

LET THE FIRE BURN

LIN CALVERT

Revival in Papua New Guinea

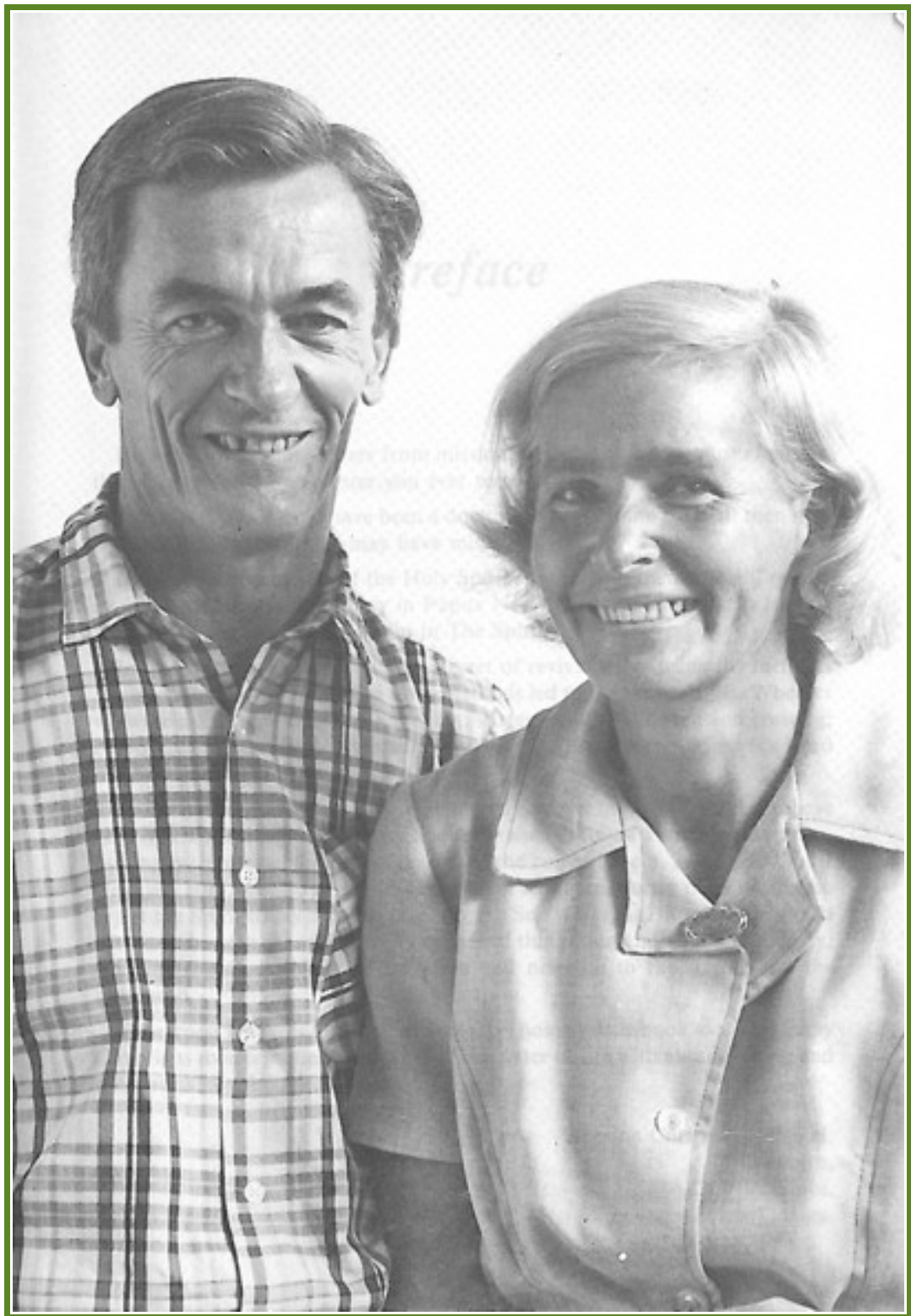


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Chapter 1: Let the Fire Burn

It was an ordinary afternoon 'ward-round' at our bush hospital. A hundred-odd people had settled themselves comfortably on the wide verandah running its full length, and were waiting patiently for their turn to be seen. My husband, Dr Peter, was examining the sick children as they sat in little clusters with their mothers and numerous brothers and sisters. Further along I worked my way steadily through rows of out-patients. Skin diseases thrive in the humid climate of the sago swamps of coastal Papua New Guinea. Leeches, mosquitoes and swarms of sandflies bite mercilessly, while long sago thorns, like bunches of black darning needles, lurk in every stretch of the muddy banks of the Purari Delta. These bites and pricks are often the beginnings of deep tropical ulcers.

Subconsciously, I noted the sound of approaching canoes as the dull boom! boom! of paddles clashing against dug-out hulls came from somewhere up-river. I thought to myself, "That will be the Kinipo team returning." A week earlier we had been surprised to see a canoe-load of Christians arrive at Kapuna. They came from a coastal village some hours' travel from us. Led by a wiry old man, once the village deacon, the rest of the team was made up entirely of young Christians, themselves baptised only a few weeks earlier. Now, on their own initiative, they had decided to take the Gospel to their kinsmen at Kairimai, a village about a mile upstream from the hospital. Kairimai men were well known for fighting and wife-beating, and for harbouring gangs of 'rascals' who stole systematically from trade stores or prowled around townships picking up whatever they could find. The team had asked us to pray for them before they went. Knowing well that unless the Spirit drew the people of Kairimai to Jesus there would be no hope of any harvest that week, Peter and I had gone from one to another, laying hands on each bowed head and asking God to fill them afresh with His Spirit and power. Many began to tremble and speak in tongues as we had prayed, and we were thankful that they were not going out relying on human wisdom, but were relying rather on the power of God to reach their clan brothers.

Now I was wondering what success they had had. A month earlier we had taken a challenging Christmas play up to Kairimai. Only one old man had shown any interest in its message of repentance and the need to accept Jesus as Lord. If the team had to report complete failure I would, of course, be disappointed, but not too surprised. But then, simultaneously, Peter and I realised it was not one canoe coming, it was a whole fleet! As the paddlers came into sight, suddenly, as if with one voice, they all began to sing and shout. The whole hospital poured down to the water's edge to see this marvellous sight. As they sped down the river we could hear the words of their song, a new one to us:

"Let the fire burn! Halleluia! Let the fire burn!

God is moving one more time in the end!"

As they arrived the waterfront became alive with people singing, laughing, shouting, crying and hugging. We stood amazed, quite unable to comprehend what was happening. Gradually we heard their story from Kauoi, the old deacon, and from different members of his teenage team. For a whole week, day and night, they had told their friends about what God had done for them at Kinipo and what He was willing to do for them at Kairimai. That day, the people had gathered to make up their minds about the message. Except for two or three of the older men, all had wanted to receive the wonderful new life they could see bubbling out of the Kinipo Christians. Accordingly, that very morning close on a hundred of them had been baptised, many filled with the Holy Spirit, and many received the new heart of love which made them want to rush

everywhere and share their joy with all their relatives. Some of these relatives were patients at Kapuna so they decided to return with the team and tell everyone here all about it. As they rounded the point above the hospital they looked over to Kapuna and what did they see but flames dancing and leaping over the hospital buildings.

The Kinipo Christians had already seen Pentecostal fire twice before: over their own village when it first accepted the Gospel a few weeks earlier, and then over the first village they had themselves evangelised. Peter and I were almost dumb with amazement. It was unbelievable that God should so bless us with His gracious signs and wonders. The very first song that the Spirit gave in the revival had taken our breath away with its boldness, but now its truth had been confirmed. This is how the song went:

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

Kapuna, home of the Holy Spirit!

Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!

All people, believe in Jesus!"

Now there was yet another 'Home of the Holy Spirit' in the Delta!

As soon as Kauoi had finished his story, the leading men of Kairimai came to offer apologies for all the trouble their village had given to Kapuna. Hands were shaken and tears were shed. Next they asked permission to witness to the patients in the hospital. How gladly Peter gave it. In a very short time the whole of Kapuna was enjoying a spiritual riot! As I walked through the hospital trying to take it all in, these are some of the things I saw:

On the path was a young man praying for an old woman. After the prayer, at his instruction, she began to cut off her anklets and armbands of string, customary wear after the death of a relative. The people had always told us they were just decorations but earlier in the revival the Spirit had said otherwise. A group had been praying for deliverance for a sick man but the Spirit told them that he must first remove his string bands, and his necklace too. As soon as he did so he was set free from his sickness. We had guessed that the real purpose of these decorations was to stop the spirit of a dead person from attacking his relations, and naturally, reliance on evil-spirit charms for protection cuts one off from receiving healing from God.

In one ward I saw an old man unpacking his box. Someone in the village had had a word of knowledge about things the old man had stolen and the man was now giving those things back to their owner.

In another a group prayed for a sick child. When the father, Vai'i Kaipu, saw how much better she was after the prayer, he made a full commitment of his own life. He has since become the leader of the whole Kairimai group, in fact, he is the recognised big brother of us all. His background is interesting. After a good High School education he went to the Administrative College in Port Moresby. On graduation he became the 'kiap' or Patrol Officer at a coastal station to the east of the Delta. He took over from an Australian man and inherited his beautiful house, vehicle, fridge and all the comforts Australians normally enjoy. Some time later he got into trouble and lost his job. He came home to his village, feeling very bitter at the sudden loss of his good income, his authority and all his little luxuries. As head of a large clan he at least had land, and he set to work to take care of his dead father's six wives, his twenty brothers and sisters and his own family of three little girls. Up to this time he had taken no interest at all in the Gospel message. Now, as he saw his little daughter so much better, he discovered a new purpose in living. He had education and authority. He was respected by both Government and village people alike. He could handle troubled situations with diplomacy and sensitivity. That day he began to see how God planned to use his gifts and his life.

What a day to remember! How amazed we were to think that of all the many missionaries who had planted and watered the seed in this area, we alone should now have the great privilege of seeing the harvest. Yet, even more amazingly, when we wrote to those ex-missionaries, telling

them of the wonderful thing God was doing up here, some of them figuratively shook their heads, and warned us that what we were seeing might be madness due to evil spirits. Our daughter wisely advised us, "Don't be too hard on them, Mum and Dad, they never saw the things you are seeing. Even I just couldn't believe it when you told me about it. I had to see it with my own eyes before I could accept that God had really visited, of all the most stubborn people in Papua New Guinea, those in the Delta." A touring Mission Secretary from England once wrote in his report; "The people of the Delta have mud deeply embedded in their souls. Now I know the real meaning of the phrase 'a fallen world'." Yet we were finding that neither ignorance nor illiteracy, a life ruled by fear of evil spirits nor years of failure to hear the whole Gospel preached, could keep a people from enjoying the same magnificent outpouring of God's Spirit that the whole world is experiencing today.

Chapter 2: Salt without its Saviour

"You cannot lead where you will not go; you cannot teach what you do not know; what you do not have you cannot give; you can't share a life you refuse to live."

In 1941 I was a school girl at a Christian college in Masterton, New Zealand. I was in the group who were being prepared for confirmation, yet I was full of unasked and unanswered questions. I had put off requesting to become a church member for as long as I decently could. Communion was held four times a year and this would be the last one I would attend while at school. I had no wish to go to a strange congregation after leaving school and ask to join the church there, so obviously now was the time to do something, yet I still felt dissatisfied and unhappy. Some months before, a missionary's wife had spoken to the school and her appeal had led me to give my whole life to the Lord. Sitting up in bed one night after 'lights out' I had promised I would be a missionary one day, but I did not see any relationship between that moment and what I was doing now. Neither did I think of a day in the far past as having any special importance.

When I was a little girl of six or seven, I found a tract left behind by some Salvation Army Officer, riding a lonely circuit around the hill country farms of Gisborne. At the back of the little folded card was the challenging question, "Have you been born again? You can give your life to Jesus today. Just repeat this simple prayer, write your name on the card and take it to someone you know. Tell them you have become a follower of Jesus today." In childish scrawl I wrote my name on the dotted line and took the card to my mother. Too shy to say anything I pulled her dress as she stood at the sink peeling potatoes, then waved the card for her to see. She smiled at me and humoured my quaint ideas but no doubt found me somewhat of a puzzle, with my strange desire to talk about Jesus and ask questions about Him.

My parents were God-fearing and bought many Bible story books for us three children, but I never saw either of them read the Bible, neither did they ever bring up the subject of salvation to us. I remember asking two questions of my mother when she was kneeling by our enamelled tin tub to bath me. The first was, "How can God and Jesus be the same yet different?" She answered, "Just like two pennies are the same yet different," an answer that still seems to me as wise as that given by most theologians. The second one was a question all children ask, "What is this funny lump in the middle of my tummy?" Again she seemed to be given a word of wisdom, "That is where God finished you off when He made you." She conjured up for me a picture of a big man pouring a small baby into its empty skin and tying a little knot to tidy it off, again so close to the truth no other answer could have been better.

I do not know whether it was because of the commitment made on the small card or not, but all Bible story books had a strong fascination for me. I would coax my mother to read to me "Little Christian's Pilgrimage" with its harrowing stories of the fight with Apollyon, the death of Faithful and the imprisonment in the Castle of Giant Despair. Even though I was hearing it for perhaps the twentieth time no sooner would she begin than the tears would pour down my cheeks. Nevertheless, I would beg her to go on so that eventually we might reach the Palace Beautiful or the Delectable Fields or even the Celestial City.

Yet real as Jesus was to me as a Man in a story book, I had not met Him for myself. In fact I can only recall one prayer I ever made, apart from the nightly "Our Father". On that occasion I was doing the spring chore I loved very much: checking on the lambing ewes in a large paddock

with a swamp held in the hollow of its three hills. On this particular day a sheep had ventured too far into the mud, searching for the watercress they loved to nibble. Her long wool had become heavy with mud and water and she could find no firm footing to lever her way out, for all the world like Christian in the Slough of Despond. I waded in and tried to lift her out but in typical sheepish fashion she immediately ceased her struggles and left me to do it all. I strained my small muscles but could not lift even her front legs up. I remembered how Christian cried out for help when fighting his battles, so instead of going home to get my older brother to pull it out, I decided to pray. I knelt down in the grass and asked Jesus to give me the strength I needed. Then I leapt back into the mud, gave an enormous heave, and dragged the soggy mess to the bank. Mindful of a stupid sheep's tendency to repeat her stupidity, I waited till the water stopped trickling out of her wool and walked her a safe distance away from the lagoon, then continued joyfully on my way. There was Someone there who answered prayer!

Now, even though I had been at a Christian college for two years, I seemed no nearer to really knowing Jesus than I was in those childhood years. No-one had asked me why I wanted to be confirmed. The Headmistress had simply said, "I think that would be nice, Lin. Come up to my study to the confirmation class that meets tonight." She spoke to us about the meaning of Communion and how one should approach it but it was just assumed that anyone who wanted to be a Christian could become one by following the proper rites and ceremonies of the church, approval by the session and the right hand of fellowship, after saying "yes" to the standard questions. Repentance, confession, water baptism and a changed life were not mentioned, and of course in those days baptism in the Spirit had not even been heard of in churches such as the one I was joining.

The minister had paid the official visit to the class and this would be the last chance I would have to speak to anyone about the many things I wanted to know. I stopped him in the corridor and came out with the only question I could think of that seemed relevant to the situation.

"I was christened in the Methodist church," I stammered, "do you think I should be baptised again, or is that alright?"

He laughed jovially, "Oh quite alright, the only churches we don't agree with are the ones who put them right under. We say they should go under and stay there!" It was meant to be a good joke, and I laughed with him, but inside I felt cold. Was this, I thought, all it meant to be a Christian, joining one group that made fun of the other groups?

The big class was duly confirmed one Saturday evening at the pre-communion service and the elders all shook hands with us and we came home again. As we got ready for bed the other girls were laughing and talking about the event.

"Did you notice the boy sitting opposite us, wasn't he just too good-looking for words?"

"Him? Oh no, there was a much better-looking one sitting just in front of me..."

Again I felt cold inside. Was this all there was to being a Christian, just joining a group who said the right words and did the right things but whose hearts were far away, thinking of other things entirely?

Some time later during my University days, I was asked at a Bible Class camp to lead a study group on the work of the Holy Spirit. I read the required study book, gave the required teaching, and received the congratulations of the camp leader. Her kind words added to my guilt. What a hypocrite I was! I realised I knew nothing about what I was teaching - but then it was quite obvious no-one else knew any more than I did, so perhaps I was just normal.

But one teaching at that camp did come home to me. Someone spoke on the need to be willing to do whatever God wants us to. I knew I had started my medical course without giving God a chance to say what He wanted me to do with my life. Could I bring myself to give it all up if He

should ask me to? I knew I had to give Him the chance, so one afternoon I went away by myself to a grassy hill and told the Father I was willing to give up my plans to be a doctor if He wanted me to. For the first time in my life He seemed to come close to me and speak to me, saying, "I only wanted you to surrender your plan that I might bless it and give it back to you." For years this word from the Lord gave me much comfort as I worked my way through the six-year course. Surely if His plans were my plans then He would help me to pass the exams. I made a promise to Him that I would not study on Sundays but on those days I would do my best to serve Him, that is, I would help with Sunday School and the Christian student group. The night our results came out I stood on the roof of St Margaret's hostel, our billet while sitting finals, and gazed around Dunedin's golden horizons, praising God for so wonderfully keeping His side of the bargain. Surely exciting things would begin to happen now!

However, two years later I was I felt, making no further progress in my Christian life. I attended services faithfully, 'gave of my substance', took the sacraments and spoke of my belief in the Lord when I had the opportunity, but I found no real fellowship in any of the churches I attended. Just a handshake at the door and a very occasional invitation to a meal. Worse still, I was no closer to knowing the Lord as a person. Only a strong sense of duty kept me still praying and reading the Bible regularly. When I would ask myself what my life's goal was, memories of stirring missionary tales would always come to mind. Yet somehow I was afraid to apply to a missionary society to actually go. Other missionaries' calls and experiences were not mine. Would it work for me? Would God bless me as He blessed Dr Ida Scudder, my own particular heroine? And operating in a hot climate by the light of a lamp. Could I cope with things like that?

And again, what about that pleasant young medical student, working at the same hospital as I was, but as yet only in his final year? Although we were three years apart in the medical course, this was because he had been in England several years, serving in the 2nd World War as a navigator in the Air Force. He had begun a law career before going overseas but on the troopship coming home he had realised he had lost all interest in law. Instead, rather to his own surprise he began to think of medicine as a career. The reason for the surprise was that before going overseas, a medical career had never entered his mind. In fact, as a small boy he had made history in his cub pack during a First Aid talk. When the pack leader mentioned the word 'blood' he tumbled to the ground in a faint!

We had met a number of times at Medical School, as his sister was a good friend of mine, and now it was clear we both enjoyed each other's company very much. I knew I should lay it all before the Lord and trust His guidance, but I had no idea how to get guidance. So one evening I prayed, "Lord, I refuse to marry anyone unless you give me really clear directions to do it." How He did it I do not know, but when I woke the next morning I was perfectly sure I was to marry Peter. The doubt and confusion of one day became inner certainty and peace the next.

Just a few days after he graduated we were married and soon we began to look around for our life's work. A letter from the London Missionary Society arrived just as we were leaving one day to go to see a film. I have forgotten the film but will never forget the letter which we read in the interval. "Kapuna is situated in the low-lying swampy delta country of Papua. There would be plenty of opportunity for your wife to share in the medical work. There has been no doctor there for a year. A nursing sister is taking care of the hospital until we can find one." That sounded fine, just what we wanted, but there was just one small problem -- we were not quite sure where Papua was! After the film we went to the public library and found a map. Of course, (as everyone should realise!) Papua is the bottom quarter of the right half of the big island of New Guinea.

We wrote that we were very interested in the position and we were accepted at once. Soon we moved to Sydney, to do a diploma in tropical medicine at the University. Peter's mother went with us to mind our two year old daughter Valerie so that I could be away all day at the medical school. Every Sunday we would go off to one church or another. We tried nearly all the churches within walking distance of our rented house, and found them all very similar to New Zealand churches, and equally as unlike the church as it is described in the New Testament.

We remembered how our minister back in Newtown had once organised a mission among the congregation, putting us into teams to go out to the people of that area. We met to read the book of Acts before we went to our allotted houses to invite the people to Church. He preached excellent sermons on the need for accepting Christ as Saviour. I particularly remember his final one, when he said, "For five nights we have been imagining that Jesus is the prisoner and we are the judge. We have sat back leisurely deciding whether or not He really is the Son of God. Tonight I want you to realise that in fact the situation is exactly the opposite. It is you who are the prisoner, it is Jesus who is the judge and it is He who is deciding whether or not you belong to Him. Is He going to judge in your favour tonight?" It was Lloyd Geering at his best. Yet in spite of much well-meant effort the whole mission resulted in only a few more families joining the congregation, and none of us fooled ourselves into thinking they had 'found the Lord'. Presbyterians just didn't talk that way in New Zealand. Nor did they in Australia either.

We completed our diplomas, and our first son was born very conveniently in the week between lectures ending and examinations starting. Then the mission board arranged a valedictory service for us. Looking back on it, we see so well the deficiencies in this system of choosing and sending out missionaries. We were not chosen by our church or by a praying group as Paul and Barnabas were. We made the decision to be missionaries all by ourselves. We had not proved ourselves as soul winners. We had not even been filled with the Spirit, the normal experience of every new Christian in Paul's day. Yet there we were, still hoping God could do the same things through us as He did through the first disciples. And praise the Lord, He did - eventually, but not until we had learnt many hard lessons.

