present-day society.

Marks of the genuine moving of the Holy Spirit include the following:

1. Emphasis on worship in spirit and truth of Almighty God.
2. Recognition of the person of Christ—His deity, His incarnation, and His redemptive work.
3. Recognition of the authority of, and a hunger for, the Word of God.
4. Emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit.
5. Emphasis on the second coming of Christ.
6. Emphasis on prayer for the sick.
7. Emphasis on sharing Christ in witnessing and evangelism.

The Assemblies of God wishes to identify with what God is doing in the world today. We recognize that no existing organization fully represents the body of Christ. Neither do we believe that for all true Christians—whether Pentecostal in doctrine or not—to align themselves with an existing organization or a new one, will bring the unity of the Spirit. We do believe in the institution of the Church.

We trust the Holy Spirit to bring the members of Christ's body into a true unity of the Spirit. If there is yet a truth to be revealed to the Church, it is the essential unity of the body of Christ, which transcends but does not destroy existing organizational bounds.

The Assemblies of God does not place approval on that which is manifestly not scriptural in doctrine or conduct. But neither do we categorically condemn everything that does not totally or immediately conform to our standards. No genuine spiritual movement in Church history has been completely free of problems or above criticism. The Pentecostal movement of this century has experienced its problems relating both to doctrine and conduct. Spiritual maturity leads to a balanced life which will bear the fruit of the Spirit while displaying the gifts of the Spirit.

We place our trust in God to bring His plan about as He pleases in His sovereign will. It is important that we find our way in a sound scriptural path, avoiding the extremes of an ecumenism that compromises scriptural principles and an exclusivism that excludes true Christians.

Indeed, the church of Jesus Christ had come a long way in the third quarter of the twentieth century.

Chapter 27, Pentecost!

To even the most expectant mind, it was unbelievable. There we were—twenty thousand people, at least half of us charismatic believers—jammed into St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. It was Pentecost Sunday.

The choruses rose higher and higher, up into the vastness of the cathedral. The ten thousand Spirit-filled Christians refused to let it die. First it was “Alleluia,” then “He Is Lord,” then “Alleluia” again. Wave after wave of joyful, worshipful singing swept up and down the ancient sanctuary.

We sang in all languages, and in unknown tongues. It was impossible to distinguish the languages; it was all so spontaneous.

Then a great gong tolled ten o’clock, and immediately in came the pope, carried high on his sedan chair, to greet the 1975 Congress on the Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church. The colors were splendid; the faces of the people were virtually luminous. Nobody I spoke to could remember a pope entering to such a reception. People were standing, hands lifted, shouting and singing the expression that is common to all languages, “Alleluia. “ It just didn’t stop. The people sang and sang, with great joy and yet with deep reverence. The atmosphere was charged with expectation.

Pope Paul stepped to his throne. A smile flickered upon his face. He and all of us were seeing living, visible evidence of what God was doing throughout the church of His Son, Jesus. Those of us who had come as observers and invited guests knew that we were first-hand witnesses to another of the mighty surges that the Lord was more and more frequently sending upon His body, Catholic and Protestant alike.

The pope began to speak. His Latin was translated into the major languages for all to understand. Even the most optimistic of us had not been prepared for such a Pentecostal message as came from the slight figure high on the throne. As the translations reached the people, soft “amens” were heard in all parts of the congregation.

“As we speak of Pentecost,” he said, “two sentiments are found in our hearts. The first of these is trepidation—a sentiment which the Bible attributes to the prophet Jeremiah, and which led him to express his hesitation by saying, ‘Ah, Lord God! ... I know not how to speak. ’ The second sentiment is that of exuberant enthusiasm, as Peter had on the day of Pentecost.

“It is this second sentiment that prevails and gives the church the revealing announcement of the intimate life of God: One in being and three in persons. Christ had foretold: ‘I will ask the Father and he will give you another paraclete—to be with you always: the Spirit of truth.’

“The theme and doctrine of Pentecost is the very mystery of the transcendent life of God. This is what is proposed to us and we can never forget it. Our gaze must be illumined by God, who is our sun.”

Except for the murmurs of “amen,” a hush settled over the twenty thousand people. They hung on every word. This was more than a celebration, they knew. It was one of the church’s great milestones.

As he neared the end of his message, Pope Paul declared: “And this is our announcement of Pentecost. It is the announcement of the giving of a new interior life, animated by the presence and power of God—a life which is begun in love.”

And love swept through St. Peter’s Basilica. From my vantage point in the massive hall, I was certain there were very few, if any, who were not being touched by the Holy Spirit and awakened to the prospects of fuller life.

During the celebration of the Eucharist, there was singing with the Spirit, gently, tenderly, reverently and absolutely fitting. It was indeed a Pentecostal service, with Pentecostal manifestations and very evident Pentecostal blessings. All of us had prayed for a Pentecostal miracle to take place, but no one had expected such a rich and positive manifestation of a new Pentecost.