Our first thoughts when we reached Kapuna were that here at last we had found a spiritual church. There was a Seekers' class for those wanting church membership; a Sunday school for the children led by a national Pastor; a Sunday service where we could take our turn in preaching; morning and evening prayers every day, prayers in the kitchens, prayers in the wards, prayers everywhere. Missionaries came and went, overseas secretaries clucked over our problems of transport and supplies, and New Zealand friends kept sending us parcels and telling us what a marvellous work we were doing. We went home on leave and dutiful supporters came to our meetings. They asked among other things, how we cooked taro and what the mosquitoes were like. They raised money to help us buy a jet boat for the medical work, so naturally we talked a lot about that when we went home to New Zealand the second time.

When thoughts about the harvest and the works of power rose up, it was easy to push them out of mind again. "It is best not to take Paul's letters too literally," we argued. "After all, you can't put the clock back. This is the twentieth century and you can't expect people to believe the Bible in this scientific day." There were some new converts, won painfully by much teaching and some pressure, I fear, but they never converted anyone else. In fact when I commented on this to a missionary wife, she said, "Aren't you expecting far too much? I would be really surprised if village Christians ever taught anyone else to be a Christian. That's the pastor's job." Another missionary wife complained to me, "The people don't seem to appreciate what we have to offer." I asked bluntly, "And what is it we have to offer?" After a minute's thought she said, "Spiritual comfort."

Yes, it is true, the Holy Spirit is the comforter of the persecuted but that certainly didn't describe our situation. The missionary was the honoured person at feasts, at Government, school and medical gatherings and everyone spoke well of him. Also, the need of the people was not for comfort. They were not persecuted either. Their need was for power. Power over the evil spirits that ruled their lives. Power over the sins of their ancestors to which they were still in bondage. We had no answer to their needs. Many in our church denied there was such a need. The church's Bible College taught that Satan and evil spirits were not real at all, just graphic descriptions of evil thoughts.

However, we did everything we could to generate at least some power in our own little Kapuna congregation. We continually reformed, restructured, re-planned and re-organised our timetables and our methods. We persuaded the District Minister to try baptism by immersion. He did but it made no difference. We threw ourselves into youth groups and women's fellowships, prayer meetings, indigenising the services, Bible translation, writing a new hymn book, making the services more lively using drums and ukuleles. As the writer of Ecclesiastes says, "It was all in vain, just like chasing the wind." Nothing changed, nothing ever happened, and worst of all, no-one except us seemed to see that there was a problem at all. The scapegoat was always 'the people'. "The people are very hard. Everyone knows the Delta. It is a very hard place to work."

Looking back on it, I see our situation as very similar to a story I once read, about a load of coconuts that were accidentally dropped in the Arctic. The Eskimos picked up one each. They shook them and decided there was only water in them. No-one knew how to husk a coconut and at last everyone threw their coconuts away. Everyone except one. He said, "They must be valuable or people wouldn't take them from country to country." A missionary from tropical parts was visiting the village and the Eskimo brought out his coconut to see if the stranger knew anything about it. The missionary was delighted to show him how to husk it, perhaps using a harpoon wedged fast in the ice. While everyone watched breathlessly, he tapped it around its equator and then enjoyed the amazement and pleasure of the people as he cut off slivers of sweet meat for them to chew. We were like that Eskimo, convinced there must be something really valuable hidden in the Bible, even though none of our fellow missionaries could show us how to find it. In fact some seemed to be almost at the stage of throwing theirs away. That, at least, we resolved we would never do.

Chapter 3: The Fire Falls

A man went into a shop and asked for an encyclopaedia, which he had seen advertised. By mistake, the assistant gave him only Volume One. A little later the man was proudly showing his purchase to a friend. The friend exclaimed, "But they have given you only Volume One! You should go back and ask for Volume Two as well." Of course his friend was delighted to be told that he could get another wonderful book, without having to pay any more money. He hurried straight off to the bookshop and came home even more excited, for Volume Two explained so many of the things he had not understood in Volume One.

This is Watchman Nee's perfect picture of the gift of salvation (Volume One) and the gift of the Spirit (Volume Two) and of the way many Christians throughout the world reacted when the charismatic wave began to lap the shores of their churches - they wanted Volume Two as well! The wave arrived at Kapuna in the form of books and a tape. The books were well-known ones: John Sherrill's "They Speak With Other Tongues", and Dennis Bennett's "Nine O'Clock in the Morning". The tape was "The Lordship of Christ" by Juan Carlos Ortiz. These whetted our family's appetite for more, and Peter and I began to read all the books about the Holy Spirit we could lay hands on. We prayed for the Baptism for ourselves but nothing seemed to happen. Our oldest son was baptised in the Spirit in New Zealand but when we asked him to pray for us he felt he was too new in the experience himself to do so. At that time it was commonly thought the gift was best received at big meetings with a 'Peter' or a 'John' present. A nursing sister who was working here had had the experience, but she also had never prayed for anyone else to receive it and was not keen to start.

On holiday in New Zealand we visited the Apostolic Church in George Street, Dunedin, our first experience of a Pentecostal church. It was the time of the Billy Graham crusade and the pastor announced, "Colin has something to share with us." Our small Colin asked in a horrified whisper, "He doesn't mean me does he, Mum?" I quickly reassured him but he was still much relieved when a tall young man came up and told his story. He had been giving out invitations to the Crusade and at one house he had had no answer to his knock. The door was not locked and, obedient to the Spirit, he walked in. There he found an old lady lying on a sofa unable to get up because of her swollen painful ankle. So he offered to pray for her and she accepted. After the prayer she was much better. As he finished his story everyone said "Praise the Lord!" and 'Colin' sat down again. Then quite uninvited and unannounced an elderly lady came charging forward down the aisle. The pastor really gaped as she waved her umbrella at him and said, "Let me tell you the whole story now. I am that little old lady. I came here just to show you my ankle. Watch me!" And she ran up and down the aisle to show us how healed it was, just like a Kathryn Kuhlman healing story! During that furlough we visited as many denominations as we could, but this was the only church where we saw the power of God at work. From that time on, as well as going to our own denomination, we began to attend Pentecostal services whenever we could.

Back home at Kapuna we continued to read and discuss and ponder. There were so many arguments about how one received the Spirit. It seemed that the churches who normally rarely mentioned the Spirit, had suddenly realised they must brush up their Trinity theology and so books on the subject were pouring out of Christian bookshops of all persuasions. Some said there was nothing happening that anyone needed to make a fuss about, it was already all in their books of doctrine. Many said everyone in their church had the baptism of the Spirit anyway, because it was automatically received at confirmation, or baptism, or whenever their church taught that one

became a Christian. They argued, "Paul says we are not Christians unless we have the Spirit, and we are Christians so of course we have the Spirit." In our estimation these arguments were quite unsatisfying. It was just as plain as could be that neither Peter nor I had had anything that even faintly resembled the experiences we had been reading about. Neither had we ever seen anyone in our church receive any spiritual gift at baptism or confirmation.

Another view was that you should ask for it and then receive it by waiting patiently. We felt we had waited quite long enough, much longer than the Samaritans had. Perhaps, we thought, it was not a gift for everyone. That would be a good way of escaping with dignity from doing any more about receiving it. Acts 2:39 was the answer to that excuse. Other theories were that the whole phenomenon was, at worst Satanic, or at best, a psychological trick. We could not accept this either. The stories in Kathryn Kuhlman's books (eg. "I Believe in Miracles" and "God Can Do It Again") were sufficient proof that there was again a mighty power from God at work in the world, to save, to heal and to bring light into dark lives. We decided not to give up until we had found it for ourselves and not only for ourselves, but also for all the people who depended on us to find the streams of living water that they too needed so badly.

It took about three years of searching before I found the answer to the problem of how to receive the Spirit if there was no-one available to pray with you. One of the reasons for my persistence was that God had kindly given me one special sign that the gift was real and that the gift was for me. Every time I prayed for it my lips would begin to tingle and continue to do so for a minute or more. At first I ignored it, thinking it just a coincidence, but it happened so often I knew there was a close connection between the Spirit filling me and His use of my lips. The helpful book that supplied the key was Robert Frost's "Aglow with the Spirit." Like many others I had thought that a miniature tape recorder would simply start up one day if I just opened my mouth and prayed for something to happen. Now I learnt that I must speak whatever word He gave me and He would do the rest. I tried it and managed a couple of sounds, "mubu" and that was all. Undeterred I tried again next evening. This particular evening I set my lips to say "Mubu, mubu," while I fixed my mind on Jesus Himself. Suddenly, a strange new language came pouring out! I had never heard anyone speaking in tongues, and had no idea the words would tumble out so fast or so freely.

It is indeed a great blessing to be on the receiving end of God's power line but suddenly I realised it also brings an awesome responsibility. As I rolled into bed that night two things struck me: first that the whole Bible was much truer than I had thought, and secondly, that I had suddenly lost my many excuses for not carrying out all the Lord's commands.

It was not long before Peter noticed something had happened to me. I began to get up early in the morning to pray. My prayer times were much longer than before. He warned me rather anxiously "not to overdo it" but I felt there was no way I could overdo this drinking from the river of life. Soon it seemed the right time to tell him all about it and not long afterwards he asked me to pray for him. Although he did not speak in tongues at the time, he said, "I'm not going to pray for the Spirit again, I know something has happened." It was one day some weeks later that he received the tongues. As he was walking along the beach on patrol, he was praising God for the beauty of the sea and sky and suddenly he found himself using a new language to do it.

We began to share enthusiastically about the wonderful new way God was moving in the world. Still our hearers did not seem to understand that this new life was for them too. They were quite satisfied with Volume One, Repentance and Salvation, and had little desire to claim Volume Two, a new Spirit and a new life. For a long time we spoke of these things and would invite anyone interested to come for prayer to receive the Spirit. Only one came and she did not

actually receive the baptism. We ourselves had had a long time of preparation and study, now we learnt they must also have the same thing.

In the meantime other tapes and books, especially Derek Prince's and Juan Carlos Ortiz' tapes, and Pat Boone's "A New Song", had convinced us that scripturally baptism was to be carried out as soon as the new convert believed. As Ananias said to Paul, "Why wait?" (Acts 22:16). However, at this stage we had the circuit minister living at Kapuna and he, of course, was bound to carry out the rules of the church. A decision of the region to divide the church circuit in half changed everything. The circuit minister's house was now resited many miles away and we were left as the leaders of the Kapuna congregation. From now on, if we thought the Christian meetings were dull or fruitless, there was no-one to blame but ourselves.

One day an orderly came to see us and said he wanted to join the church. We wrote to the new circuit minister and he promised to drop in sometime when visiting villages up this way. Months passed and he did not come. The young man fell into sin and was dismissed and no doubt some said "Just as well he didn't become a church member, he would have brought disgrace on the church." Our feeling was, "But it shouldn't be like that. He should have been baptised and so received power to overcome temptation." We knew it was the custom in the local church to 'save up baptisms' for big events such as a church opening or an important visitor's arrival. We knew how the convert's early and meaningful experience of God had often become dim by the time his baptism was arranged. Also we knew that in God's eyes, no event was as important as a sinner repenting. We decided to 'rebel' against our church customs and follow the New Testament instead. We had read somewhere, "You can't expect New Testament results unless you follow New Testament methods." We admitted to ourselves that the methods we had been following for the last 25 years had had about as much result as a hen sitting on a china egg. Now we would see if anything more would happen if we followed the Book of Acts instead.

The first opportunity came in January 1976 when three nurses asked for baptism. I prayed earnestly for guidance in the matter. I remembered as I opened my eyes from the prayer, they fell on a newspaper cutting lying on the floor. It read: "First women priests ordained in Anglican Church". Somehow it seemed a confirmation from the Lord that He was not only accepting women to do His work, but even letting them be pioneers in it. I tried many innovations in my first baptismal 'service'. I made a white and gold 'robe of righteousness' to put on the newly baptised people as they came out of the water. We sang choruses as they went down into the river and as they came up. In the evening we made a small 'birthday party' for them at which they gave their testimony and we also invited them to share this at the next Sunday service. I spent much time in prayer with them before the baptism and we all shared communion on the river bank straight after it. I also started a Testimony and Roll book in which each new convert wrote her story so that others could read it and be encouraged.

Over the next eighteen months we saw a 'chain reaction' to those first 'why wait?' baptisms, as twenty-six others came, frequently saying, "It was when I saw my friend in the river that I knew I should be there too." We were hoping some would receive the Spirit spontaneously, but none did. We waited and waited for God to do something about this, but at last it dawned on us that actually He was waiting for us. Before the people could ask, they must believe, and before they could believe they must know.

Not long after Easter 1977, we decided to hold a "Seminar on the Holy Spirit" lasting for the ten days between Ascension Day and Pentecost. Almost everyone came to the first meeting, but only fourteen came to the next. Those fourteen were like Gideon's army, really ready to get into the battle. In the mornings we studied the work of the Spirit in the Old and New Testaments. In the evenings we looked at the meaning of full commitment. We spent much time on repentance, writing down all the sins that came to our mind from childhood up. These papers we burnt after

accepting God's forgiveness for them all. Another night we shared the sad things that had left a bitter taste, either when we were children, at school or since coming to Kapuna. We told God we had forgiven all those who had hurt us and that we would not hold any anger against them any more. Another time we wrote down all our possessions and dedicated everything to God, acknowledging His right to take it all away from us if He wished to. We looked at the problem of completely committing our lives to God as far as marriage was concerned. I was thankful I could honestly say I myself had done just this and how wonderfully happy I had been as a result. We talked about being willing to give 24 hours of our day to the Lord, not speaking of 'my holiday' and 'my off duty' any more. We discussed the right use of our possessions, especially cassette players and radios. Lastly, we talked of three of Jesus' commands: "Love one another", "Give up all you have" and "Go and tell". All fourteen girls went all the way with everything I said and none turned back because they felt the standard Jesus laid down for His disciples was too high.

On Whitsunday evening the fifteen of us gathered in an empty classroom to pray. We sat in a circle on the floor and after a time of praise and worship I asked them one by one if they were ready to let God's Spirit take full control of their lives. Seven said "yes" but seven were still not sure, so the first seven made a smaller circle while the others looked on. I asked the Lord where to start and He said "Start with Tugume." I knelt behind her, put my hands lightly on her hair and she and I together asked Jesus to baptise her in the Spirit and thanked Him He was doing so. Straightaway she began to breathe fast and cry out, "Praise the Lord!" Then she rolled on the floor laughing! Somewhat disconcerted I asked her to be quiet while I prayed for the next. Afterwards she told us that she had seen a bright light and a Voice said, "Your sins are forgiven. I accept you and your room is ready here." She was so filled with happiness at this message she just couldn't help laughing for joy. The next three were much quieter but the last three all acted like Tugume, obviously much moved. After praise and thanks to Jesus, they shared what they had seen or heard. Kusunu had seen a bright light coming in the window and then a man in white had entered the room. His hands were outstretched and written on His palms were the words, "Do not sin again. This is your last chance." She knew the sin he meant was making her face hard to her friends. This girl later married a Christian orderly and at the time of the forming of the Kapuna Fellowship there was a prophecy that the couple would be real leaders for the Lord's work, and so indeed they have been. Another heard Jesus say to her, "Don't write that letter." She knew He meant a really nasty letter she was planning to write to a friend of hers. She also spoke in tongues and so did some of the others. Our quiet little four-foot-nothing Sister who comes from Coastal Papua was as carried away as any of the excitable Highlanders. She became quite chokey, weeping tears of joy and praising God in a new tongue. She too became one of the strong leaders in the revival that followed. Of course the seven who had received the Spirit wanted their friends to know the same joy they had found and after it was over they all began to say, "You people should have asked for the Spirit too." In chorus they all cried "We will! We will!"

A week later we met again to pray for the other seven. At this meeting one girl stayed 'in the Spirit' and we could not get her to 'come to earth again'. So we decided to 'drain some power off her' by letting her lay her hands on the sick. A girl called Teben volunteered as she had had bad backache for several months. As Hahire sat there with face uplifted, eyes closed and still speaking in tongues, we put her hands on Teben's back. Immediately Teben began to roll around the floor laughing, "It's gone! It's gone!" Another girl, Elizabeth, said "Me too! I've got malaria." Her fever and headache disappeared right away. How full of praises to God we were. Again many had had visions: One saw the Book of Life with Tugume's name at the top of the page, while another saw us all in heaven.

Naturally the whole hospital was stirred by these happenings and many patients began to come asking for baptism in water. After a further teaching time we held a third meeting for the rest of

the nurses, and for the first patient to ask for the Baptism in the Spirit. This time the Spirit really taught me a lesson: the girls began to receive the Spirit long before I reached them, and I found they could perfectly easily find the Spirit's blessing by their own prayers and those of their friends. One of the nurses shook very violently this time and three of us quickly agreed it was an evil spirit. It left her as soon as we commanded it to go in Jesus' name. Another girl, Sere, actually saw Jesus present with us and was disturbed that the rest of us couldn't see Him. At last she said, "He is going now. There He goes walking across the grass."

As John Sherrill puts it so well, in his book "They Speak With Other Tongues": "I felt like a man who had stooped to pet a kitten and finds his hand on a tiger." We were full of a deep happiness and yet we were also afraid. Where would this Tiger lead us before He was through?

Chapter 4: Raw Recruits

Looking back on God's strategy, it seems that He spent the next six months preparing His troops for the many battles ahead. Although we now had plenty of keen Christians, some had parts of their armour missing, others had no skill in wielding swords or shields.

This chapter tells of God's attention to detail. When He reviews His troops not a button must be missing. A message might be lost from a pocket with no button. Not a stain must be seen on those who wear the uniform of the King of kings. It would suggest the wearer is careless of the gift His Captain has given him.

It was around this time a niggling doubt began to surface in Peter's mind, and quite independently, in mine too. We preached water baptism, we taught water baptism and we performed water baptism, but neither of us had been baptised in water. About a dozen of our Christians too, had only been baptised either 'with the finger' as people here call sprinkling, or by pouring. It was not that there was any shortage of water or that they had been too sick, it was just the custom in our church. Putting away any thoughts that arose from fear of what others would say or think, we tried to sort out the problem at mind level.

Our first argument was: If God accepts us by pouring out His Spirit on us, doesn't that show that water baptism doesn't matter? In Spirit, Cornelius arose and rebuked us (Acts 10:47).

We tried another rationalisation. We had baptised many people already and God had blessed our converts by filling them with the Spirit. Didn't that prove He was satisfied with us? No, we had to confess, that proved He was satisfied with the converts, but not necessarily with us.

We checked again the Bible verses on believer's baptism. Perhaps we would find some escape clause for two leaders such as us! We had heard the arguments for infant baptism many times and they always seemed singularly weak. Two verses, Matthew 19:14 and 28:19, taken from totally different contexts, and put together to prove a point! All the same, we too had once accepted that provided people received Jesus as Lord sometime or other, the method and the timing of baptism part didn't really matter.

A Bible-teaching seminar in Port Moresby opened my eyes to the gap between what Jesus taught and what we had been told. The leader explained that the translators of the King James Bible were instructed by the King not to translate the Greek word for 'dip' or 'immerse' into English, but to transliterate the sound of the Greek word instead. The object of this, apparently, was to avoid upsetting the bishops who, for hundreds of years, had taught that 'baptise' meant "the ceremonial use of water to signify cleansing from sin." By agreeing to use the Greek word 'baptise' instead of the English word 'dip', the translators lost the comparison Matthew, Mark, Luke and Peter (Acts 11:16) were all so careful to make: "John immersed people in water, Jesus will (or does) immerse people in the Spirit." Could it have been that when only a token amount of water began to be used, then only a token amount of Holy Spirit began to be received?

My first reaction to this was real indignation. Tricked! And by the very people dedicated to putting God's Word into man's language! I felt particularly unhappy because (when translating Mark and Luke) I had fallen into the same trap, using 'bapatiso' instead of the Iai word for 'dip' or wash. The Bible Society's Translator's Handbook for Mark gives the English meaning of 'baptise' as "dip, bathe, immerse" but advises lower down, "The translator should not ... construct a new phrase which will in its evident meaning rule out any major Christian constituency." A

recommended solution in the Handbook is to translate 'baptise' as "to dedicate by water". As far as I was concerned the cat was out of the bag!

Through the translators' compromise with the truth, the churches had been able to conceal the fact that they were not carrying out Jesus' instructions at all. Worse still, the main point of the illustration had been lost, that is, that baptism primarily illustrates how we are filled with the Spirit (John 1:33).

But the question of what we should do next still remained. Our parents, doing the best they knew for us, had us sprinkled as babies. We had done the same for our four. Three of our children had already put the matter right for themselves. Should we now do the same? It was Jamie Buckingham's book "Risky Living", that finally convicted us. His problem was slightly different from ours. He had indeed been immersed, but while still an unbeliever. God told him his baptism was 'out of order' because he should have believed before he was baptised. That settled it for us. If he was out of order so were we, and we well knew God is a God of order.

That very week we decided to literally take the plunge. First we went to the nurses and orderlies and told them our plan. Much to our surprise, nearly all those not river-baptised joyfully shouted "Me too!" The first to be baptised was Peter. He chose Ivei to baptise him. Ivei had been the first of the men to be baptised by Peter. Here is part of the testimony Ivei gave at that time:

"I was brought up on a rubber plantation at Kikori. My father was an old man with no Christian experience. I went to Ihu vocational school and became worse, drinking beer, playing cards for money and not controlling my mouth, which is a big sin in God's eyes. I worked in a store and gave things to old people who didn't have the full money. I knew I was in debt and the store wasn't making any profit. Then one day the canoe sank and I lost all my money. I realised money is not God. God wanted to use me in other work." Ivei is now a member of the Gulf Provincial Government and is seeking to work with other Christians like himself who know that money is not God.

Ivei asked Peter, "Doctor, do you believe Jesus is the Son of God?" He answered, "I have believed that for a long time."

"Why have you come down to the river then?"

Peter replied in Jesus' own words (Matt. 3:15), "Because I want to do all that God requires."

It was my turn next. I am no swimmer and hate having my head under the surface as water always seems to go up my nose making it sore for some time afterwards. Yet when Peter baptised me no water went up or in or down. What a tender Father to attend to such a tiny detail. Then I baptised Sister Kana, and she baptised the next nurse while Peter baptised the next orderly, and so on until all twelve of us were in the river rejoicing with those on the bank.

One strange happening occurred that day. A pastor's wife, Pairama, was watching the baptisms intently when someone standing behind her said, "That's good. That's the way we used to do it in the old days." She glanced behind and saw an old lady there, dressed in traditional fashion with a string bag around her head. She said, "Wait till the baptisms are over and I will talk to you." But later when she turned to talk to her, the old lady had completely vanished! It seemed to us that God was giving her an assurance that the Christians of the previous generation, now in heaven, were pleased with the new ways.

A little later two of our Highland nurses wanted to be baptised. When they wrote to their home churches for permission, one was allowed and one was refused. The second nurse, Yuguli, decided to be obedient to her mission-appointed leader and was not baptised. A week or two after this the nurses gathered for a Christian Endeavour meeting and again Jesus appeared to Sere, the same girl who saw Jesus so clearly when she received the Spirit.

Jesus said to her, "Now you keep quiet. I am going to do the talking. Here are the messages you are to give." He then gave her about a dozen messages. Three concerned baptism and one of these was for the girl who had decided not to be baptised.

He said, "Tell Yuguli she has given herself to me, but not all of herself." When Sere passed on this message Yuguli couldn't wait to get down to the water!

Another message was like this, "Go to one of the patients called Henao and tell her I have forgiven her sins and she must be baptised." Henao (not her real name), was an unmarried mother and we had been doubtful about baptising her, but after this message we did so.

The third was especially helpful. "Don't listen to Kau'u or her husband. They are only pretending to be interested. They hope one of you will give them food. They don't want My gifts." This message referred to a patient who had appeared to me to be quite anxious to hear the Gospel, but clearly her heart was not right and she never became a Christian.

Perhaps a dream and two visions may help to show why we feel that baptising new believers is so important that we do not assure any that their names are written in the Book of Life until after this is done. The dream was told to us by a coastal nurse called Aivai.

"Many people were walking along a road. They came to a waterfall and the road ran underneath it. The orderlies and nurses said, 'Our road passes under the waterfall. We must pass under it too.' The others said, 'No, there is a track around it. We will go that way.' When they met on the other side, those who had avoided the waterfall were suffering from the very hot sun. Their skin seemed dried up. Those who walked through the water were no longer wet, they were just cool and refreshed. Some of those who had avoided the waterfall the first time then decided to go back and go through it too." Aivai's dream reminded me of the incident in Pilgrim's Progress when Ignorance reached the Celestial City. He had not bothered to enter the Way by the Wicket Gate and so he had never received a roll, which was a personal message from the Prince. Because of this he was turned away at the City gates. Obviously, in Bunyan's thinking, short cuts in order to avoid discomforts were not acceptable to the King.

The next vision is one Sere saw. She was the girl used so much in prophecy. "As I was coming up out of the river after baptising the women, I saw two angels. They were rolling a large stone down the slope into the river. Then I saw Jesus standing there with a Book in His hand. It was the Book of Life, and Jesus was writing the two ladies' names in the Book."

I asked her, "Sere, what did He write with?"

"He wrote with His finger," she told me. "Light streamed off His finger and the names were written in light."

We felt this vision showed that names may be written in the Book of Life after public confession of faith and baptism, rather than after just believing and repenting.

Andama, another nurse through whom many prophetic visions and dreams have come, told us this vision she had. "I saw Jesus come down with many many angels. Each nurse began to dance with her own angel.

'You people are happy but what about the unsaved ones?' Jesus said to us.

'But we have told them many times,' I answered. 'What else can we say to them?'

He told me, 'Ask them if they have been baptised. If they say "yes", ask them if it was by the sign only. If they say it was by the sign, tell them they have to be baptised in water and in the Spirit and not by the sign only. You cannot enter the Kingdom by the sign only.' "

Some, including myself, have been shocked by Jesus' words. Some doubt if I recorded the message correctly, but I wrote it exactly as Andama gave it. Another Christian hearing it said simply, "He only said the same thing we already have in John 3:5 'No-one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.' "

I am not suggesting that Christians who have not been baptised in water and the Spirit are not saved. Acts 16:31 makes it clear that if we believe in Jesus we will be saved. Nevertheless it is Jesus' plan that in this life we should all travel as far along the road to heaven as we can. If we can be baptised then we should be baptised. If we omit this step here, I believe Jesus can repair the omission in heaven, but that is not His wish or plan.

Although we knew the doctrine well by now, some problems still remained. At what point are people saved? Just how persistent should we be in getting them filled with the Spirit? Just how important is it to get them to repent? And so on. One day the Lord gave this explanation to me. To become a living person one must first be conceived. This is like the Spirit leading you to repentance. Next the baby must be born. He is born wet all over because he has been immersed in a pool of water. This is like baptism in water. Now he is alive and is born, but he will die very quickly if he does not breathe for himself. Taking his first breath is like being filled with the Spirit. Now he is able to live by himself. He could have been kept alive by a respirator with someone else doing the breathing for him, but that would not be real life. Next, the normal baby begins to cry. This is the same as speaking in tongues. Finally we should remember that any baby will die if not given milk as well as air. It is not enough to be born of water and the Spirit. As long as we live we must go to Jesus, first for milk and then for bread and meat.

Another message received at this time showed just how important were the small details of our daily living. We needed to open up our hearts to each other as well as to God. Jesus said to one girl, "You are sick, but you are hiding it from your prayer group. You must ask for help." To another, He sent the message, "You have written a nasty letter to your brother. You must write and apologise."

It was not long before we noticed that if there were quarrels or divisions, the Spirit did not move and the meeting seemed dull and lifeless. This made members decide they would always repent and get right with each other before meetings, but from time to time someone would still become a 'bitter plant' (Heb. 12:15). Then we would pray and seek God's will, and in almost every case we would find who and what the problem was and the girl responsible would repent and apologise. For example, one staff member said to a trainee nurse, "I don't like that dress you are wearing". The trainee felt so hurt she didn't want to go to meetings where the sister was taking a leading part. When I explained this to the sister she was most apologetic, the two of them hugged each other and both had a little cry.

On many occasions it was Matthew 18:15-16 that held us together in love. Whenever anyone came to Peter or to me with a complaint we would ask if they had tried to talk to the person who had upset them. If they hadn't, we would usually arrange a time for the two to meet that same day. If they had already tried to make peace unsuccessfully we would get another girl or two and we would go to the angry one as a group. Only once did we have to take a matter to the church. Not only was God's method far more successful than our old 'Moses' method' of dealing with all problems ourselves (Exodus 18:13), but ultimately problems almost ceased. The Christians learnt to deal with them directly and while the resentments were still small. No wonder Moses wished all the Israelites would receive the Spirit (Numbers 11:29)!

I discovered one of the blessings of praying in the Spirit at about this time. I found that if I prayed in tongues while waiting for a girl in trouble to answer me, she would almost always answer quickly and tell the truth. Previously I might have spent an hour or so questioning her, and then be told an untruth! This greatly eased the solving of personal problems.

Ever since we had been at Kapuna we had had morning and evening prayers with Bible teaching. All the nurses and orderlies came from mission schools. In spite of that many had never read even one whole book of the New Testament and others were confused about such elementary things as the relationship of the Old Testament to the New, and the Epistles to the

Gospels. Not only were they lacking in Bible knowledge but most of them knew little about the power of prayer. Talking about these things was no use; we had to take action. Sister Kana was my friend and consultant in all these matters and we prayed much about the matter. We decided she would ask one nurse to meet with her daily for prayer and Bible study. We asked the Lord for a name and found we both had the same name. The girl was keen, so they began to meet every evening as soon as the generator started and the lights came on. I met with them once a week to check their Bible Study progress. After only a few days Teben asked if she could join them. They prayed about it and felt three was a good number. Then Sere and a friend came to me. Could they please meet too? "Wonderful! Of course you could," I said. After another few days others came and asked to be allowed to meet together too. Soon there were five groups meeting every evening in the different classrooms or staff-rooms.

I then began to give them Bible questions to study every evening. We did not use any Bible Commentaries but there was a wide selection of Christian magazines and books in the library and this helped to give everyone a good stock of real-life illustrations of the important Bible teachings. Over and over again we found that the Holy Spirit Himself was perfectly capable of teaching the meaning of the Scriptures to any earnest reader. It still delights and amazes us when a Christian tells how he was wanting help in a certain area so the Spirit directed him to a verse, explained it to him and solved his problem.

Christians have two other weapons besides the Word, namely their testimonies and the Blood of Jesus. Over the next six months the group learnt to share about our entry into the new life. We learnt to speak frankly about our past sinfulness or hardness of heart, and how Jesus had changed us. This is a much more powerful witness than Bible verses to most non-Christians. We also learnt to claim the power of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse our house from evil spirits and to protect the door as the Israelites did at the first Passover. We learnt to begin each journey or other big undertaking with prayer. We learnt to sing during our work, when walking around outside or when sick or discouraged. We learnt to give praise to God at all times.

By now many patients had come to us for baptism in water, but we were still reluctant to give them the teaching on baptism in the Spirit. We felt it was too 'dangerous' and also we were afraid God wouldn't do for them what He had done for us. They were not spiritual enough we thought. However, it was impossible for us to keep up this hypocritical stand, teaching the necessity of baptism in the Spirit while refusing to help them actually receive it.

When we prayed about it, the answer was as usual, "Trust Me." So one night a group of us met with all the village Christians who wished to receive the Spirit, and who were staying at the hospital at the time. First we spent perhaps half an hour in teaching. Then the men present prayed for the men, and the girls prayed for the women.

To our surprise and joy they received the Spirit just as quickly as the nurses and orderlies had done. At the same time as they received the Spirit, Sere again received the spirit of prophecy and for a long time we sat there listening as she went to each of these village people in turn and told them all that God was willing to do in their lives, if only they would go back home and obey Him. Her usual way of giving prophecy was to give the message in Iai (her own language), then in Motu (a trade language), then in Pidgin (another trade language) and lastly in English, so there was no mistaking the meaning of the messages.

After about an hour of this, I couldn't resist interrupting her to ask, "Just when did the Lord tell you all these things, Sere?"

"He's with me now," she answered, slightly surprised I should be so ignorant. "As I speak, He tells me what to say." Suddenly it became clear to me how the prophets gave long messages from the Lord without benefit of shorthand or tapes. He had stood beside them giving the messages sentence by sentence just as He was doing for us.

Suddenly Sere changed completely, leaping to her feet and crying out, "All the lights have gone out! What's the matter? I can't see anything!" She began to rub her eyes and try to brush an invisible something off her face. "Satan, get out of here!" she cried out. Then even louder and more angrily, "Get out of here, Satan!"

I took her arm gently. Her eyes were open but she obviously could see nothing.

I said, "Sere, say 'In the name of Jesus!'" She seized on the phrase like a drowning man clutching a rope and shouted, "In the name of Jesus!"

Immediately she said this, her face changed. "I can see!" she shouted. With thankful hearts we all praised God. Satan had thrown a fiery dart but the shield of faith had put it out, and the sword of the Spirit had put him to flight. Soldiers who have tested both their armour and their weapons are ready to advance - God's next exciting step for us.

Chapter 5: The Sparks Fly

"Just where is this revival leading us?" Peter pondered one day. "It should be reviving the old church, but there's no sign of that. I've visited the Circuit Minister, I've invited him to call a pastors' meeting, I've invited him to study the Bible with me, but there is just no interest."

"But what sort of leadership could the old leaders give these new Christians anyway?" I answered. "They know nothing of the gifts of the Spirit and the new Christians will soon lose what they have gained if they go back to the old type of worship where all too often people go to church, sit down, go to sleep, wake up, go home!"

"Yet what can we do?" he argued, "We're already finding it hard to keep up proper lecture times because so many stop us on the path from the hospital to the house, all wanting to give their lives to the Lord. If only the children were here to help us!"

By this time all our four children were baptised in the Spirit but none were with us. However, the two soon coming home for their holidays were especially keen to support an outreach team with a music back-up. When they arrived in December '77, we had a long talk about the problems and they both saw the impossibility of keeping on as we were doing. The message must be carried out to the villages, but we could not help being apprehensive about what would be the result. If nothing happened we would be very disappointed. But if the same things that had happened at Kapuna happened there as well, just how would the pastors react? Many had been at Kapuna and seen the work of the Spirit and had no comment to make, but it might be very different if it went on right under their noses.

In January our two boys, Alan and Colin, decided to take the plunge and visit a village, giving the same message that had been so effective here. At that stage we were thinking of one of the villages that was without a pastor because surely the people there were more in need of hearing the Gospel than those with one. Also, it would be much 'safer' for the team. A large group gathered to seek guidance on which place to visit first. Almost all agreed it was to be Kinipo, a large coastal village - with a pastor! Peter and I were somewhat dismayed, but the boys decided they would invite the pastor to take a full part in every aspect of the work and trust the Spirit for the rest. Much time was spent asking the Lord who should go, how to present the message, which songs to use and so on. The message they planned to give was very simple: "Jesus offers forgiveness to all who repent and believe. If you are willing to leave your old life, He will give you a new one. So leave your old ways, be baptised and receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit. Do not delay. If you die it will be too late to change your mind. If Jesus returns it will be too late to change your mind. Now is the time to obey Jesus' command."

The team were travelling down by the Missionary Aviation Fellowship's amphibian aircraft (aptly named WET or Whiskey Echo Tango!). Before they embarked I asked Alan what he would do if any accepted the message.

"Baptise them, of course," he answered airily. My heart missed a beat. Evangelising was one thing, baptising was another, yet how could we stop in the middle of Acts 2:38? We set aside an hour that evening to pray for the team and next day everyone waited eagerly for the hum of the plane that would announce their return. Very boldly, I thought, I had prayed for five to receive Jesus as Saviour. Five seemed a really big number, because as far as we knew no-one in the whole district had ever come to the Lord in response to an invitation at a public meeting. Altar calls were a completely foreign concept to the people here, and even when explained and built up

with suitable songs it had taken a very long time at Kapuna to get people to come forward for prayer, let alone salvation.

At last we saw WET come flying back from the coast, landing with its usual dramatic splash and taxiing up to the wharf. The minute the team stepped out of the plane we could see by their big grins something fantastic had happened. "Guess how many, Mum and Dad? Nineteen!" Everyone was jumping up and down and shouting halleluias! There was not the slightest doubt, only the Lord could have done that.

This was the boys' story. As they got off the plane all the young people saw the guitars. They all shouted gleefully, "A party! A party!" Then a young man stepped forward to say hullo. He asked them bluntly, "What have you come for?" "To tell the people the Gospel," they told him. He nearly cried with joy. The boy was Mika Akia, the son of the pastor. Home on holiday from the Lae University, he had tried to pass on the Gospel he had received at a Pentecostal church there. To his great disappointment he had not been able to interest even one person. Now he took fresh heart and the three boys went off to talk and practise their songs while the medical team did their work. In the evening they called the whole village together, sang their four songs, gave their testimonies, sang their four songs again, gave their message and sang their four songs yet again. By now the children had learnt them all and joined in the singing with great gusto. Papua New Guineans have a great gift for singing. They can often sing a song perfectly, in parts, after hearing it only a few times, even when the words are in English and not even written down for them!

Alan then announced, "That's all there is. Time to go now, unless anyone wants to follow Jesus." Not a soul stirred. He got Mika to repeat it in case his Iai (the local language) was not being understood well. Still they sat. So the team sang the songs again and repeated the message. The village boys looked at the girls and said, "Go!" So all the girls went. Now the boys felt free to come forward and say "Yes, I want to follow Jesus." All of them said they did! The team spent a long time with them. They explained again about repentance, baptism and the new life. Then they prayed with them for forgiveness and the group left. In the morning the team were woken early by the chatter of girls outside. Sleepily getting up they asked what they wanted.

"We didn't have a chance last night," they complained, "Now it's our turn!" So the explaining and repenting began all over again. After all had understood to their satisfaction some decided they were not really ready for a full commitment. That left a total of nineteen, all keen ones. The boys went to see Akia, the pastor, but of course his son Mika had already told him about the boys wanting baptism. He agreed to take part in the river baptism and in the river bank communion that followed. While they were baptising the new believers many were filled with the Spirit and spoke in tongues. In spite of this one old lady scoffed at the whole procedure.

"You'll see," she said, "It won't last. In a few days they'll forget all about it."

"No, this is different," Sere explained, "the Spirit is here today." The old lady shook her head in disbelief and went back to her house. On the way she was stricken with severe abdominal pain. After a few minutes she sent someone to call Sere. "Please pray for me," she begged. Sere told her the pain had come because she had made fun of the Spirit, so the old lady repented and when Sere prayed for her the pain went away.

Just as the team finished all their work the plane came droning down from the sky. The whole village gathered to meet it, many still shouting, "Halleluia!" and "Praise the Lord!" It was a most astonished pilot who arrived back at Kapuna that morning!

The very next day Mika gathered his nineteen new Kinipo Christians and went off for an outreach to the village across the river. When some distance from the shore they happened to look back. To their horror they saw the village was on fire! They began to turn the canoe to go back when they realised it was not an ordinary fire at all - it was the fire of Pentecost. In spite of

this encouraging sign the team met a real set-back at the second village. Only a few showed any interest and no-one accepted the message. Undeterred, they decided to paddle along the coast to Mika's home village, Maepenairu, and give the good news to them. Here the people were really eager to hear what they had to say. Two high school boys had already been witnessing there during their holidays but again, they had been unable to move their own relatives and friends. However, as a result of Mika's preaching, twenty-six received the Lord and many began to prophesy, rebuke local evil-doers, denounce sorcerers, heal the sick and so on. When the team left they gave a final prophecy:

"The Kapuna team will be here tomorrow! There will be another chance for those who have not yet made up their minds to follow Jesus."

Back at Kapuna we had been praying about where to go next and this time the name "Maepenairu" came to everyone's minds. Peter said, "All right, but you must wait till tomorrow, because it is the nurses' graduation tonight." The team insisted they should go that day, so it was decided half would go that very afternoon and half would stay for the graduation and go down by canoe next day.

When the plane dropped them out, the first half of the team was quite bewildered by the crowd that gathered to meet them, all shouting, "We knew you would come! Mika told us you would come!" Soon they were marvelling at this further sign of God blessing the whole operation. Many had already decided they wanted a full part in what was going on and forty more came forward as soon as invited. Again the pastor agreed to share in the baptising and communion, even though a number being baptised were his own church members, but, as at Kinipo, he himself did not wish to find out if this new life would change him too.

While the team were praying for the new converts to receive the Spirit, two of the team were themselves attacked by an evil spirit. They fell to the floor screaming with pain as spirits appeared to be pushing invisible knives into their feet or any part of the body near the floor. The other members of the team rushed to help them and by using their spiritual weapons were able to bind and cast the spirits out, but it left the two girls very shaken and upset. That same day one of these girls was walking in the village when one of the village gamblers aimed a coconut at her, quite a dangerous missile. To everyone's amazement and joy, the nut was diverted in mid-air by an invisible hand and she was quite unharmed. Another sign of God's blessing was the healing of an old man, blind for years. Alan and Colin went to visit him to see the healing for themselves and found he could indeed see, though he did not go out in the midday sun because he found the light too bright.

While the team was still in this village rumours began to arrive that the pastor of the next village, Kapai, was violently opposed to the work the teams were doing, both Mika's team and the Kapuna one. In spite of this Colin and Moses, one of the orderlies, decided to visit him. Alan dropped the two of them off at a sandy point near the village and went on to another village along the coast. Moses himself came from this village so he was very surprised to be greeted by young boys with bows and arrows at the ready. They did not actually shoot at them but simply said they must go with them to the pastor's house. The whole village was tense, and silent, apart from some school-age children making fun of the gift of tongues. No-one came forward to greet them. The pastor was exceedingly angry and insisted they leave the village immediately. The accusation was that the teams were starting a new church called "One Way", by which they meant one with pentecostal-type teachings. Colin suggested they look at the Bible together but the pastor did not want to do this. As they had no transport he himself took them back to Maepenairu where they waited for Alan and his team to return.

At the village that Alan visited the reception was much the same, "You are trying to start 'One Way'. Get out of here!" Alan found that an important man from Kapai saw what happened at

Maepenairu and had then gone from village to village telling the people how to oppose the team if it arrived. By God's grace, a large group decided to hear the message anyway. Many believed and were baptised, a large number speaking in tongues spontaneously as they came up from the water. One man and his wife had been baptised at Kapuna already. He was very helpful and offered to be the leader of the twenty new believers in his village. The team then returned to Maepenairu where they encouraged the new brothers and sisters and then set off for home. As they counted up the miracles they had seen and the number who had repented and found the Lord, they all began to praise God. Far from being downcast about his rejection in his own village Moses was so 'high' in the Spirit that he was literally dancing for joy all the way home. His task was to sit on the prow of the canoe and warn Alan, who was driving, of any logs lying in the water, but he was, in fact, "so heavenly minded as to be no earthly use." Alan at first mistook his arms thrown out in praise for gestures about the size of logs lying just under the water. After swerving away from a number of these imaginary obstacles, he realised Moses was just drunk with the Spirit, so from then on he did his own watching out for logs! Two hours later they arrived at Kapuna still shouting and singing and we saw at once everyone would want to hear their story. We called a meeting that night and the place was crowded. Moved by the team's stories, many patients gave their own lives to the Lord that very night.