It was almost noontime when the mass ended. Then spontaneously, the thousands moved in one great flow out into the piazza of the cathedral. It was a ripe field of humanity, the people from the mass mingling with the thousands already gathered in the square outside the papal palace. Thousands upon thousands waved and shouted in every tongue possible. And once again, chorus after chorus of “Alleluia” moved back and forth as though on waves of the sea. Joy, even holy glee, filled our hearts.

Monday found us once again in St. Peter’s Basilica. It was entirely given over to the charismatic congress. Nearly twelve thousand people from sixty nations, with more than seven hundred priests and twelve bishops, joined with Cardinal Suenens of Belgium around the papal altar to celebrate the closing Eucharist. Even compared with the previous day, this was a most unusual service. For the first time in many years—the first time in the memory of most of those present—a cardinal was allowed to celebrate communion from the papal altar.

Cardinal Suenens, a powerful leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal, spoke with great liberty and inspiration. The multitude reacted with freedom in the Spirit and sang lustily. A sight to behold was the youthful, vigorous music ministry from members of the Word of God community in Ann Arbor, Michigan, occupying the place held by the famous Sistine Choir, accompanying the people in songs of praise and worship.

Father John Patrick Bertolucci, vice chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, New York, and a prominent figure in the American renewal, later described the moment: “With hands raised in continuous flow of Spirit-filled praise and adoration we all felt the importance of this historic moment as the Church of Rome said an unmistakable ‘welcome’ to what had hitherto been a controversial current of God’s grace within the Catholic community.”

Cardinal Suenens, without doubt, was specially anointed by the Lord as the communion service progressed. Every word he uttered carried the power of the Holy Spirit. It was a free and exciting celebration, as “Pentecostal” as any I had heard or seen in many years of ministry in all the churches.

Prophecies began to flow loud and clear over the loudspeakers straight from the papal altar. Tears filled the eyes of thousands as the Lord spoke words of edification and encouragement through His servants. “The Lord’s presence was so real in that assembly that I’m sure many healings will be traced to that day,” said Father Bertolucci later when reflecting on what he had seen and heard.

As the elements of the communion were distributed, the prophecies continued, mingled with more singing in the Spirit. One woman sang a beautiful solo in tongues.

At the end of this glorious eucharistic service, the multitude remained standing, awaiting the entrance of Pope Paul. Although this was to be what is called “a faithful audience,” the pope had offered to come into St. Peter’s and address the crowd there rather than have the people move into the regular audience hall.

As he arrived, he received a much louder welcoming hallelujah than on Sunday. With a delightful smile, he sat on his throne and spoke with enthusiasm, in no uncertain terms of approval and acceptance, of the charismatic movement in the church as a sign of the work of renewal of the Holy Spirit in answer to prayer.

“This strong desire to situate yourselves in the church is an authentic sign of the action of the Holy Spirit,” he said softly, gently. “For God became man in Jesus Christ, of whom the church is the mystical body; and it is in the church that the Spirit of Christ was communicated on the day of Pentecost when He came down

upon the Apostles gathered in the ‘upper room,’ in ‘continuous prayer,’ with ‘Mary, the mother of Jesus.’

“As we said last October in the presence of some of you, the church and the world need more than ever that ‘the miracle of Pentecost should continue in history.’”

I could feel my heart rising in my throat.

“In fact,” he continued, “inebriated by his conquests, modern man has finished by imagining, according to the expression used by the last Council, that he is free ‘to be an end unto himself, the sole artisan and creator of his own history.’”

“Alas.” Sadness filled his thin face. “Among how many of those very people, who continue by tradition to profess God’s existence and through duty to render Him worship, has God become a stranger in their lives.”

Every face in the sanctuary was intent, turned upward toward the seated pontiff.

“Nothing is more necessary to this more and more secularized world,” he said, “than the witness of this ‘spiritual renewal’ that we see the Holy Spirit evoking in the most diverse regions and milieux. The manifestations of this renewal are varied: a profound communion of souls, intimate contact with God, in fidelity to the commitments undertaken at baptism, in prayer—frequently in group prayer—in which each person, expressing himself freely, aids, sustains and fosters the prayer of the others, and, at the basis of everything, a personal conviction, which does not have its source solely in a teaching received by faith, but also in a certain lived experience. This lived experience shows that, without God, man can do nothing; that with Him, on the other hand, everything becomes possible: hence this need to praise God, thank Him, celebrate the marvels that He works everywhere about us and within us.”

Then he turned specifically to those in his audience. “It will be very fortuitous for our times, for our brothers, that there should be a generation, your generation of young people, who shout out to the world the glory and the greatness of the God of Pentecost.

“Today,” he said for all the church to hear, “either one lives one’s faith with devotion, depth, energy, and joy, or that faith will die out.”

Yes, I mused, this man understands Pentecost. He understands what is happening.

For sheer emotion and drama, the high point of that historic celebration came when the pope paused, gazed out upon us, and declared: “Jesus is the Lord!

Alleluia!” A holy awe filled the hearts and in fact the entire basilica. I saw tears and laughter mingled. It was simply so exciting that all of us felt we had lived through a Pentecost such as you could have only once.