After visiting one more village in our language area, where the same joyful result occurred, the team went over to another language area called the Gope. Here Alan and Colin could no longer give the message in their language, but the orderlies and nurses who could, were just as successful in communicating the Gospel as our boys had been, and three villages welcomed the 'new day of the Lord'. Soon after this Colin and Alan had to return to their studies in New Zealand.

We were still not fully aware of the storm clouds gathering and every time we prayed about further outreach the Lord encouraged us to go with such messages as these "I have many people everywhere waiting to receive the Spirit," and, "Do not take any notice of their black looks." Two groups of trainees visited their own villages and brought many to the Lord and we could see how alarming the situation must seem to those who believed, with real churchly conservatism, that "Nothing must ever be done for the first time."

The float plane was soon due to visit us again and we prayed about an outreach to the inland people of Wabo, a name well-known in this country because the proposed Purari Hydroelectric scheme was to have been sited there. We felt this was God's timing for the rather wild and primitive Foroi people to find salvation too.

On this trip the team included Pastor Aivei who lived at Kapuna. He was really pastor of Kairimai village, but because of recurrent asthma attacks a house was built for him near the hospital. His wife and two little boys also went, as well as a medical team. After the babies had been weighed and the vaccines given, the pastor, or rather 'Brother' as we call leaders in the Fellowships, gave the message in Motu. Sister Kana added her testimony also in Motu. Then quite unannounced Aivei's wife, Pairama, who frequently had visions and 'in the Spirit' experiences, stood up and began to speak in tongues, but not in an unknown tongue, instead it was in the language of the people. In the natural she couldn't speak a word of it and the Foroi people, of course, knew this. There was a real moving of the Spirit among them as thirty-six came forward to give their lives to the Lord. Again, there were a few present who had already become Christians while at Kapuna for sickness, and they were a great help in translating and arranging everything. One of the special events was that Aivei's two little boys were able to lead some of the school children to a decision and to explain the gospel picture books to them.

After our initial burst of evangelism, the new Christians began themselves to go out witnessing to friends and clan brothers, sometimes being rebuffed, sometimes welcomed, but

nothing deterring them from sharing the Good News wherever they went. Every Sunday Christians visiting Kapuna would tell of the wonderful things that were going on all over the Delta. It was unbelievable, indescribable, but stupendously true! God was pouring out His Spirit on everyone who would accept Him, just as the prophets said He would do.

Chapter 6: Opposition and Persecution

For a long time after the revival began we cherished wonderful dreams of the effect it would have. We imagined it spreading along the whole Papuan coast, leaping from village to village as Christians shared the good news with their friends. We thought that our church, after more than a hundred years of Bible teaching and effort, would rejoice greatly over the harvest of souls. We thought God was going to use our church to bring the new life in the Spirit to the many other traditional churches in the country. It was, I think, the first mission church in Papua New Guinea to gain its independence from the sending missions and was really free to choose a new path if it wished to. We had visions of Port Moresby experiencing the same scenes that we had witnessed, perhaps the schools and stores closed for a day while hundreds, or even thousands repented and found salvation. We still believe all this could have been God's plan but there proved to be an enormous giant blocking the way. His name was "Tradition".

Because the pastors had made no objections to the new evangelistic work being carried on at Kapuna, we thought they saw its results with approval. This was not so. Very soon after the revival spread out to the villages, letters began to go to the church authorities in Port Moresby, giving a long list of complaints against the Kapuna Christians. They said, for example: "They are starting a 'One Way' church"; "They are encouraging immorality"; "They talk to evil spirits"; "They are confusing the people"; "They are doing pastor's work but they are not ordained"; "It is all from the devil"; and "They are starting a cargo cult".

This last accusation was one of the most common. About thirty years ago there was a cargo cult known as the "Vailala madness". It was named after the river and villages where it was most active, and this area is not very far from where we work. After hearing these accusations we immediately asked the church leaders to meet with us and to discuss the matter, but no-one accepted the invitation. The circuit minister had been on holiday during all the first dramatic spread of the new movement but had now returned. Peter went down to visit him but he met a blank wall. It was the same in the circuits on either side of ours. There was simply no interest in talking about the situation, just the blunt request "Stop it and get on with your medical work."

We have often asked ourselves how a church could be so blind to the very experience it was supposed to be preaching. We believe it was because we missionaries had failed to plant the true church of Jesus. Firstly, we had taught the people that whenever they found conflict on doctrinal matters, they should consult the written constitution of the church. We had not taught them to rely on the Spirit and the Bible to guide them. Whenever there were disagreements at our annual missionaries' meetings someone always seemed to have the book of standing orders at their elbow, and would often use it to quell all opposition. In our hearts, I think we realised we were 'out of order' with God's plans, for sometimes bitter arguments would arise and no-one knew how to reconcile the opinions of the different groups. It was the same when new teaching was introduced to a village which traditionally 'belonged' to our church.

One day a Pentecostal preacher arrived in such a village. He told a village elder that he had a message from God. So the elder allowed him to preach and many accepted his message. When the missionary came he was very upset.

"Why did you let him preach?" he asked.

"Well, he said he had a message from God. How was I to know it was not?" the elder answered very reasonably.

No-one had any answer to this problem except to say, "Everyone who causes divisions is wrong." This statement, of course, assumes that every church is so close to perfection that any division always means that those separating themselves are going away from, rather than towards, the Lord. Was this, in fact, true?

One day one of our sisters went to a service where the pastor devoted his whole sermon to the wickedness of those who cause divisions. As she was a revival leader she knew the message was aimed at her and those like her. Back at home she opened her Good News New Testament. It fell open at Luke 12. Her eye was caught immediately by the section heading: "Jesus the Cause of Division". All her doubts and feelings of guilt left as she praised the Lord for His comforting Word.

Secondly, we missionaries had not taught the Christians that God's word is much wiser than the wisdom of man. We had criticised the Bible to them, explained away the parts we ourselves could not accept and rejected some teaching altogether. I remember hearing a pastor say he had been taught that Satan was not real, it was just Jesus' way of talking about His thoughts. Yet even though pastors dutifully repeated this teaching they often did not really accept it in their hearts. This became obvious when they tolerated, or even welcomed, the activities of sorcerers in the village. The church's Bible College taught that evil spirits existed only in the minds of the superstitious. I remember a wise old pastor saying bluntly at the annual meeting: "Your theology will never help us until you accept the reality of evil spirits." Only one or two heeded his words and the principal of the Bible College was not one of them.

Thirdly, the work of the Holy Spirit was seen only as protective. Every night the people prayed the same prayer in the hospital wards, "Send your Holy Spirit to look after us." We too used to know little or nothing about His power. We too were once ignorant about His gifts and about His wonderful ability to 'teach all things'. Because at that time we did not know Him, we did not trust Him, and we could not teach others to trust Him either. When supernatural manifestations arose such as shaking, falling unconscious or speaking in languages a person had not learned, we could not discern whether the Holy Spirit or an evil spirit was present. We used to take the easy way out of these situations and give sedatives, hoping the problem would go away by itself. However, by the time revival came we were ready for it because by then we had experienced the Spirit's power for ourselves. We had also learnt much from the mistakes others had made. We praise God for the frank and helpful books written by such people as Michael Harper, Don Basham and many others. Also, we had a group of Spirit-filled Christians with whom to talk over our problems. The village pastors, and indeed, all the church leaders, had none of these preparatory experiences and it was not surprising they felt lost and threatened in this entirely new and alarming situation.

Chapter 7: Moving with the Spirit

The old recipe for revival sermons used to be given as "Read yourself full, think yourself clear, pray yourself hot...then let go!" One of the hardest things for us to do was to 'Let go!' We had to let go of our old ideas and prejudices, and we also had to learn to let our Christians go, with nothing but the wind of the Spirit directing them. No longer could we be sure nothing would happen unless we made it happen. I once read a conversation that could have easily taken place in the days of our old church.

Overseas visitor: Do you have an indigenous church here?

Indignant missionary: What do you mean? Of course we have an indigenous church. Less than one percent are expatriates.

Overseas Visitor: Well, what I mean is, what sort of hymns do they sing?

Indignant Missionary: They sing the hymns we translated for them, of course. What else would they sing?

Overseas Visitor: And what do the people believe about the faith?

Indignant Missionary: I don't know what you mean. Naturally they believe what we tell them to believe.

Overseas Visitor: Let me try again. Has there ever been any new movement in the church? Something that began from the indigenous people?

Indignant Missionary: Oh certainly not ... Well, not for a long time. They did try some wild ideas of their own once or twice, but we soon put a stop to that.

Overseas Visitor: Well brother, I don't like to upset you but I think you still have a long way to go before you have an indigenous church!

Now, as the Spirit led us to ever higher ground, we found it took much courage to follow Him. One of the reasons it took courage to move into the field of deliverance was that we often had to follow our own converts' advice and experience. Even the Bible is not a complete handbook on this subject. The first thing we had to learn was that spirits are genuinely visible to some people. One night the orderlies were casting a spirit out of a man in their classroom. After the man had been delivered the couple in the house next to them came running over to see if anyone was hurt. They had seen a black figure jump out of the high window and thought it was an orderly who had jumped out.

Another time a girl was praying for two new converts. She felt an evil spirit touch her leg. She opened her eyes and saw the spirit running round the room looking for a way out. It could not go out the door as Jesus was standing there. He had just walked in bringing two white robes for the two new sisters. At last the spirit found a hole in the wall and got out through it. We used to laugh at people who shut windows and doors to keep out evil spirits, but we no longer do so. It seems that most evil spirits have a spiritual body that cannot fly, or pass through solid walls.

A staff couple, Kusunu and her husband, could not sleep at night because of whistling noises and the sounds of household articles being moved about. They noticed the trouble had begun the night that the small church near their house had been used for deliverance. It seemed the spirit had left the man but taken up residence in their house. One night they invited the fellowship to come and cast it out. We divided into groups to go into the various rooms. As a girl went into their bedroom she saw an old woman come out from under their bed and jump out the window.

After that they were never disturbed again. Kusunu linked the whole incident with a curse that her dying mother put on her, saying Kusunu would never have any children, but if she did ever become pregnant she would die. That night we broke the curse in the name of Jesus. We accepted that her mother had been possessed by a spirit of hate which had caused her to pronounce this curse. When she died, the spirit had left her and come to Kapuna to carry out the curse. The evil spirit that left the Kapuna patient may then have invited this other spirit to join it in entering her home, as Jesus describes in Luke 11:26. Today Kusunu is the very proud mother of fat little Mike. During her pregnancy she became severely anaemic. She needed a unit of blood to enable the baby to continue to grow. This was a real test to her faith but we praised God with her and for her and she did not become depressed or fearful at any stage.

Another fact we had to accept was that evil spirits really do make their homes in various animals. For example, a strange experience occurred in our own house. I always keep bunches of bananas hanging up on the back verandah. As they ripen we pick them off. One morning I saw several were eaten and realised a flying fox (fruit bat) had been inside the house. This was the first time in our experience that this had happened. I closed the nearby wooden shutters but this did not stop it coming in, so I took the bunch down, put it on the kitchen table and shut the door, thinking this would surely discourage it. Next morning another three or four bananas were eaten. Also, it was beginning to fly around inside the house frightening us all. With a two foot wing span it was not a pleasant thing to have swooping past one's head in the dark, especially as its wings sounded like the rattling of Ezekiel's dry bones! Determined to stop it once and for all I put the bananas into a cupboard. The cupboard had only one door on it, the other having recently come off its hinges, but we all agreed no flying fox in its senses ever went into a cupboard. Normally, even outdoors they perch for only a few moments, grab a mouthful of fruit, then are off again to circle and come back for another bite. Well, we couldn't believe our eyes next morning when we saw it had crawled into the cupboard and had yet another meal.

I then recalled an Annie Vallotton picture in a Good News New Testament. It showed a bat being driven out of a house along with snakes and evil spirits. It seemed to me that this bat was just another of Satan's persecution devices. I decided to walk around the house seven times that night claiming protection from any of Satan's employees. While I was doing this, Peter prayed in our bedroom. When I'd finished he commented, "Did you notice the earthquake while you were praying?" I hadn't but took it as a sign from the Lord that He had heard. From that day to this we have never lost another banana to a flying fox. The bananas still hang in the same place with nothing to protect them except prayer. Once again we had seen that often this was all that was needed. Since then we have dealt with rafter bees and house-nesting swallows in the same way. For some reason or other, we have not had protection from rats. Perhaps it is because they are not invaders. Our houses are their natural habitat.

Gradually we gained confidence in dealing with ordinary spiritual warfare problems but sometimes entirely new situations would arise and again we would have to jump off the faith spring-board. Every day, twice a day, we go on the air for medical traffic. People call on radio transmitters from all over the country asking for advice and help with medical problems. One day Peter was away so I took a call from a distraught headmaster of a Highland high school.

"I've got a boy here who seems to have gone crazy. He's been running through the bush and over the hills, saying a spirit is chasing him. The other boys have just brought him in and he's all covered in mud and his clothes are torn. They can hardly hold him down. Can you help me?"

We had often spoken to this very pleasant missionary and knew he had little or nothing in the way of medical supplies. With some trepidation I suggested he cast the evil spirit out. He was 'all of a flutter' at the suggestion.

"What do I say? What do I do?" he wanted to know.

I told him just to say, "Evil spirit, in Jesus' name I command you to come out."

He seemed very doubtful if anything would happen so I promised to pray for him until we next came on the air. At 5 p.m. I turned the radio on more punctually than usual.

The headmaster was already there waiting. "It's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "As soon as I said the words you gave me, he just relaxed completely and went off to sleep. Actually he's still sleeping. Isn't it marvellous?" I was as excited as he of course, and we both gave glory to Jesus for the event.

If spirits have been in people for only a short time they seem to come out fairly quickly, but if they have been there for years it is much harder, and we have often had failures. Peter and the orderlies cast the spirits out of an epileptic boy with repeated maniacal attacks and he was very much better for a long time, but his trouble returned when he went back to the village. Some nurses and I cast out three spirits from a man who was much troubled with asthma. Again, his attacks seemed to clear up and he was well for a long time. But one day I was called from a Sunday service to help him through a bad bout. I gave him the intravenous injection that had always relieved him before. This time, to my horror, it had no effect at all and he was already desperately fighting for air. "It's Mapi ... again," he managed to whisper. Mapi was the name of one of the three spirits we had cast out before. Quickly we commanded it in Jesus' name to come out again. Almost immediately his body relaxed, and he began to breathe more easily. Soon we were able to leave him and go back to the service. This man is a strong Christian and yet in spite of that the spirit had managed to come back and cause the same trouble again.

On several occasions women have had difficulty in giving birth to their babies and the nurses are usually the first to suspect that the trouble lies either in evil spirits or in a guilty conscience. In almost every case a prayer of deliverance or of confession has solved the problem and the baby has come easily with the next contraction. Other times the girls have been disturbed at night by knocking on the door. When they peep out the window there is no-one there and the knocking stops when they command the spirit to go.

On still other occasions we have needed the gift of 'discerning spirits'. One night a nurse rushed into our house. "We want you to come," she said, "One village girl has a message for us from the Lord." I went over and found the girl sitting stiffly in a chair, shaking violently and waving her arms. Her sister supported her with one arm around her shoulders while the nurses sat around in frightened clusters whispering to each other. We all sat down and she gave her message.

"Praise the Lord! Lord is saying you have many letters in your rooms from boyfriends. Lord wants you to bring them all out and burn them!" She began to shake wildly again. All the girls looked at each other in embarrassment. I had a word or two with Sister Kana, who had a real gift of discernment, and she agreed with me that this did not feel like a message inspired by the Spirit. I remembered a good teaching from Isobel Kuhn on how to test a situation, to find whether it was from the Lord or the devil. I asked all the girls to pray that if the message was from the Lord she would keep on repeating it, but if it was from Satan she would not be able to give it again. When we opened our eyes from the prayer we found she had stopped shaking. A few seconds later she got up and walked quietly out of the house, without saying another word.

Another area where we needed courage was in handing over responsibility to the new Christians. At first we thought we ourselves should always take part in the leading to repentance, the baptism in water, the prayer for the filling of the Holy Spirit, the checking of the prayer groups and so on. The Spirit soon spoilt our plans by sending so many new converts that there was just no way we could control it all. After a few months of experience we found that not only could we trust those we had ourselves taught to do these things, but we could trust them to pass

on the teaching of it to others. Perhaps it would be helpful to give a brief outline here of what we believe Jesus meant by "Go, baptise, teach."

Imagine that a patient is hearing the message of salvation from a Christian nurse, perhaps Kana. A young trainee who is learning to witness will be there too. Kana: Good evening Kau'u, how are you feeling?

Village lady: I'm getting better now.

Kana: We have come to tell you about Jesus. Do you want to hear about Him?

Village lady: If you want to tell me you can.

Kana: Jesus wants everyone to leave their bad ways and follow Him. Do you know Jesus? Are you a Christian?

Village lady: No.

Kana: I will tell you about Him. A long time ago God made the angels. One of these angels became His enemy. His name is Satan. When God made the world and put people in it, Satan pulled many of them away from God. He made them steal, tell lies and kill each other. All of us follow Satan if we don't follow Jesus. Then God sent His Son to earth. He came as a baby (nods and smiles, everyone knows the Christmas story). Many people hated Him and they killed Him. But after three days He rose up (nods again, solemn ones this time, everyone knows the Easter story. There are no atheists or agnostics here). He told His friends He was going back to heaven but He would send the Holy Spirit to be their Helper. If you believe Jesus died to take away your sins, He will send His Helper to you too. Do you believe all these things?

Village lady: Yes. I believe Jesus died for me. I want to follow Him. *Kana:* Do you want Him to forgive your sins?

At this point there is a crossroad. Many will now say, "I haven't any sins" and the conversation may finish quite quickly. Alternatively a period of sharing may begin with the woman confessing all kinds of secret deeds that she is ashamed of. After she has asked for and received forgiveness and added her own prayer and praises (sometimes in tongues) Kana will shake her hand warmly and praise God for a new sister in Christ. She will then go on to explain Jesus' next step of obedience -- baptism.

The next high tide or other suitable time, Kana and her helper will ask two questions while all three stand in the water: "Why have you come down here to the river?" and "Who is Jesus?" Some baptisers add other questions, some converts want to give longer testimonies - there is complete freedom to follow the Spirit. Before and after the baptism, there is much chorus singing on the river bank, also hand-shaking and warm greetings from the whole group. Then some dry clothes are found and Kana and her trainee witness go to a quiet place to pray for the Spirit to come upon the new believer. Even if she has spoken in tongues during the repentance prayer or during the baptism in water, we still pray in a quiet and leisurely way as well. Much blessing comes from extra time spent giving a longer explanation of the Spirit's work. The ability to use the gift of tongues is much more likely to remain if the new Christian has several opportunities to use it, even though it is only several times on the same day. If there are a number of people baptised together, those praying for them divide into pairs and pray for each person, individually. As the new converts receive, they join those who are praying for the others, and again this helps to give them confidence in using their new language.

On many occasions the new language has been recognisable to someone present and then it is very exciting to find out what the new Christian is saying. Just a short time ago a Pauae lady from Wabo was led to the Lord by a nurse, using a small Pauae schoolboy as translator. Of course this meant little teaching could be given, even though they spent over an hour with the woman. Nevertheless she grasped the basic facts. While praying for forgiveness she began to

speak in an unknown tongue. Afterwards she described the vision she had. She saw Jesus come out from the pages of the nurse's Bible. He was carrying a cross. He grew larger and larger until He was much bigger than she. She saw the blood dripping from His hands and she cried for her sins.

When baptised in the river the next day she spoke in an unknown tongue again and came up the bank beaming joyfully from her experience. Yet later, when the little boy, supported by two of his school-mates this time, joined the nurses to pray for her she spoke in fluent English! She spoke for a long time, praising God, and saying we must always praise His greatness before bringing our requests to Him. After about twenty or thirty minutes of praise and prophecy she stopped and opened her eyes. "I was speaking in English!" she exclaimed in Pauaeon to the small brother. "What did I say?"

"Oh, I think you speak better English than I do," he laughed, but of course she does not speak a word of it really, and the first two times she spoke it was not in English.

This then is the way we teach others to teach. We never ask anyone to receive the baptism of the Spirit in front of the whole church because we feel a relaxed and 'all-the-time-in-the-world' atmosphere is the best, so that the person can spend as long 'in the Spirit' as the Spirit wishes.

If people fall down we leave them there until they get up by themselves. A short time ago we had an experience of the value of this. We were singing a worship song at the beginning of the Sunday service when suddenly one of the nurses collapsed on the floor. There she remained for about half an hour, no one taking any notice of her. Then she sat up looking very dazed. A little later, at a suitable time in the service, she went up to the front to tell us what had happened. While singing she had suddenly become 'in the Spirit'. She saw a throne and Someone sitting on it. Millions of people stood around being judged. If a person's name was called out they had to go forward, whether they wished to or not. After being judged many were thrown into a great fire nearby. She trembled and felt very faint because of the heat of the fire. Then her name was called and she had to go forward. An angel held her arm and said, "Don't be afraid, you won't be put in the fire," but she felt so weak with fear she fainted and even when she came around again she still could not see our building or the people in it for some time.

At one stage in the revival there was a division of opinion about 'falling under the power' and it became the custom for someone to hold such people in their arms in a half-standing position. When we prayed for the Lord's leading it seemed quite clear He wanted us to just leave them on the floor until they got up by themselves. We know this is the best thing to do for a physical fainting attack and so perhaps the spiritual counterpart is appropriately treated in the same way!

Long before we were filled with the Spirit we began to have small times of communion in our own house on Sunday nights. Visitors from many denominations were willing to join us in a simple act of fellowship and remembrance and we had many good times of sharing because of this custom. For example, we had the wife of a Seventh Day Adventist missionary here, awaiting her baby. We felt much closer to each other as each Sunday we shared the Body and Blood and remembered our Saviour together. Many MAF pilots joined in the same simple ceremony and spoke warmly of the custom. When the prayer groups were formed we suggested they did the same thing, and many do. From this it was only a small step to gathering in small groups in the church meeting also, each group choosing one person to take the baked sago pancake and the cup of coconut water from the communion table and, after a time of repentance, sharing them with their group in memory of the Master. On many occasions individual Christians have got up from their groups and visited someone in another group to apologise for hurtful words or unkind actions and it is wonderful to see the 'family' hug each other or shake hands warmly as they are reconciled. Once again we found that as the Spirit led us to put far more freedom into the hands

of the ordinary Christian, not only were there none of the problems people prophesied there would be, but wonderful new blessings emerged instead.

Chapter 8: Moving With the Spirit

One of the most obvious problems in the revival was lack of village leadership. We pointed out this problem many times to the Lord. "Here we are, baptising all these patients, as You told us to," we would say, "and what's going to happen to them when they get back to the village? They're just going to fall away because they have no leaders!" He would answer simply, "Trust Me."

Or perhaps we might say, "Why didn't you fill the pastors with the Spirit first? Then there would have been someone to keep this revival on the rails!"

This was the Spirit's answer: "Don't worry about anything. It isn't often I get a chance to run a revival in My own way!"

Now, in 1985, we are seeing the fruits of His patience. All of the six older men who stepped into leadership at the beginning have now been smoothly and naturally replaced by young men, raised up by the Spirit and given a pastor's heart. These young men have no other preparation than possibly a few years' High School education and a love for souls. They lead their groups as they meet two or three times a week, plan special times of outreach or visit the other fellowships to hear what God is doing around the area. A number of these young leaders are now here at Kapuna as Aid Post Orderly trainees. At the same time they are doing a Bible-based leadership course. Their keenness to evangelise and their eagerness to understand the Bible are remarkable. Once again New Testament methods are having New Testament results. The Spirit Himself separated these young men for His work and they learn by watching the 'older' Christians live out their lives in this bush hospital. Sometimes a group of ten or fifteen young men comes in from the different villages to spend a few weeks at Kapuna learning basic discipleship teachings. They tackle hard outdoor work and study with equal enthusiasm. Many go back to the villages and help the others there to grow. Some are quite young boys of ten or twelve, others have good schooling and are already well up in Bible knowledge.

Sometimes there is a disaster and the leader himself falls away, perhaps tearing the fellowship apart as he does. We have learnt not to wring our hands in despair but to see that God's plan is for disaster to follow disobedience. Hushing it up and 'transferring the Pastor' are not His methods at all. He will, at the right time, raise up another leader and so the group learns that the healthy growth of the fellowship depends entirely on themselves, and in turn, their dependence is to be entirely on the Lord.

About four years ago a number of nurses began to have dreams about children coming to the Lord. Up till then we had baptised very few children and those baptised all had older members of the family who were Christians.

Here is part of one typical dream: "My friend said, 'Let's go fishing' so we went down to the fish-pond but when we got there all the big fish hid in the mud. I said, 'I don't want to catch little fish', but my friend said, 'No, we will catch the little fish.' We put down our nets and caught many little fish. The fish then turned into children. My friend said, 'We must go on our journey now.' The children came with us. We walked up a hill and I looked back. I could see the big fish had come out of the mud and were swimming about again. I wanted to go back to catch them but my friend said, 'No, it is time to go on.' "

After many such dreams we prayed about the message and felt the Spirit was saying to go ahead and baptise all children who believed. So we began to do this. I went with one nurse to

pray for two small boys to receive the Spirit. They had come to her saying, "Why can't we be baptised too? We love Jesus!" So she baptised them. They both received the Spirit very quickly and afterwards one said, "As soon as you people began to pray a white bird flew in the window and He flew round and round above us!"

On another occasion at a village outreach the nurses baptised all the bigger children who gave their lives to the Lord, but they decided a small boy of four or five years was too small. He insisted on coming along when they were praying for the Spirit to fill the new group and though no-one laid hands on him he was one of the first to speak in tongues. As in the story of Peter and Cornelius they decided no-one could now refuse him baptism so after the prayer time they took him down to the beach and baptised him too.

We were at first reluctant to completely obey the Lord's message; we feared the children might not really understand what they were doing. Also, we thought that their parents might object. But we found to our surprise that on the whole the children grasped the Gospel just as well as adults did. They had far fewer reservations about giving up the pleasures of sin, and they were not deeply involved in traditional customs as the adults were. All Papua New Guinea children are fully exposed to the adult world of birth, death, sickness due to evil spirits, people coming back to life after death, visions of a life after death and so on. So in this country the age of the hearer does not much affect his readiness to believe the stories of the Bible. As far as parental opposition goes, there has been some, but as we do nothing secretly, the parents always have an opportunity to stop their children coming to our meetings if they wish. Often we have been surprised to find that even non-Christian parents are very keen for their children to become Christians. At one outreach time for example, although no parents showed any interest in coming to the evangelistic meeting, yet many came to watch the baptisms and to see their children filled with the Spirit, some boasting that their children were the first to receive the baptism in the Spirit! Time and time again it is the children who have brought their parents to the Lord, rather than vice versa. Also it is the children's marvellous ability to sing in any language they hear, known or unknown, that has made them the life and soul of the Fellowship meetings. They have no qualms about singing at any place and at any time and it is mainly through them that joyful times of praise can now be held in any village as they sing choruses in English, Pidgin, Motu and their own languages. If we had not welcomed them as true believers and as brothers and sisters in the Lord, we would have denied ourselves a great blessing, as well as grieving the Spirit.

As everyone knows, sermons are very dear to the hearts of those who lead services, and Peter and I were no exception. Only when the Spirit had worked on us sufficiently did we begin at last to reorganise both the church building and its services as He showed us He wanted them to be. We had long ago removed all the seating except the occasional chair at the back for visitors with 'frozen-knees'. Now we put a large wooden cross, with a white sheet as a back cloth, in the centre of the wall facing the worshippers. We added a white cardboard dove coming out from behind it. We had read of a group of churches who put a white dove on the roof whenever the Spirit visited them and took it down when they felt the Spirit had gone. We intended to do the same but have almost never had a service when the Spirit did not visit us, so the little dove remains there from week to week. At first we pinned him to the front of the cross but several thought this was inappropriate. Everyone has been happy to have him emerging from behind it. In many visions of the Spirit He has come out of this Cross and sometimes Jesus and the angels have come out of it too.

On each side of the Cross stand blackboards like the wings of a stage. The space behind is very useful for dramas as the players can be hidden behind them. The blackboards are for teaching new hymns, drawing visions, illustrating teachings and listing items for praise and prayer. Below the blackboards and beside the Cross we pin up pictures and Bible verses as visual aids. In front of the Cross is a low communion table and two small forms which are useful for

dramas and for holding teaching aids. There is no pulpit. We use the communion table as an altar for confession and re-dedication and as a gathering point. Sometimes we hang up a big LOVE banner or put seven lit lamps on seven stands, or put bread and a cup on the arms of the Cross. One verse always remains beside the cross: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Next, we began to expect the Spirit to guide us in our worship time. We still had a slip of paper outlining our proposed order of service, but we no longer worried if any or all of it didn't happen. We happily abandoned our sermons, changed the topics of prayer, included totally new topics for teaching or sharing, allowed someone else to give the main or only message and so on. We led the whole meeting from the wall side of the front row of people sitting on the floor, and were careful to have nobody standing literally or figuratively between the people and the Cross. We feel that even this single change quite transformed our worship times. Sometimes people spontaneously came forward and danced before the Lord. Sometimes when worshipping in the Spirit, someone would speak in tongues with interpretation, but we did not specially look for these manifestations. As a result they were not a regular part of the service - but always genuine and exciting if they did occur.

Many years ago I had a dream in which I was leading the service. Just before I was to give the sermon all the people trooped out! In the dream I asked our son Colin where they had gone. He answered, "They don't want sermons; they want to meet in prayer groups." Acting on this message, we started to use group ministry and discussion far more often, and to reduce sermons to a simple story or a sharing time. What wonderful blessings have come from this change! The groups form as the people happen to be sitting and they discuss the verses or subject one of the leaders has introduced. After sharing thoughts, the group goes on to invite all its members to take part in ministry, healing, deliverance, or solving of problems. They sing a song quietly and move out as they finish. Sometimes one group will stay on for an hour or more until the needs of the group members are met. Services normally last two hours because of the relaxed atmosphere, with sharing being encouraged rather than suppressed. Because we are a natural Christian community, everyone is deeply interested in everyone else, so shared items are never boring. Also, almost every experience, dream or vision shared is 'hot from the press'. In fact, I can honestly say that I have never heard anyone give the same testimony twice, unless specially invited to. There is just so much happening today that there is little time to recall the messages and miracles of yesterday.

Chapter 9: Moving With The Spirit

Most of us are understandably afraid to climb on God's operating table and let Him go to work in our personal lives, often without even a local anaesthetic to numb the pain. Yet I do not think we could possibly have found the time, interest, and energy for shepherding the revival unless God had first done a major overhaul of our own lives. There were many areas in which He had to do extensive surgery or even 'total replacements'!

First we made a quiet revolution in our reading habits. We used to have a wide range of detective and thriller type books on our shelves. We justified this on the grounds that firstly, "Doctors need to relax," and secondly, "Non-Christian visitors need something to read." I think the turning-point came when Peter had a very painful back and the Lord said to me, "The trouble is caused by the cover on that book he's reading. " This particular cover was an ugly one: a picture of a skull with one normal eye in it. At first, when I suggested this was the problem, Peter said "Nonsense," but later he thought, "It's foolish to risk a mere book standing in the way of healing." So he agreed to put it in the fire. Of course when his back got better we could think of lots of other possible reasons for the improvement but nevertheless we felt it was time to look carefully at the witness of the books on our shelves.

One problem was library-time. We would say to the trainees, "Take any books you like from the three middle shelves," but inevitably they would pick up some from the "Visitors only" shelves, and we would have to say "Er, I don't think that book is a very good one for you to borrow." At last we decided to make a clean sweep of any book we couldn't gladly recommend to our Christian friends. We finished up by including in the bonfire such old favourites as "King Solomon's Mines" and "Experiences of a New Guinea Magistrate". This was because we felt ashamed of the writers' arrogant attitudes to the Africans and Papua New Guineans, respectively. It is true such books record a historically true picture of the typical European attitude to native peoples, but we felt that anyone finding them on our shelves could fairly assume we saw nothing wrong in such an attitude either. The same could be said of a number of Bible commentaries we had. They fairly describe many Christians' views, e.g. they say miracles are probably 99% psychology and 1% vivid imagination. But again we were concerned that because such books were available for borrowing, people might think we agreed with such views. Some people feel Christians should be given every kind of opinion and then taught to choose between them. We do not agree with this. Time available simply does not allow any Christian to absorb even all the good and true ideas they should, let alone unlimited false ones. Also, many of us are capable of believing in two mutually exclusive ideas at the same time. If we read two convincingly-put explanations of a miracle, we will probably try to believe both!

Next, we embarked on a buying programme to fill up our now half-empty bookcases with faith-building books. For a long time almost every small donation of money went towards the library. This has paid rich dividends, both directly, in developing knowledge of the Bible and understanding of what God is doing today, and indirectly in improving everyone's English, spelling, etc. Most trainees read about twenty books every year. Their list would include relatively long books such as "The Hiding Place", "Anointed for Burial", "God's Smuggler" and many other Christian classics. One of the extraordinary blessings that we Christians today may enjoy is the flood of books written by Christians who have thrown themselves into the adventurous life of the Spirit. Some despise these books, claiming Christians would do better to study doctrine and commentaries, but our experience has been exactly the opposite. We have

learned little or nothing about how to please God from the latter type of book. It has been from the rich treasures of those who have walked through life hand in hand with Jesus that we have gained the greatest benefits.

One day Colin remarked to me, "Mum, if you had more Christian records and cassettes, I would never play anything else." We resolved that this would be our aim and from then on we bought no more secular ones. We gradually gave away those we had, and also consigned a few to the river. Without any persuasion from us the whole Christian community has come to the same conclusion. All they want to hear and sing are songs about Jesus.

Unbelievers find this hard to understand. One 'hippie' that Colin picked up, as he hitched around the world, commented to me, "Don't you think you are very narrow-minded? There is nothing on your book cases except medical and religious books!" I feel the newspaper, the radio news and up-to-date Christian and medical magazines have given us a much broader outlook on life than in the days when we spent our spare time with Earle Stanley Gardner and Agatha Christie. I hope no-one feels I am condemning them for reading those books. Certainly no-one ever condemned us for reading them, or for listening to "The Seekers" and so on, but "When the sun rises we put out the candles", and for us, these books and cassettes were no longer interesting. God had replaced them with something far better.

The last major pruning was in the area of house decoration. Like many other missionaries we used to regard traditional artefacts as mere pieces of wood. If we saw one that was well carved we sometimes bought it to hang on the wall. But books by Don Basham, Nicky Cruz and many others warned us that the connection between demons and such objects was very close. We heard stories of illnesses and mental diseases being associated with houses containing fetishes and other objects taken from spirit-houses. When we thought seriously about it we realised that though we had declared war on Satan yet we were still displaying pictures of his troops on our walls.

I decided to get rid of all the carvings except one. This had been given to us by the nurses as a present at their graduation. I argued that it was different. It had no face. It was just a decoration. A little later Valerie pointed out to me that the traditional two eyes were, in fact, hidden in the pattern. I threw it outside too. We thought it quite appropriate to use some of the carvings as stepping stones. Face down in the mud, under the feet of Christians, is quite like making Jesus' enemies a footstool for His feet! I also had a bedspread with traditional masks as the pattern all over it. I thought, "Surely a piece of cloth is innocent." But after hearing that the workers who design such things often sing magic chants over them to make them sell well to tourists, I was not so sure. I asked the Lord what to do with such good strong cloth and He suggested, "It would make good bedpan covers!" And so it has.

Finally, there were a number of personal choices we consciously made in order to bring our lives as close as we could to Jesus' clear requirements, "None of you can be My disciples unless you give up all you have." To us this meant:

1. giving our whole house to Him. We tried to make sure that the most casual visitor could get the message of salvation from the pictures and texts on the walls, even if he got no farther than the toilet!
2. giving our bank account to Him: trusting Him to handle our finances.
3. giving our holidays to Him.
4. giving our meals to Him, making them as simple as we could, and dropping the time-consuming habit of in-betweens.
5. tithing personal gifts as well as income.

6. giving up our traditions. After a Sunday service discussion on how traditions interfere with obedience to Jesus, we made a conscious effort to identify any New Zealand customs that might do this. We decided that firstly, we have an undue fear about future financial security, and secondly, there is an inappropriate emphasis at Christmas time on eating and on gifts. As a result we decided to discontinue Peter's life insurance policy, and to severely trim the other two items in future Christmases.

Some readers may be thinking, "The poor things! They don't sound as if they ever have any fun." The truth is exactly the opposite. Firstly, we never had any holiday as wonderful as the last one. In fact, it was so exciting I must tell you all about it in the next chapter. Secondly, we have never been so happy and relaxed and free from money worries as we are now. Jesus' words are a hundred percent true. His yoke is easy, His burden is light. When we trusted in the Spirit to lead us and provide for us, it was as if a hundred burdens slid from our shoulders.

Chapter 10: Rock That Boat

In 1979 a Canadian doctor and his wife came here for three months enabling us to take a three month break in New Zealand. Our Mission Board graciously allowed us to spend the whole time as we wished. After much discussion Peter and I drew up an itinerary that covered nearly all our supporting churches and involved much travel. Colin, who was then working with Youth For Christ, decided to come with us. For almost the whole three months, the three of us over and over told the story of the revival or acted it out in short dramas and songs. After each meeting Peter would soon be deep in conversation with the elders, I would usually have some keen young wives to ask me more questions and Colin would go off and yarn with the leaders of the youth groups.

At every meeting we took along Christian books to sell or give away and these were amazingly popular. As many said, "We see these books in Christian bookshop windows, but we have no-one to tell us which ones to buy." A friend gave us a hundred kina as a parting gift in PNG and we spent this on books, replacing them perhaps six or seven times during our tour. Many churches already had book stalls with the same books on sale and while we praised them for that, we also urged them to start lending-libraries too, so that all Christians can read widely and at little cost. Did any church do it? We often wonder.

As we gave the message of revival we hoped to hear many say, "Wonderful! Now tell us how we can have a revival too." Most did not. Again and again we were reminded of a story told by a Bible College principal.

One day his phone rang. "Could you send us a student to take our Sunday service please?" asked his caller.

"Well, I could send you Brother John," he replied, "but I must warn you, if he comes you will get a revival."

Long silence. Then "... Have you got anyone else?"

The churches wanting a revival did not want one like ours. Some churches wanted a lot of people to come to the front, accept Jesus and be filled with the Spirit, then go back to their seats and fit neatly into the existing church structure. Others just wanted more people to join their church. Most churches had no door-to-door or open air witness at all. Most had no plans to take the Gospel to every person even in their own suburb. But perhaps the biggest disappointment was to find that even in churches that had accepted the Pentecostal message many leaders seemed afraid to trust the Spirit to control either their services, or their members. Because of this many New Zealanders still did not hear the Gospel, see anyone baptised or witness signs and wonders. It seemed that everything had to be programmed and nothing could be done without permission. Too many were afraid to do anything new in case the leadership disapproved.

Three ladies approached me at different times about baptism, saying they had asked for it but had been put off. While I was talking to one such lady another came up who commented, "I had no trouble. My minister arranged for me to go to the minister of the Baptist church and he baptised me."

The other said gloomily, "But mine wouldn't hear of that."

I was wondering how Peter and I could fit a baptism into our rather full programme when the obvious solution struck me. I said to the second lady, "It's as simple as ABC! Why don't you baptise her?"

The ladies hugged each other, "Why ever didn't we think of that before?" they said, "We'll go down to the beach and do it at lunch time!" I would dearly love to know whether they did this or whether Satan managed successfully to plant his seeds of doubt and fear before they got there.

Many young people were more than ready to give their lives to the Lord, but because of traditional opposition to altar calls, making 'decisions' and coming forward to repent, they found no chance to do this in Sunday services. As a result many had to wait for a Crusade or an Easter Camp to make their commitment. We all want to take big important steps, such as marriage or baptism, when surrounded by others who feel the importance of the occasion too. It is sad that so many young folk have to wait such a long time before such an opportunity comes to take the biggest and most urgent step of all. Wherever we received permission to have the people minister to each other in small groups, wonderful things happened. People fell on their knees weeping. Others stood up and confessed hardness of heart, jealousy, unforgiveness and so on. Still others confessed their need for prayer for sins over which they could not get victory. The Spirit moved beautifully wherever He was given a loop-hole to enter. Sadly these manifestations of His presence made many uneasy, and we felt the experiment would rarely be repeated after we left. The situation they feared was the same as that described very honestly by an expatriate pastor in the Kapuna area. We had asked him if he would be willing to combine with us on an outreach to Baimuru township. He replied, "My elders are not happy to do this. They say that if you people come, the Holy Spirit will start to move and then they will not be able to control Him!"

Nevertheless much seed fell on good ground. In one home particularly we were filled with joy because of peoples' openness. First, one of the house group members was stricken with a painful stiffness of the neck. She came round with the group and everyone prayed for her, but it was not in the way we were accustomed to do. No-one laid hands on her and after the prayer no-one seemed to expect her to be healed. Instead, everyone just moved out of the lounge to the table where afternoon tea was being served.

I asked her if she would like to talk quietly somewhere and she said she would. We went to my bedroom, and after sharing for a while, I taught her how to pray for healing. I told her to tell Jesus just what she wanted Him to do for her, and then to thank Him that He was doing it and to look with expectancy to see if He had. We did this and when I helped her take off the enormous collar she was wearing, "to see if He had", He had! She really praised God and so did we all. There was a big concert a night or two later, and a few days after that I heard someone ask her if she had been to it. She said she had and her friend commented how much she had enjoyed it. Quickly she spoke up, "You couldn't have enjoyed yourself as much as I did. Jesus healed me just in time for it!" How good it was to hear her fearlessly praise Jesus for His blessing.

A few days later, we were speaking to the Bible Class and after the talk we asked them to divide into groups for prayer ministry. Our host decided to ask for prayer for his long-standing deafness and to his great surprise and delight he was healed and could again hear his watch tick. When we arrived home he was so excited when he heard his wife speak in the next room: he could hear through the wall, the first time for years.

Peter and I often related stories of times when "God spoke to us." Our hostess thought one day, "I wonder if He would speak to me too? I'll try. I'll ask Him whether I should let our daughter get baptised."