I lay in my bed that night, my eyes open in the darkness, and tried to comprehend what had been unfolding right in front of me. Had Pentecostalism finally penetrated the Catholic Church? Instantly I knew the answer. No, it was Pentecost, not an “ism,” that was moving in the churches. They had not accepted Pentecostalism nor should they have. They had accepted Pentecost—the Holy Spirit, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the work of Jesus.

Just what was the Lord going to do with this? I wondered. It seemed obvious that He was preparing the denominations. I smiled as I realized we not only had an ecumenical Pentecost, but also an economical Pentecost. The churches were already established and paid for, they had already trained ministers, and this framework permitted the fast growth we were seeing. I recalled that, in only a few years, the Catholics had already taken the message of Pentecost to ninety-two countries. Yes, the Lord would move the nations by first moving the denominations.

I perceived also that night that three strains were at work in the overall Pentecostal movement. There were the classical Pentecostals, the neo-Pentecostals, and the Catholic Pentecostals. And more and more those strains were converging—in cooperation, in fellowship, in regard for one another. And there was less and less emphasis on history, cultural background, and breadth of influence. This provided more and more unity in the Holy Spirit.

There are dangers, I thought. But only one significant one. It was the danger that a handful of men—in any strain of the Lord’s working—would try to make the Pentecostal-charismatic renewal a “movement” or a “denomination” that they would attempt to control. I was sure that there was not to be one charismatic church or denomination. This renewal was an influence, an inspiration, aimed at all the churches. And it was spiritual. I saw it plainly. Jesus said, “Father, let them be one, as we are one.” He was likening the unity of the church to the unity of the trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They were one, but they were individual at the same time. It was a spiritual unity. And that’s what Jesus wants for His church.

“Glory!” I said aloud into the darkness, addressing myself: “David, you’re now a real ecumeniac!”

“That’s right,” I said back to myself. “I’ll accept nothing less than full ecumenicity—the whole family of nations.”

I closed my eyes and was on the brink of sleep. In my mind's eye, I could see, as plain as life, standing erect and stern before me, a mighty man of God—Smith Wigglesworth. Slowly his sternness gave way to a contented grin.

It was Sunday. I stood before the packed audience at the graduation ceremonies of St. John's University, a Roman Catholic institution administered by monks of the Order of St. Benedict. The president of the university, Dr. Michael Blecker, was reading, nearing the end of a citation. I could see Anna out in the audience.

“In 1974,” he said, “when a group of Catholic and Protestant editors issued a list of eleven ‘shapers and shakers of the Christian faith,’ religious giants, who have challenged the assumptions, rattled the complacency, prodded the unthinking Christian community, your name was included alongside Hans Kung, Bernard Lonergan, and Dom Helder Camara.

“In your ecumenical work you have never compromised your Pentecostal witness. You are every inch a classical Pentecostal, a faithful representative of world Pentecostalism.”

He looked up at me from his reading of the document and smiled.

“We are honored by your presence among us today. In appreciation and recognition of your role as a shaper and shaker of the Christian faith, as a faithful witness of classical Pentecostalism, we, the academic community of St. John's University, present to you on this twenty-third day of May, 1976, the Pax Christi Award.”

The next day, I crossed the Atlantic once again, while Anna returned home, and arrived after the fifth session of the Pentecostal-Roman Catholic dialogue had begun. Since this was the final round of the series started in 1971, it had been arranged for the so-called core group of the dialogues—three classical Pentecostals, three main line Protestants, and three Catholics—to have an audience with Pope Paul VI.

The pope entered the small audience room just off the main audience hall and was told that “this is the Pentecostal dialogue team.”

A smile broke across his face as his eyes passed over us. “Pentecostal,” he said. “Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Halleluia!”

I could hardly believe this was happening.

The pope was then handed a sheet of paper, from which he read:

Dear Brethren,

We are happy to welcome you today.

You have come from certain Pentecostal churches and from Pentecostal movements in other confessions to meet with our Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and its collaborators, in order to reflect together on prayer, on spirituality, and on related aspects of theology. In doing so, you have been dealing with spiritual resources of which the whole human family has urgent need. Your exchanges have been a testimony to the living power of the Spirit of God experienced in the lives of Christians and offered to all who will accept it. You have spoken together of how faithful souls participate in the reality of God. We believe this is a reality which establishes itself among the faithful as a visible communion, so that they are united not only by a spiritual relationship on the level of mystery and the invisible, but also on the visible level of human realities transformed by the Spirit. It is a communion expressed in the fellowship of the Church which seeks always, according to our Lord's will, to become perfect in unity. How untiring all who love this Lord of ours must be in working to overcome all the causes of division and separation that still impede the fullness of this communion.

As you come to the conclusion of the present phase of your work, we shall learn with great interest the outcome of your studies and give attentive consideration to what they indicate for the future of our relationship.

Let us continue to walk together in the paths of understanding and growing Christian love, listening with docility and care to what the Spirit is saying today, and ready to move into his future with joy and trust.

We were then introduced, one by one, to Pope Paul. As I reached him, my name was read aloud. He looked into my face and said, "So you are Mr. Pentecost?"

"That's what they call me," I replied.

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