So she did, and to her surprise, He answered her. She related the story to me next day, "And do you know what He said? You'd never guess. He said, 'Of course, and what about yourself too?!' "

As so many of us have found, it's quite dangerous to ask God questions unless you are ready to act on the answers. She now had no inner peace till she had shared with her family that baptism was indeed God's will for all His children. The biggest problem was finding a way to baptise them that was acceptable to their church. It was out of the question for their minister to do it. Nor was he happy for them to go to another church to receive it. The sea? Too far. The river? Too dangerous. The swimming pool? Too unfriendly. At last we ventured the suggestion, "Is it alright for them to be baptised in their own house?" and to this the answer was, "What a man does in his own house is his own business." A hole in the hedge at last!

Our host called his children aside as they came home from work or school and told them the plan.

"We're all getting baptised tonight and I'm just going out to buy the sparkling grape-juice!" A friend of the family was also invited, as, although baptised in water, he had not received the Spirit and wished to have prayer for this.

We prepared the bathroom with lots of towels on the floor to soak up the drips and ran a nice full bath. Then the family crowded in to watch as Peter and I baptised the husband. Then he baptised his wife, and finally they both baptised their three children. Peter and I then went to one bedroom to pray for the parents, while Colin and the two girls, both of whom had already been baptised in the Spirit, prayed for their brother. When all were sure the Spirit had shown His presence in their hearts, we gathered for a hearty love feast of bread and grape-juice, with prayers and joyful singing, making melody to the Lord in our hearts. This whole family continues to witness boldly for Jesus and the freedom He brings, in a way that no other family we visited does. Such is the heady experience of tasting the joys of complete obedience to Jesus' words.

Another incident that occurred while we were in this area is worth recording for the lesson it taught us. One evening after we had told our revival story to a large group of people, mainly dairy farmers and their families, one of the wives present asked, "I have had prayer for the Spirit but nothing happened. Why do you think I didn't receive anything?"

Peter answered her immediately, "The commonest reason in our experience is the presence of an evil spirit." I was slightly shocked at his statement, wondering how the lady would react, but she merely looked thoughtful and did not pursue the matter.

A day or two later she came around to see us. This was her story. "Some time ago a colour therapist visited us. He suggested we buy skeins of embroidery silks of different colours. He would choose certain colours, and if we put these in our calf-shed then the calves would not get diarrhoea, but would be healthy and fat. Strangely enough it really did seem to work. Then someone told us this was not a good thing for Christians to do, so my husband took them out of the shed and told me to burn them. However, I thought they would do nicely for our small girl to use when learning sewing, so I put them away in a drawer instead. After Peter's talk I made a fire outside and threw them on it. Then last night I said to my husband, 'I wonder if it was those colour-therapy cottons that were blocking you and me from receiving the freedom to pray in tongues.' He said, 'But we burnt those ages ago.' So I had to tell him I hadn't burnt them then, but now I had done so. We went to bed and soon I heard a funny noise. I sat up and listened, thinking it was a hedgehog under the house, but it was coming from my husband. I asked him what was the matter and he said, 'I think I'm trying to speak in tongues. I'll go out to the kitchen so as not to disturb you.' Sure enough he came back speaking in tongues! I lay there praising God and soon it was his turn to ask me, 'What are you talking like that for?' I said, 'I think I'm

trying to speak in tongues, I'll just go out to the kitchen so I don't disturb you.' So I went out and now we both know how to pray in the Spirit!"

The lesson we need to learn is that all over the world there is the same battle going on, with the devil often deceiving even the elect, with his own brand of miracles and wonders.

At this same church I was invited to visit a Sunday School class. No restrictions were put on my subject, so I told them the story of how I gave my own life to the Lord when I was no older than they were and how He had been close to me ever since. I had prepared many small cards with similar words to that tract of long ago. The teachers took two or three each and the children went into classes. Soon there was a steady stream of children coming for more cards and then each brought them back to show me that they had signed it. After the children left I wondered what the teachers would say to me. I need not have worried. It was, "Praise the Lord! Our whole Sunday School has got saved!"

One teacher pointed out that many years of faithful teaching had prepared the way and the children were ready. How very true. But someone must harvest the crop. I would say there are thousands of children ready for this step, but seldom does anyone give them a chance. Some say they are too young. I believe a child is old enough to love Jesus when he is old enough to know he loves his mother. Satan does not wait till any specific age before beginning his tricks and temptations. Let's get in ahead of him and tell our children they can ask Jesus to come and live in their heart just as soon as they are old enough to say the words. I was greatly encouraged when the mother of one of the little girls who chose Jesus that day, made the opportunity to tell me how much it had meant to her little girl to know she now belonged to a loving Saviour.

I have just been reading a story in Billy Graham's Decision magazine. At a big meeting Billy urged the children present to lead their parents to the Lord. One small boy pleaded with his father in these words, "Daddy, go up on the field and give your heart to Jesus. Jesus loves you, Daddy, and He wants to live in your heart. He died on the cross for our sins. Don't you love Jesus, Daddy? Don't you want Him to live in your heart?" He was only four, but he knew how to witness. This has been our own experience too. Let us trust the Holy Spirit to finish the work Jesus commands us to begin. Let us abandon the feeble excuse that: "They might fall away and bring disgrace on the name of the church." I am sure Jesus is well able to take care of the honour of His name and His Church's name, and we should be content to accept the strategy He has given us and simply carry out His instructions to "preach the Gospel to everyone".

At the end of our holiday we counted up the profits and losses. We had spoken in about thirty churches, sometimes only once, sometimes several times. Not one had given us a cold reception, though individuals may have sometimes been upset at our message that baptism in water and the Spirit were still God's requirements for entering the Kingdom of God. In every congregation, even the coldest and most formal, we had found at least one 'brother' or 'sister' who had rejoiced to hear the message of the new life in the Spirit "shouted from the housetops". They had often been trying to give the same message to their husband, to the session or to the pastor. They too knew that God has so much more waiting for His people than just regular attendance at a worship service, a chance to sing in the choir, and to teach the approved syllabus in Sunday School. In almost every home Colin had found teenagers eager to move with God, but not knowing how to get started. Frequently they were let down by their own Christian leaders who were just too nervous to do anything that might upset someone, no matter how scriptural it was.

I was often reminded of a conversation I once had at Kapuna with a village headmaster who had successfully prevented a boy from his upper class from giving his life to the Lord. "Why did you do such a thing?" I asked, "You know Jesus commanded us to go and preach the gospel and baptise those who believed." "Yes, I know," he said, "but the Bishop told me not to." "But what will you say to Jesus when you meet Him in heaven?" I prodded him. "I don't know what I will

say," he admitted. Then he brightened up, "But I do know what I will say when I meet the Bishop." It was very clear whom he feared meeting the most!

Chapter 11: New Wineskins

In 1980 the Kapuna Fellowship decided to openly separate itself from the church it had come from. This step was taken only after many attempts to convince our church leaders that it was God Himself who was doing the stirring amongst us. Peter and I spent hours talking to individuals. We also sent a circular on the revival to every leader in our church, explaining why we baptised in water and prayed for the baptism in the Spirit. But it seemed to be all to no avail. The rock of stumbling was the church rule that Bible College education and ordination were essential before anyone could be licensed to baptise or conduct communion.

It was true that Peter had been so 'licensed' at least as far as communion at Kapuna went, but this licence gave him no right to permit others to do these things. There was no doubt that every day at Kapuna the myth was being shattered that ordination was, in the eyes of God, necessary for these two activities. God was continually showing His approval of the actions of this 'laymen's church' by filling their new converts with the Spirit, and by giving the people visions that showed He loved and approved of the new fellowships.

The scriptural basis for our actions lay in Matthew 28:19-20, where we saw a 'Christian chain reaction'. We believed that Jesus meant "Go, make disciples, baptise them, then teach them to go, make disciples, baptise and teach them in turn to go . . ." and so on until the earth be as full of the glory of the Lord as the waters that cover the sea. We noticed how Peter commanded the Joppa believers to baptise Cornelius and his household, showing that he didn't regard baptism as the privilege of the most authoritative person present. Paul also made it very clear that baptising was a job he left his new converts to do (1 Cor. 1:14-17). Consequently Paul was able to say, "This gospel has been preached to everyone in the world" (Coloss. 1:23). Who knows, perhaps even today, if a miracle should happen so that once again every Christian had his original rights restored, we would once again see the world evangelised in our generation.

One of the lessons God has clearly taught us is that the validity of the baptism in His eyes, depends on the heart of the one being baptised; yet the Spirit seems to flow very sluggishly, if at all, if the person baptising and praying for him to receive the Spirit, is out of order in his own spiritual life. We have seen men, set aside in the official manner of the church, conducting baptisms and communion in a bored or careless manner, and nothing appears to happen in the hearts of those they are ministering to. On the other hand we have found that blessing often flows when even the newest Spirit-filled Christian is baptising or sharing out the Lord's supper. We feel that the fears of these matters being handled badly by ordinary unordained Christians are groundless, provided they are Spirit-filled Christians living close to the Lord.

When we wrote to the Church Headquarters to tell them our plans to form a fellowship, the leaders, needless to say, were greatly concerned. Conditions were laid down for 'reconciliation'. Predictably, these were that we should stop baptising and stop allowing Christians to take communion in their homes and in groups in the church services. We felt we could not possibly go back to the old ways of doing these things.

As well as the rising opposition from church headquarters, there was an increasing hostility to the new converts at village level. The church did not recognise them as properly baptised believers because many had never been baptised by an ordained person, and those who had been baptised this way, by accepting another baptism had, of course, implied that the earlier baptism was in some way inadequate.

Soon we were hearing that these new Christians were being refused communion at church gatherings. At one Sunday service the visiting pastor asked, "Who has been baptised in the river?" Many children and the Aid Post Orderly put their hands up. "You must all leave," he said, "I don't want to have you people mixed with the others." This story had its humorous side. The Aid Post Orderly and the children left and had their own communion elsewhere. But towards evening the minister came round to the APO's house and asked very meekly if he might stay with him as no-one else could accommodate him for the night! The APO, I am glad to say, gave him a warm welcome, heaping we suspect, at least a few coals of fire on his head.

Two girls baptised in their village during the school holidays returned to Kerema High School on fire for the Lord. Soon others were clamouring to share this exciting 'secret', and they wrote to me asking what to do. I suggested that as they knew no-one who was willing to baptise their converts they should go down to the sea on the weekend and do it themselves. This they did, but there was no way they could keep it quiet; the group was so filled with the Spirit everyone heard what had happened. There was great consternation in the school and the two girls were given punishment, being made to carry heavy stones up to the school from the beach; but they told me afterwards, "We didn't mind. We were so happy!" The group grew so strong that the church could not control them even though officially they were its Youth Fellowship. Led by the Provincial dentist, they began market witnessing. This aroused intense opposition, so they were stopped from using the church premises and from attending services as a group.

At other schools children were threatened with expulsion, and their worship meetings were disturbed by organised shouting and loud singing outside their meeting-place. Later on pressure lamps used for the meetings were destroyed and the meetings themselves were frequently broken up. On one occasion the riot was led by the pastor in person!

More and more we became embarrassed at being part of a church that was treating the new converts so badly, and of course, more and more of the 'mud' that was being thrown was falling on us personally. Such a serious step as deciding to leave the church we had served for 20 years could only be taken after we were sure it was truly God's will. When we began to seek this we were not left in doubt for long. Some of the messages were direct. For example, one Christian said to me, "Jesus says, 'Get out of the building before it falls down'."

Others were in the form of dreams showing the relationship that was developing between the fellowships and the church. Here is one such dream: "I was with a group of nurses on the beach catching fish. Nearby was a river mouth and down the river came a ship. The passengers on the ship saw us catching fish and began to jump out of the boat to help us. This made the captain very angry and he told them to stop. They took no notice of him and ran to us. They began to catch fish too. Suddenly a great storm arose and all the girls and their fish were taken up to heaven. The fish became people as they went up. But the boat, its captain and those passengers who had not left it, sank into the waves and disappeared." Another Christian saw two trees. The smaller one was covered with fruit and each person could pick one fruit. She could either eat it or plant it but not both. Nearby was a bigger tree but it had no fruit on it. The Lord said, "Pray for the tree with no fruit." She understood that the bigger tree referred to the church but the smaller one was a picture of the fellowship. She felt the Christians in the fellowship could choose to just enjoy their personal salvation or could plant more revivals. We have followed the command to pray for the bigger tree and have one prayer period a week when we lift up the different church leaders to God.

I should at this stage make it clear the church concerned is divided into five regions and these remarks are meant to apply only to our own region. In the other regions revivals have been supported or even led by the pastors. On the other hand some of these revivals seem to have died out because they are necessarily limited to the area the church controls through its village

pastors. When the right, or even duty, to baptise is accepted by every believer, there is truly no knowing where the influence of a revival will end.

It was for all these reasons that we decided to form the new fellowship. We planned to celebrate this with a special service so that everyone could make their own decision as to whether they would join it or not. We did not ask beforehand how many were prepared to do this. We knew some had said they wanted to leave the old wine-skins and live in the new but we also knew that most of them would like to move with the crowd. We thought that probably either all would join it or no-one would, not even those who had said they would. We knew it was not an easy decision for them because most of the trainees and staff were from our own church. What would their parents and pastors say when they heard what they had done?

We drew a very large chalk cross on the floor before the service began. Then we acted a play to show the significance of what we planned to do. It was based on a story I had read of a simple village church in Africa. Each Sunday the African Christians would mark out 'the Kingdom of God' in sticks and stones, leaving a narrow 'gate' where two leading men would stand. They would challenge each arrival with the words, "What right do you have to enter the Kingdom of God?" If there was anything on the person's conscience he was encouraged to confess it, especially as a small fire was lit near the gate to remind him of the fire of hell, ready to receive liars and cowards. In our enactment of this we had many answering with the traditional but wrong reasons, e.g. "I've been a deacon for seven years," or, "I was baptised twenty years ago. Here's my certificate to prove it." But even those who said, "Jesus is my Lord," were further challenged: "Not all who say 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the Kingdom, but those who do the will of My Father. Have you done what the Lord told you to do?" Some were able to answer: "Yes, I have been born of water and the Spirit, and, yes, I do love and forgive others." Others had to go away and repent or make peace with their neighbours before they were allowed to enter. In this way then, the conditions were laid down for entering, and for staying in the fellowship.

We then invited all those who wished in future to simply have the name "Christian", with no denominational tie or support, to stand up and step forward into the cross. A few courageous ones immediately got up and stepped in. There was a short pause, and then, as one man, the whole congregation ran forward and crowded into it. Only two or three remained in their places, all of whom were patients present only as visitors. We then faced in each of the four directions north, south, east and west and proclaimed to each corner of the compass, "Jesus is Lord."

Many years ago, as Peter and I well remembered, several churches in P.N.G., including our own, were planning to unite. One senior missionary suggested that instead of having a statement of doctrine and a constitution, we simply agree: "Jesus is Lord of this church." His wise advice, if followed, would have saved years and years of arguments! This simple confession of faith has proved completely adequate, not only for the Kapuna Fellowship, but also for all the other fellowships that have arisen in villages touched by the revival. Up until today they have continued without any divisions or arguments whatsoever over points of doctrine.

We have often had to list the important differences between these fellowships and a typical church congregation, and I feel this list may be helpful to others. Each difference is, we believe, a move nearer to the type of group Jesus planned to be His Body on earth.

1. There is no permanent leadership. Leaders arise as the need arises. If a leader falls away or moves away another unobtrusively takes over the leadership. As a rule, decisions are made by the whole group, they are made by discussion and prayer rather than by voting. This fits PNG traditional thinking very well.

2. Funds are raised and spent, on the initiative of the group. Most of their money is used to buy petrol to visit other fellowships. Leaders are not paid. They all belong to the villages where they are acting as leaders.

3. Believer's baptism, Spirit baptism, deliverance, laying hands on the sick, and anointing with oil are all an essential part of every group's ministry.

4. No titles are used; everyone is addressed as 'brother' or 'sister'.

5. At worship services all are encouraged to share, join in the group prayers, bring a teaching, a song, a dream or vision, an experience or a testimony. There is much emphasis on the importance of sharing, because only in this way is every Christian encouraged. It is sad that in a traditional service the leader in particular often feels no one prayed for his special needs.

6. There is much emphasis on the importance of forgiveness. All are encouraged to solve their problems before coming to the fellowship meeting. Frequently, we have someone waiting at the entrance who will question believers about this. The discipline of the fellowship members is in the hands of the whole Christian group, not of the leaders. If a group let their fellowship die through undealt-with sins, we do give advice if asked, but we do not insist on any particular course of action being followed. It is God's family, not ours. However, we have introduced one helpful way for a backslider to show personal repentance.

When studying John, it seemed that Jesus' words to His disciples after He had washed their feet had special meaning for the backslider. Jesus said, "Whoever has taken a bath is completely clean and does not have to wash himself, except for his feet." (John 13:10). We took this to mean that someone who has been baptised does not need repeated baptisms just because he has sinned again. He only needs to have Jesus or another Christian wash his feet. The foot-washing is sometimes done in the church, but often takes place in the river when others are being baptised. It has been a moving thing to see a once prominent leader who has fallen away, come and ask for this simple act to be done publicly for him. One of the most meaningful times was when a husband and wife quarrelled. After repenting and forgiving each other they suggested they also publicly wash each others feet; and this they did before a hushed congregation.

7. Some fellowships have agreed to keep certain rules they have decided on for themselves, e.g. no pagan funeral customs, no lucky charms, no betel nut chewing, no smoking and so on.

But to return to our first meeting as a Fellowship. This meeting finished by the group breaking into fives or sixes for ministry. Later we found that among our congregation of sixty or seventy, six people had been prayed for and were healed that day! Also one girl saw Jesus come in carrying an Eastern type lamp, already lit. He took it up to the Cross and placed it in front of it. Then He disappeared, leaving the lamp just sitting in the air. We all felt this meant Jesus had accepted us as a church with our own lamp and angel (Rev. 1:20).

Why should Jesus bless such a small and unimportant group with His visible presence? One evening many of the nurses were 'in the Spirit', enjoying a visit to heaven. One girl saw a big city with a wall around it, and many angels standing on the wall waving palm branches. She and many of her friends were riding in a chariot going up to the city. A gate opened in the city wall and Jesus came out to meet them.

She asked Him, "Why are the angels welcoming us like this? We are not important."

"No," He answered, "you are not important, but there are two reasons why the angels have put on a special welcome for you. One is that you are united. The other is that there is One with you who is important." It is indeed the presence of the Spirit that comforts and guides us and keeps peace in our hearts when many misunderstand our actions and doubt our motives.

Chapter 12: Praying and Prospering

Paul says to "pray without ceasing". Once we dismissed this as 'just another impossible command', and thought we did well to spend five minutes on this exercise before we went to bed. 'Quiet times', 'spending time with the Lord', 'listening to the Lord', and 'meditating on the Word' were phrases that meant nothing to us and we would have classed anyone who described prayer in these terms as rather fanatical. Yet every real saint seems to have built his or her life on prayer, and in time, the Lord began to tell us we were not to try to be exceptions to the rule. My excuse had always been: "You can't expect me to spend much time in prayer with a husband and four children to look after." Peter's was, "You can't expect me to spend much time in prayer when I am often up at night to patients."

Finally I gave in and conceded a point, "Alright Lord, the children are all grown up and have gone away. I can't say I'm too tired but I am too sleepy. You will just have to wake me, I'm not going to use an alarm clock and wake everyone in the house." (Many nurses sleep in our house, not to mention visitors, etc.). That was about six years ago and since then my heavenly quiet-time alarm clock has only failed me on perhaps a couple of dozen occasions, and these have usually been after a night of calls to the hospital. In the same way the Lord convinced Peter that even busy doctors need to visit the 'Superintendent's Office' before starting the day's work. He too has often testified how valuable is the time spent in the early mornings with the Lord. We often lay the difficult hospital problems before Him then, and many times He has told us the right treatment or the right diagnosis. We find these morning times of silence and tranquillity are the most beautiful hour of a tropical day. They make the whole day go smoothly and satisfyingly and as a result we have lost all interest in the old pleasure of 'sleeping in'.

As well as teaching us the truth of the Moslem call to prayer, "To pray is better than to sleep", God also convicted us about being ashamed to pray in front of others. Gradually we learnt to pray openly on air strips, in the canoe, in the hospital and during all kinds of emergencies. One of the reasons for our old style 'duty praying' was that we had not realised how eager Jesus was to talk to us. I remember one of our sons having earache. I came into the room where he was lying and said, "Let's pray for your ear, Alan."

He replied, feeling, I am sure, very unselfish, "Do you think it is important enough to pray for? What about praying for Ted to find a boarding place next year instead?"

That is exactly the picture I once had of God too. I thought of Him as a super executive sitting coolly among a million telephones, with heads of churches and presidents of nations all clamouring for His attention on such major issues as nuclear warfare, famine in Bangladesh, or even perhaps whether women can baptise! Somehow we had missed the message of Colossians 1:27 that "Christ is in us", not as a vague presence with His mind a million miles away thinking about other and more important people's problems, but living quietly inside us, with no-one to talk to but ourselves! As someone put it so neatly, "Jesus is talking to me all the time, all the time, ALL THE TIME! I want to be listening all the time, all the time, ALL THE TIME!"

As he gradually became Lord of our whole lives, our whole conversation, and eventually our every thought, seemed to have to pass through His throne room in our heart for approval. If we tried to slip an idea, or a plan, past Him, thinking He would not notice, we were always made aware that this action had dimmed the fellowship we enjoyed with Him. As I was reading Malachi I could see why this is so. There we read that God accuses the people of "saying terrible

things about Me." The people ask, "What terrible things?" God answers, "You say, 'It's useless to serve God. Evil men not only prosper, they test God's patience with their evil deeds and get away with it.' " (Mal. 3:13-15). In other words, every time we think either that others or ourselves can get away with evil deeds, or that He doesn't notice those who serve Him, we are treating God as if He were a deaf and dumb idol!

These are some other key points we found we had to keep practising and reminding ourselves to do:

1. We had to stop just saying our bodies were given to the Lord, and start acting as if they were. This meant that every time we damaged them by a careless action we had to ask the Lord's forgiveness, usually verbally for all to hear.

2. Every time God answered a prayer for a patient we had to remember to give Him the credit for it, praising His name on the ward rounds; again, we had to make ourselves do this for all to hear, not easy at first.

3. Whenever we lost things we had to learn to ask God to show us where they were and then as He did this to thank Him for it.

4. We had to learn to begin every 'procedure', whether it be pulling out a tooth or posting an important letter, with an acknowledgement that only God's power could achieve the desired result.

Jesus said plainly that no-one can be His disciple unless he gives up everything he has. There are many good arguments put forward to prove Jesus didn't really mean us to give all our possessions to the poor, e.g. it would cause economic chaos if all Christians did this. But we were not interested in arguments and had committed ourselves to believing Jesus' commands were meant to be obeyed. We truly desired the pearl of great price and were willing to sell all we had to possess it. But just how did one understand this parable? (Matt. 13:45-46).

We studied the solutions some other Christians had reached. The first teaching we looked at was "God wants all Christians to be rich, so expect Him to give you far more than you have now." Did this mean we should expect a 60hp outboard to replace our 25hp? Fancy clothes for our trade store ones? A big bank balance for our small one?

While not denying there are many good points in such an argument, we felt the solution put forward by Juan Carlos Ortiz was more consistent with Jesus' life-style and that of His disciples. (Heb. 10:34, Acts 4:32). Put briefly, it was this: Dedicate everything to God. Accept that from His kindness He will allow us to use much of it, but never argue with Him when He wishes any of it to be given away, lent or spent. It is His already, not our own. And as well as this, give at least one tenth away.

So after much discussion this is what the early group decided to do. (I say 'early group' because some later on felt the degree of commitment was more than they wished to make.) We would give away all the possessions that we could spare, that is, we would not give away a spade and then go and buy another, but we would give away plates, knives, etc. that were not being used daily. We would especially decide how many towels, sheets, shirts, etc we needed, and if we bought a new one or someone gave us a new one, we would give away an old one to keep the number the same. We would willingly lend our houses, beds and bedding to travellers even if it meant we slept on the floor. We would dedicate to the Lord all items which He might find useful in His service, e.g. guitars, cassette players, outboards, and our houses. This helped to remind us not to play secular music on our cassette players and not to hire our outboard to doubtful people no matter how much they offered us for its use. Finally we dedicated our time to Him, 24 hours a day, while we had breath.

Two changes became noticeable immediately. Monthly giving shot up from 50 Kina a month to over K300 a month. We had always given almost all the collection money away anyway, but now it became really exciting to dispose of Jesus' riches for Him. Many of the Christians still wanted to send money to their home areas and this we did, but instead of the individual trainee sending K10, we all joined in and sent K50 or a K100. We had many a blessing from sending gifts to ministries that were just beginning or were little known. One I specially remember concerned the Tega Fellowship, an independent Fellowship like ours, in the Western Highlands. We heard of their sadness when one of their leading Christians was killed in an accident and felt we would like to show our concern, so we sent a gift to help his widow. Later we heard that the people were quite overwhelmed at the unexpectedness and timeliness of the gift. They themselves had no spare money to help the widow, and yet they knew they should do so.

At first we thought that giving money directly to patients would cause jealousy, but this has not happened. It is done in the name of the Lord and if anyone says, "But what about me?" the other patients themselves quickly reply, "But you don't come from a distant village like he does," or, "You have a son to look after you; you're all right. But that old woman has no-one." Usually we give about K25 a month to individual poor patients, spend another K100 or so on outreach, while the rest goes to the many wonderful organisations in PNG and other parts of the world who spend the Lord's money wisely.

The other big change was that suddenly we all 'had time' for the Lord's work. This was, of course, obtained at the 'cost' of stopping other activities. For example, many lost all interest in sport, others played only friendly games and no longer practised strenuously with the view to winning competitions. The nurses lost interest in 'parties', though a fun and games evening was always popular. Meals were gladly given up to share in witnessing and baptisms. Talk went on far into the night to share experiences with relations and friends. Many rose early for prayer and all spent much more time reading their Bibles than they used to. They gave of their 'free' time cheerfully to practise songs and plays for outreaches and were never too tired to join in prayer for sick or frightened patients, even though this might mean an hour or more of wrestling with an evil spirit or counselling a person with a problem.

There was often a conflict between common-sense and the commitment we had made. For example, our senior nurses were to sit their final Government examinations soon after revival broke out. It seemed wise for them to stay behind to study instead of going on village outreach. But among this group were not only some of the keenest evangelists but also some of the most fluent speakers of the local languages. We suggested they pray about the problem and were not surprised, though slightly apprehensive, when they told us they had decided to go. Those against the revival criticised them and us, saying that when they failed we would have only ourselves to blame! We all prayed very earnestly for them, asking God to sharpen their wits when they were studying, as academically they were a very average group. When their results came out we really gave glory to God - all had passed, and of the five distinctions given in Papua New Guinea they had gained three, as well as two of the three credits given!

Another way that we 'prospered through giving' arose out of Revelation 3:20. In this verse there is a lovely picture of Jesus' relationship with the individual Christian: "I will eat with him and he will eat with Me." We decided to combine this picture with that in Acts 2:46. We took the 'glad and humble' hearts to mean the poor were not ashamed to invite the rich to their houses and the rich did not make the poor feel embarrassed when they in their turn invited a poor one to their homes. So we began a system we called 'Fellowship Meals'. A Fellowship meal is always between two people, never more. Each brings the foods would normally have eaten that night and the two plates of food are then shared equally between them. In this way no extra time is spent in buying, preparing, or cooking. There is ample time for sharing Christian experiences as well as the food, and both go away refreshed in body and spirit. At first we suggested people

invite someone they did not often talk to, e.g. all the senior nurses would invite all the juniors to eat with them in various nooks and corners. Lately we have found it better to make a roster, as some people still tended to be left out. This custom has been particularly good for helping people such as visitors to get to know the PNG Christians as individuals, and also helps the staff, and us, to take a real personal interest in each trainee.

Chapter 13: Witnessing Boldly

I have already explained how we began to share the gospel with new patients as they arrived. This often led to unexpected results. For example, one woman brought her small child here with a broken leg. Her husband had violently objected to her coming but she had ignored him. My team-mate and I witnessed to her but she was evasive, saying first she knew nothing but wanted to hear the message, and later on that she was already a Christian but had drifted away. Finally she said she would discuss the matter with her husband when he came. A week later he turned up, quite friendly and smiling as he saw his little daughter perfectly happy in her traction apparatus. His wife told him the message we had given her and he said cautiously, "You do what you like; it's nothing to do with me." So she gave her life to the Lord and was baptised. A little later he dreamed that Moses stood beside him and told him to open the Bible and read it. The dream was so real he came under conviction, dashed over to the orderlies' house at about five in the morning and demanded to be baptised immediately! I saw him the day after his baptism sitting in the market enthusiastically telling two other men all about Jesus.

Occasionally I have felt led to hurry people into a decision because they were near to death. There was Kaiki who had severe heart disease. After her baby was born she developed pneumonia. I asked her if she wanted to give her life to the Lord and she did, so we baptised her with 'Aaron's baptism' (Lev. 8:24), the right ear, the right thumb, and the right big toe, and left her, praying her husband might return from a journey in time to see her. He came just an hour later and had half an hour with her before she died. That night one of the girls dreamed she saw Kaiki walking up a beautiful path into the arms of Jesus.

Epe was a single girl who had a baby. It died of starvation and she arrived here with severe tuberculosis, weighing less than 30kg. We witnessed to her, but she made no response. Another night I saw one of our most earnest Christian orderlies, Emmanuel, pleading with her to accept the Lord. But she refused again. Then she suddenly became much worse as her tuberculosis took a new turn. Once again we told her the way of salvation and this time she nodded her head and in a whisper, a few words at a time, confessed her sins and asked the Lord into her heart. A mug of water stood near her bed and we used that to seal it. Two days later she returned to her village and died there.

Auaa's story was a little different. She came here with a very distended abdomen having passed nothing for several days. For another week she grew steadily worse. We tried the normal procedures to help her but eventually she seemed to give up hope of getting better and did not want any more treatment. We had told her the way of salvation when she first came and she had seemed interested, but we had felt she was too sick to be asked to make a decision. Now we spoke to her again and this time she weakly nodded, indicating she wanted to give her life to the Lord. Again we 'baptised' her just with the water that was handy. To our great surprise, soon after this she began to pass worms and suddenly her problem was over and her abdomen began to go down like a pricked balloon. After a few weeks she was strong enough to walk short distances, so I reminded her she had agreed that if the Lord healed her she would later be baptised in the river. She looked very doubtful about it but admitted she had said this. A few days later others were being baptised, so we went along with the stretcher to take her to the baptism place. All her doubts suddenly seemed much bigger than her faith.

"What will I do?" she asked the other ladies sitting with her on the verandah, obviously hoping they would say, "Don't go." But one of the ladies happened to be a new Christian, just baptised herself a few weeks before, and she very strongly urged her to take the same step. So we carried her away feeling rather as if we were taking a sheep to the slaughter! Once we arrived at the river bank she began to enjoy herself and even stood up to watch the others being baptised. As we brought the stretcher up out of the water she seemed much happier and welcomed our prayers for her to receive the Spirit, though she did not speak in tongues as most do. Many Christians helped her with encouragement and teaching and at last she herself began to witness to others. How excited she was when one day she led another patient to the Lord. This time she went along to pray for her friend to receive the Spirit and, to everyone's delight, as she prayed for her friend she herself began to praise the Lord in tongues. Her two sons were found to have tuberculosis while she was here, so she stayed quite a long time with us and really cried when she had to say goodbye to Kapuna and go home.

But I must not give the impression we have continuous success. One day I was called to see Kau'u, another tuberculosis patient, because she had collapsed in the kitchen. I dashed over to their village-type building, clambered up the bamboo ladder, and saw she was already at her last gasp. Supported by her son, she lay back taking an occasional laboured breath.

"Is she a Christian?" I asked hurriedly.

"No," replied the son.

I spoke to her urgently, "Kau'u, do you want to ask Jesus into your heart? Do you want Him to forgive your sins?"

Still with her eyes shut she nodded feebly.

"Tell Him so then," I told her.

Very haltingly she managed to say, "Jesus, I'm sorry for my many sins. Forgive me. Come and live inside me. Thank you Jesus." On this occasion it was a cup of cold tea we used to baptise her. I left her, feeling sure she would die in a short time. But to my great surprise, next day she was ever so much better and in a few days was fully recovered. So I went back and said to her she must now give her life to Jesus in front of the group and be baptised the way Jesus was. Much to my chagrin she laughed the whole incident off and refused to do anything further. She recovered and went home and is still well as far as I know.

Let me tell one last story to show how deeply God cares about lost souls and how daring we may be in accepting even feeble commitments as signs of God's Spirit working in people's hearts. (Readers must remember we are in a normal New Testament situation here: a persecuted church offering absolutely no social or political advantage in becoming a Christian, but rather the opposite.)

One of our first year nurses, as so frequently happens, had accepted Christ as soon as the other nurses witnessed to her. Her mother was here sick and we suggested she go and tell her the Gospel too. This she did and came back to say her mother wanted to be baptised. Wondering if she had given the whole message I went down with her to see her mother. Sure enough the old lady said she wished to be baptised. When I asked her about confession and repentance she was not so keen and we thought she should have a few days to think it over. Well, a few days later she died, quite unexpectedly. Her daughter, Walo, felt very sad for her mother. Sometimes the girls would buy a fish in the market and cook it but Walo would not eat it. She would say, "It is the fish my mother used to cook. I can't eat it."

One night she dreamed about heaven. She saw her mother there with Jesus and was quite surprised.

Her mother said, "Yes, I am here with Jesus even though you people wouldn't baptise me. Now, you must stop mourning for me. As you can see, I am quite alright. And you must eat that fish that I used to cook." Walo woke up feeling really comforted and after that she never refused fish again.

As well as witnessing to the patients, God has given us many wonderful opportunities to share our faith with people far and near. For example, the Christian Medical Society invited Peter and me to speak at its meeting, held while all the doctors were in Port Moresby for their annual Symposium. Peter spoke first on the revival and recounted some of the healings we had seen. Then Peter and I acted a small play with our daughter Valerie (also a doctor), to show how prayer for healing is not only practised but taught to others. Finally I told several stories of healing by deliverance from evil spirits. All this took some courage, as not all Christian doctors believe in healing through prayer, let alone in the reality of spirits and their ability to cause disease. We waited rather apprehensively for the surgeon chairing the meeting to sum up the evening. To our surprise he simply said, "I thought I knew all there was to know about prayer for healing. Now I see how much more I have to learn."

One day Peter received an invitation to speak at a public meeting organised by the top church body, the Assembly. The title of the meeting was: "The church and the Charismatic Renewal". At first Peter thought it wise to decline, pointing out that much of what he would have to say would not be popular, and those criticised might feel it unfair that they could not answer his charges. However those organising the meeting assured him he was free to say whatever he wished. Two other people spoke that night and though none had heard what the others were going to say, their messages tied in so neatly with Peter's that no open-minded person could have failed to perceive that the Spirit of God was moving in a new and wonderful way in the hearts of the Papua New Guinean people.

Peter gave a final challenge in these words: "If you feel the renewal is not in line with the Scriptures, tell me, where does it contradict it? If it is in line, why not become part of what God is doing today?"

His first challenge was not taken up. We hope many may have taken up the second one.

I was invited to speak at a gathering of Christian women in the Southern Highlands. Revival had been very strong there several years earlier but some of the leaders had been embarrassed by its manifestations, perhaps feeling out of their depth in areas such as deliverance and baptism in the Spirit. I had a wonderful chance to talk to the ladies about praising God in everything, about prayer for healing and sharing the Gospel. Some, quite naturally, were concerned lest I stir up too much revival dust, and I was careful to ask how far I could go in the Sunday sermon I had been asked to give. I honestly tried to be cool and calm about what God was doing, but was not too surprised to receive a mild rebuke from the minister conducting the service. I had spoken enthusiastically of the wonderful messages we had received in dreams and visions, messages relating to baptism, receiving the Spirit and repentance. So a little later he prayed along these lines, "O Lord, we know You want us to have dreams about serving You. You want us to have visions of many people hearing the Gospel. These are the signs of your Spirit's presence that we pray for." I had the strong feeling that he wanted Joel's dreams and visions (Joel 2:28) to merely mean 'day dreams' and 'mind pictures'. While there is nothing wrong with these they are only shadows of the real revelations given by the Spirit in times of revival.

Another opportunity to share came through an invitation to lecture at the College for Allied Health Sciences at Madang. At first I was very apprehensive about tackling such a mission on my own, but with Peter's encouragement I accepted the invitation. Many kind people saw I was by myself and invited me to meals. One of these was the Dean of the College, a well-known man in that small town. Both he and his wife were already members of our old church, but they were

keen for me to go with them to a service at the local Pentecostal church and give my opinion on it. They were puzzled by the strange way of worship and by their teaching, so I was only too pleased to go and of course, felt quite at home there. After the service ended we drove to their home to talk it over. They had a hundred questions to ask, but about midnight Shirley asked me to pray for her to receive the Spirit. I did so and she received enough evidence to convince her the experience was real although she did not fully enter into it. She and I had many more long talks before I left for home again.

A year later both Peter and I were asked to give lectures at this same college and the couple again invited us to their home. This time we first attended a service in their own church. The speaker was a PNG pastor from Port Moresby, and the Madang congregation had many questions to ask, some of which related to the remarkable growth of the Pentecostal church already mentioned.

For example someone asked, "Do you think it is alright for people to attend our church in the morning, and another at night?"

"Oh, certainly," boomed the speaker, "if you get starved in your own church go to another!" (Horror written large on every face!)

"But what if the person should decide to join the other church and never come back?"

"Fine! Fine!" said the speaker, who had taken a course at Billy Graham's School of Evangelism in U.S.A. "Much better to get saved in another church than to go to hell in your own!"

We could have hugged him!

A few nights later Shirley announced, "I want to be baptised. Will you do it?"

Of course we would. Where? At Madang's one tiny little beach of course. They drove us back to the hospital for tea and a change of clothes, promising to pick us up again later for the baptism. As we passed the little beach where we planned to baptise her, we noticed a beautiful white cloud poised over it. Lit up by the tropical moonlight, it was in the shape of a large dove with the beak pointing downwards to the sea. Surely a beautiful confirmation of her decision. And so we baptised her in the warm shallow waves with only her husband and two children to watch. Afterwards her husband confided, "It was all I could do to stop myself running down into the water and saying 'Me too!' "

Because so many opportunities like this have come to us, opportunities that never came before, it is impossible for us to doubt that God has done something new and unusual in our lives.

Perhaps some may think, "Oh, they are missionaries. They are quite unusual people. I could never do things like that."

Not so. God gave me a very clear warning not to think like this, a warning I have sometimes used as an acted illustration to bring the lesson home. He said, "The churches are like old tins of paint. The oil of the Spirit is there but it is not mixed with the paint. The oil alone cannot be used to paint a building. The paint without the oil is also useless. The big need is for something to mix the oil with the paint. Any old broken piece of board will do. Once the oil is well stirred in, the painter can begin. I can use any old board to stir My churches, but it must be willing to be broken first."

Chapter 14: A Miracle Working God

One of the wonderful changes we have noticed since the revival is that prayer nowadays just seems so much more effective than it used to be. So much so that every time we slip back into the old way of trying to do impossible tasks in our own strength, we kick ourselves for not having prayed first and then tried. I sometimes recollect the amazement I saw on a group of New Zealand faces when sharing this new-found delight in prayer. I was urging them to always pray before calling a doctor or taking an aspirin.

One lady asked apprehensively, "How long would you wait for something to happen after you had prayed?"

From a background of dozens of prayers answered immediately, I said, "Well, I'd say about five minutes." By their chorus of "Five minutes!" I don't think any of them had ever had a prayer answered in that time!

Perhaps Christians in wealthy countries have found other ways of achieving their goals and so get by without prayer; using instead the innumerable crutches a welfare state supplies. As one young medical student put it, "In Perth we just don't seem to need God like you do here." But I think it is much more likely that people don't pray because it is always a risky thing to do. If God doesn't answer, you might 'lose your faith'(?); and if He does, He might want you to do something awful in return, such as telling an unbeliever about it! Perhaps this chapter will encourage you to take the risk.

One day a young teacher came to Kapuna having brought on an acute hernia by jumping to throw a goal at basketball. He was in great pain and the ugly bluish swelling needed quick intervention to save the bowel as its blood supply was probably already cut off. After a prayer for guidance we took him to the theatre and soon began to explore the area. But nothing looked as it should have looked. Although we have been here many years and tackled many operations with only an "Emergency Surgery" textbook to guide us, this one was not going according to the book. At last we were both ready to admit defeat. But what should we do next? The nearest surgeon was two hundred miles of difficult travelling away and the patient could be in great trouble before a charter flight could be arranged to take him there.

We decided to pray, not really seeing what God could do about it but just knowing He is a great God who has no problems, only plans. We all moved away from the operating table and lifted our gloved hands to the Lord, pleading for help. Then we all gathered around the patient again. The operation area looked just as confused as before. Just for something to do I picked up a pair of artery forceps and gave the mass an aimless poke. Suddenly the tissues seemed to fall open, just as if they had been unzipped! We could see everything we needed to see! The bowel was replaced and the weakness stitched up and the patient made the uneventful recovery that is the happy ending to every good medical story. We rejoice and praise God every time we see that man and even today tears come to my eyes as I think of God's great mercy and love. He not only answers, but He answers quickly.

On another occasion during a particularly difficult delivery we were again at the end of our surgical tether. The baby had come breech (bottom first), and the head just would not follow. There are several methods described for dealing with this situation and we tried them all, but to no avail. In desperation we decided to pray. After a few moments of fervent intercession we opened our eyes just in time to catch the baby as it literally fell out of its own accord!

Many dramatic answers to prayer have been related to the miraculous way God has provided transport when all earthly hopes have faded. One very wet season I was invited to go into Port Moresby to attend a workshop on skin diseases. Peter and I rose early and travelled by canoe to the nearest airstrip at Baimuru, about an hour and a half away. As it is a grass strip we were not surprised to find it was closed due to the heavy rains we had had, so we set out on the next leg of the journey, a long fifty miles through the network of rivers that is the Delta. We were sure that the MAF plane could land on the all-weather strip there. I pulled an enormous plastic bag over my head and read British Medical Journals and accumulated Christian magazines while Peter drove us through the rain. We arrived still in good time and put my things in the tiny little 'bus shelter' beside the strip, then sat down to strain our ears for the drone of the little Cessna. But when at last we heard it we realised it was still flying high and then, even more incredibly, we saw it was flying right over us without any sign of stopping! We debated what to do next and Peter decided to go off to the nearest mission radio to see if he could contact MAF about the problem. I decided I would just stay and pray. One of our graduate nurses from the nearest Government Health Centre came to talk to me. "What are you praying for?" she asked.

"A miracle," was all I could say. "Perhaps a business charter plane might just happen to come in!"

Sure enough after half an hour or so there was the sound of an engine, but coming the wrong way, from the east, and probably going to Daru in the Western Province. But no, it was a yellow MAF plane and it was landing. It just couldn't be! As the plane taxied into the apron I saw it was indeed my pilot but his plane was empty! Pop-eyed I asked him what he had done with his family. We knew he had been flying home from an MAF Conference with his wife and children.

"Oh, I dropped them at Baimuru and came back for you," he said airily.

"But Baimuru's closed, Laurie!"

"Not now it isn't," he assured me, "Kikori is too short to take off with the full load, so I couldn't stop and pick you up when I went over first."

Still hardly able to believe it, I asked him, "And what ever made you do such a long shuttle just to pick up one passenger?"

"Oh that," he dismissed it lightly, "I knew Valerie would be out at the airport to meet you and I couldn't disappoint her, could I?"

What a lot to praise God for: drying up a hopelessly wet strip; putting the thought in a tired pilot's mind to ingeniously overcome a seemingly insurmountable problem of permissible load on take-off; and a wife and children cheerfully accepting being left for an hour on an unknown strip in the bush just for the sake of one other passenger!

Dramatic answers to prayer have been everyday events for headaches, toothaches and the like. Sometimes it was something potentially much worse than a headache. One day Peter was passing the nutrition unit when he heard a nurse scream for help. He dashed in and found she had accidentally plunged her hand into a pot of boiling fat! "Pray for her, everyone!" he commanded. Everyone dropped what they were doing and began to pour out pleas for her healing. Amazingly the pain completely vanished! The skin didn't even turn red, let alone blister!

Another exciting time of praise followed the healing of a badly sprained ankle. For days Sister Kusunu was hobbling around painfully on crutches, and prayer did not seem to help the symptoms at all. Then one day the Spirit was moving during a nurses' fellowship meeting and she was completely healed. She dashed over to our house waving her crutches and shouting, "Take these back! I don't need them any more!" and she never even limped again.

Peter himself had a number of severe attacks of back pain, making work impossible, and even lying in bed he found little relief. Corsets, a plaster cast, and a visit to an orthopaedic surgeon in

New Zealand had not prevented fresh attacks. One day during a bad attack he decided to try James chapter 5. He asked the leading Christian nurses to come to anoint him and pray for him. The only oil we had was oily anaesthetic drops from the eye unit, but a small bottle of this was blessed and put handy to the bed. We prayed first, asking the Lord to forgive both ourselves and Peter for anything that came to our minds or to his. Then each girl anointed him with the oil and finally we helped him to sit up, first in bed, then on the edge of the bed and finally to stand. The pain had indeed miraculously gone, though stiffness remained for some time. Afterwards, when telling the story, he always complained that his biggest problem after the prayer was that we put on so much oil it ran into his eyes and he couldn't see a thing! He never had another bad attack after this.

One day Valerie was taking a patrol up to Mapaeo village, about an hour's journey up river. She made a 'comfort stop' for some girls about half-way up and then could not get the engine to start again. Some suggested we go back home. Drifting down with the current it would not take too long. "No" said others, "let's pray." Taking turns, we began to pray. All was silent in the bush, only a parrot squawking overhead and the ripple of the water. As the third girl began to pray we heard the sound of a motor. Before my turn came up, a canoe was rounding the corner into sight. Halelluia. It was Lau, a man who had driven Kapuna engines for 15 years or more and knew motors backwards! In no time he found the problem and we were on our way rejoicing. Near the village the engine stopped again, but we paddled the last few hundred yards and while we did the patrol, a son of the same old driver fixed it for us. Satan tried our patience and faith once more on the way home but as once again we continued to pray and sing the motor burst into life and we streaked home in the dusk, arriving just as the first drops of a heavy rain storm fell.

God is so practical. He does not want us to waste our time, our spiritual energy or our money. On one occasion the visiting Burns Philp cargo boat had unloaded many drums of petrol at low tide. When the men went at high tide to put them away, one was missing. Peter logically decided it must have floated upstream so he got out the canoe to go and look for it. It was pitch-dark so they took a big torch to help the search, a difficult job as only a small rim of the drum would be above the water. The outboard would not start and so the canoe drifted slowly away from the wharf, floating downstream with the now outgoing tide. Soon they were opposite a thick patch of reeds. Then, just as the motor fired, Peter glanced shorewards and saw the hump of a 44-gallon drum faintly outlined among them! Everyone praised God that He had prevented the motor from starting, thus saving them hours of fruitless search.

Keys are a most important item here because the valuable stocks of tinned meat, fish and soap in the store are a constant source of temptation to village people. Even if they are misplaced for only a few minutes, it is a real worry. So when Colin told us he couldn't find his keys we feared the worst. A quick search of both houses was followed by a brain-racking to remember where they were last seen. These gave no answers so Peter paused to ask the Lord where they were. He then walked from room to room until in the spare room the Lord said "This one." The keys were nowhere to be seen, but there was a great stack of store pillows on the bed, and in his mind a picture appeared of the keys lying under them. In quick armfuls he pulled the lot on to the floor and under the very last one were the keys.

On other occasions the answer has been, "The lost thing is not where you are looking for it. Don't waste your time. You will 'happen' to find it before you need it," and sure enough we have.

Other times the message is, "Tidy your room and then you will find it." Many times, while looking for the lost thing, we first find some other even more important thing, and only after that does God answer our prayer to find the original lost article. Sometimes when I have asked God to show me where my lost thing is and He has taken the opportunity to say, "What? Lost your

Bible again? It's under that cushion. Be more careful. Put it away in the same place every day, don't just drop it anywhere."

God is full of ideas for making daily living run smoothly. He loves to help us iron out the oft-repeated small irritations that occur. His answers are so devastatingly simple too. For years my pot lids annoyed me by falling every time someone bumped them. They stood on their edges on a shelf near the wood stove. As I picked them up for the thousandth time I impatiently cried out "Oh Lord, I'm so tired of picking these up. What shall I do?" He calmly answered, "Well, I'm glad you asked that. Just turn them round with the handles inwards." Now they never fall down!

Every time the men cut the grass in our large banana and pineapple garden they used to 'trim up' the pineapples too. This left many sharp prickly leaves on the ground and also spoilt the plants. At last I took my grumbles to the Lord, and He immediately suggested shifting the plants to encircle the banana clumps. This pleased the men as it left nice clear areas for them to cut, and it pleased me because when the grass grew long I could still easily locate each pineapple plant and no longer lost good fruit.

One day we had, as usual, disconnected our radio transceiver from its aerial. At that time we did not know that the battery connection is also a hazard in thunderstorms. I was in the room where the radio was set up and Peter was in the next room. Suddenly, without warning, a violent thunderstorm broke out directly overhead. The first bright lightning flash not only lit up the room and the sky but caused a dazzling flame to shoot out of the radio too. Before either of us could do anything it all happened a second time. Peter dashed out, seized a thick cloth and quickly tore the clips off the battery. We didn't dare turn the set on to see if it was working as the storm was still raging around us, but decided to pray for it anyway. I brought the bottle of anointing oil. Peter anointed the set and we both laid hands on it in the name of Jesus, reminding the Lord how much we needed radio communication. The next morning Peter held his breath as he switched on for the daily sked. A welcome hum came out as he put the various plugs in.

"Hotel Gulf from Alpha Charlie, do you receive?" he called.

Loud and clear came the reply, "Alpha Charlie, Hotel Gulf receiving you, go ahead."

All Peter could manage to say was, "Well, praise the Lord!"

Somewhat puzzled, the Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship sked worker asked what he meant. When Peter explained what had happened, he too praised God.

"That just has to be Him!" was what he said. The set is still going strong, with never a day off the air.

It is impossible to recount all the times God has moved in special ways to help us in our troubles, but I should not close this chapter without giving the warning that most times when we pray for people they are not instantly healed; not all lost things are found immediately, and sometimes we have had to be very patient while waiting for God's answer to our prayers. But never can we doubt that He is there, that He is hearing us, and that He is in control of every situation.

Chapter 15: Hidden from the Wise and Prudent

One Good Friday the Christians decided they would separate into two groups for an hour of prayer and Bible reading. The nurses and their staff met in a class room. The ends of the classroom were partly open. Soon one girl noticed that another was gazing intently at the sky framed in the space.

She moved over close to her and asked, "What are you looking at?"

"I can see Jesus on the cross," she whispered back.

"Where?"

"There, in the sky."

"Oh, I can see Him too," her friend said. Then, in a louder whisper, "And there's His mother going up to Him."

All the girls began to realise something special was happening and crowded round crying out, "Where? Where?"

About twenty of them could see the vision but six of us could see nothing at all, no matter how hard we looked. The "oohs" and "aahs" of the others kept us begging the Lord to let us see the vision too but He did not. Sometimes the vision would fade and then be brightly lit up again and everyone would exclaim simultaneously, saying the lighting had changed. They described the soldiers, disciples and women and what they were doing. At last, believe it or not, the girls lost interest and moved off to do their hospital work. Visions are not as exciting and unusual to Papua New Guineans as they are to us!

In another Holy Week, the nurses gathered one evening to ask the Lord how He wanted us to keep Easter that year. It happened that a cargo boat had arrived that night and Colin suggested I call the nurses to help carry the cargo from the wharf to the sheds. When I told him I could hear them having a spiritual night out, of course he cancelled the suggestion immediately, as such times always produce challenging or encouraging messages to the whole church.

After doing my bit with the bags of flour, etc., I went over to join them. All but three or four were 'in the Spirit'. This phrase is, of course, borrowed from the book of Revelation where John says "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." It is an experience I have never had, but since the revival it is very common here. Usually the Christian is praising God with his whole heart and suddenly his spirit is set free from his body and he is either in the presence of the Lord, or in some other part of the world, or perhaps his own village. It is so real that when he opens his eyes he cannot believe his body has been here with us all the time. Most of the girls were speaking in tongues with eyes closed and arms raised, but twice they all ran towards one corner of the church, shouting for joy as they did so. Then they would move back again to various places around the walls. There were two girls however, who kept returning to the centre of the room to continue a graceful dance, now kneeling, now bowing, now smiling as they raised themselves on tiptoe. Inevitably they at last bumped into each other, but neither opened their eyes. They simply hugged each other and then continued their worship in the dance. This went on for an hour or more and later we learned they had been dancing with their angels! Then one by one the girls sat down and at last everyone knew the holiday in heaven was over. Next day they were ready to tell us about their experiences. These had been too precious to share the night before.

First to speak was Kusunu, one of our married nursing sisters. The previous evening, while sitting on the porch of her house, she had noticed flames over the church. When her husband came home from unloading the boat she had asked him, "Did the nurses have a bonfire tonight? I could see a glow as if the church was on fire." But of course there had been no such fire anywhere near the building.

Then the others began to describe their experiences. One said this: "The church vanished and I was in a land that was very flat. There were no trees there. People from all over the world came together and formed two lines. All the people were the same height. Jesus walked between the two lines carrying the cross. He went through a door and all the people followed Him, dancing and singing. I went up to Jesus and confessed I was a sinner because I often grumbled about the food. He said to me, 'Just eat whatever food you are given.' Then He rebuked me for not reading my Bible."

Another saw Jesus riding on a white horse, leading an army on white horses. The nurses were all riding white horses too, but the three horses just behind Jesus had no riders. All the horses had wings. All the people were small compared with Jesus but all were the same height. Small angels danced and sang, "How great is God!"

Helen saw a big cross in front of the wooden cross hanging on the wall. All the nurses had a cross beside them as well and each had a light in their hand. Jesus came and a very big light shone from Him. All the angels formed a big V in front of Him. He said, "When I come I want to find you people rejoicing like this."

Josephine saw everyone in a big house. The girls were sitting on seats but they felt like dancing so she asked an angel, "Is it all right to dance?"

The angel answered, "Yes, you can dance. Here everything is free." Later she asked Jesus, "Why are the angels here with us?"

He answered, "They are your angels." The vision ended when Jesus told them all it was time to come home to earth. As usual, some had begged to be allowed to stay, but Jesus comforted them by saying, "No, you can't stay, but very soon you can come back."

When they had finished their stories I asked them, "Why did you all run to one corner?"

They were quite surprised I didn't know. "Why, we all ran to greet Jesus of course. He was standing there by the blackboard."

Out of the many visions of heaven I have chosen two others to tell. Both speak also of hell. In the first, Helen saw herself in a big building with half the people in the light and half in the dark. Those in the dark were praying but they were not reaching out to God. She went to this group and suggested they move into the light. Jesus then took her to a very big building with an angel in white outside. On the building were the words "I am saved by the blood of Jesus." Along the path to the building were beautiful flowers which bowed to the Christians as they passed. Then He showed her another road leading to a cliff. When people walked along this road, black flowers at the edges bowed to them. At the end of the road the cliffs opened up and the people vanished into them.

In the other vision Aivai saw many Christians running a race up a hill. There were many rocks on the hill and their feet were bleeding. There was a smooth path but they were not running on it. Then Jesus appeared and called, "Come quickly! Supper time!" Everyone ran in to supper. But although all had white robes, some were wearing black robes under their white ones which made them fit badly.

Jesus said, "Some of you are not properly dressed." An angel came and put these people outside. After they had removed their black clothes they were allowed in again. Then Jesus showed her a building full of smoke and fire with people crying loudly. Jesus told her, "This is

how hell is." Lastly, she asked Him why the people ran over the rocks instead of the smooth path. He told her that everyone must have cuts and scars when they arrive in heaven, so that He can be sure they came the right way.

The great majority of the visions have been of heaven rather than of hell, and the girls' faces glow with joy as they describe the beauties and delights of that wonderful place. Perhaps a little of this will come through in these two glimpses: "Jesus came to us and said, 'You cannot enter unless you love Me and no other.' He then gave many people an invitation card. We took them to a very bright city and a man collected our invitations and said, 'You can come in.' The whole place was very bright and full of flowers. The nurses ran everywhere picking the flowers. There were many children playing in a river but I couldn't tell if they were boys or girls. The trees were full of fruit. There were animals there playing with the children. The children would chase them but when they caught them, they would both hug each other. Then we saw Jesus again. This time He wore kingly robes and a crown. He was sitting under the Tree of Life. We asked if we could eat the fruit and drink from the river but He said, 'Not yet.' Many angels gathered around and he said, 'These are your own angels, give the flowers to them to keep till you come back.' Then He led us along the street of a city. The doors of the houses were open and we could see beautiful crowns inside but we couldn't go in.

"One girl asked Him, 'I want to see where the river comes from.' Jesus said, 'Yes, that is what I am going to show you.' Then He showed us a hill with a throne on it and the river was coming from under the throne. The angels began to sing 'Heirs of the Father' and He told us we must go back to earth. He said, 'Don't think of the things belonging to the world. They can drag you back. Purify yourselves so that the day I come I won't catch you unprepared.'"

Another girl described her vision like this: "We all went into a bright city on top of a hill. The angels on the walls threw something like pieces of paper all over us. These had a lovely perfume. They sang 'Enter, rejoice', and we all began to dance. The floor was like polished glass, so that we could see our reflections. The angels played harps and drums. They played so hard I thought they would break the strings. Then Jesus said it was time for the angels to go back to work. One angel sat down under a tree with Gedawa and began to teach her how to play on the harp. Another girl was dancing near a sparkling river. Another was playing with a cat that smiled at her. Then Jesus said, 'All your friends have gone back. Only you three are left. You must go back too.' We came down, down to earth. Suddenly we felt the heat and sweat again and we knew we were getting back into the world.-

The children of Adullan orphanage in China were able to enter heaven at will during their revival, but this has not been the case here. Rather, they are able to visit only when they 'break through the barrier of evil forces' by determined prayer. This description is not our own. On one visit the angels greeted the girls by blowing trumpets. When they asked why, the angels said, "Because you broke through the barrier of the evil forces."

Sometimes there has been a lack of harmony or dedication among the group and then instead of a visit to heaven there has been a visit of rebuke from Jesus, much weeping and repenting and often the solemn warning that it is the small sins that block God's blessing from flowing.

Signs in the sky have been another frequent occurrence. The sky is God's own writing pad where He can display His power without limit and there have been many occasions when He has done this. One of the most extraordinary was the behaviour of a large star in the evening sky, Sirius, I believe, is its name. One evening I noticed a girl staring at the sky in amazement. I asked what she was doing.

"See that star," she said. "Watch it change in size." Sure enough, as I watched, it began to get smaller and smaller.

"Oh, it's just gone behind a cloud," I suggested, ignoring the fact that there was only a mere film of cloud in the sky that night. "You wait," was all she said. After a minute or two its light again began to get stronger and stronger until it was brighter than any other star in the sky. Still not convinced, I stared at it some more. It was now disappearing again, getting tinier and tinier until it was scarcely visible, and then once again it began to grow, just like the headlight of an express train as it nears the station. I called Peter and other nurses, and for about an hour we watched spellbound as it repeated this performance about twenty times. Sometimes it would completely disappear for a short time, even though a tiny little star very near it remained steadfastly visible and the same size. One time it grew brighter at such a rate all of us felt a twinge of anxiety that it was actually approaching the earth and would perhaps shortly crash into it. One nurse rushed to her room to confess her sins and pray in the Spirit. Another ran to the patients' living quarters to ask forgiveness for her part in a quarrel. Eventually thick clouds came up and stopped our 'Saturday night show.' Next night it acted the same way again, with variations, and about a month later, when it was getting close to the horizon we noticed it was again acting in the same extraordinary way, so we took our tea into the garden to watch it give a final half dozen performances. I have looked at the identical star a thousand times since but never seen it do this again. What is the meaning of this 'sign in the sky'? I do not know. I think it is to remind us that "God leads the stars out like an army. Not one of them is missing. Not one fails to answer his call." And we too are to be as obedient when new tasks come.

One of these new tasks was to seize every opportunity to evangelise. Not long ago I joined a team of nurses on patrol to a language area about four hours' canoe travel to the west. We had a Christian driver plus a staff orderly with us. I expected this to be my last visit to the area and had made up my mind to witness at every village, but had made no plans about how I would do this. We arrived at the first village at midday and after a busy clinic were too tired to do more than cook our tea and tumble into our 'beds', a sheet on a thin mat or blanket on the floor.

Next day it was 12 o'clock before we finished checking the large school for sores, scabies, malaria, etc. Just as the school emptied out for lunch break I asked the headmaster (who was sympathetic to the revival but not in it at that time) if I could have the children for a Bible story in the afternoon. He checked his timetable and said yes, as there was half-an-hour on the timetable for Christian Education we could have that. I hastily checked the box of Scriptures we had brought to sell and to my delight found there was a big flash card set for the Prodigal Son. While I looked this over we enlisted the help of the one girl in the village who we knew was a keen Christian. We also wrote up two choruses on the blackboard for the children to learn.

Promptly at 1 p.m. the children returned to school and at the teacher's suggestion we took the whole number, approximately a hundred, to the rather dilapidated church building. None of the teachers came. Iti led off with singing. Then I told the Bible story, in English, which was, of course, almost incomprehensible to the Std 1 children, enrolled only a few weeks before. But the excellent Biblavision flash cards helped to make up for that. There was an audible sigh of relief as the story ended in proper P.N.G. style with the elder brother repenting and joining in the feast. I had not asked the two Christian brothers or the nurses if they would give their testimonies, but to my relief, they all jumped at the chance and the children were most interested, almost certainly never having heard a testimony before. I told them my own story too and then came the important moment. Would the children understand an 'altar call'? Quite definitely none would ever have seen anyone go forward, let alone ever done it themselves. The church they knew was not that kind of a church.

"How many of you would like to do what the boy in the story did? If you want to come to Jesus and tell Him you are sorry for your sins, then stay behind. The others can go back to school."

No-one stirred so I tried another tack. "If you want to give your life to Jesus, just put your hand up." A forest of small hands shot up all over the building! I knew we had a revival. Only the nudging of the Spirit could have produced that extraordinary response. Ninety children to be counselled, and our half-hour was already up. I dashed over to the school to ask for permission to keep the children another half-hour.

The most co-operative headmaster consulted his timetable again. "You can have physical education time," he announced. About ten of the children had left the church, mainly bigger boys. The rest eagerly went into groups and the nurses and Christian brothers explained the way of salvation again to them. We then asked them all to come to our sleeping place after school for repentance-prayer time and for further explanations in their own language. They all said they would come at 5 p.m.

It was now time to be on our way to the next village to conduct another clinic, so off we went up the river, enjoying a hasty lunch of green coconuts and sugar cane as we travelled.

"It's only a small village," I said cheerfully as we arrived. "It won't take long."

We set out our patrol medical gear on two large logs and got to work. It seemed that every man in the village had three wives, every wife had six children, and every child had sores or scabies and needed two or three immunisations. I was reminded of the fabled family from St Ives! We were trying to hurry for the sake of our appointment with the children, but it was a good three hours before I finished the last patient, a young woman with a thumb that needed draining. Her husband put his arm around her and encouraged her while I did this, a most extraordinary thing to do in this society, where men scarcely ever show any concern for their wives.

Late as it was, I still took time to tell the people the story of the revival, emphasising that Peter and I wanted to apologise that we, like all the other missionaries they knew, had never preached the full Gospel to them. I explained what God had done in the hospital and for the people nearby and I invited any who wished to see it for themselves, to come back to the first village with us. The young man who had shown kindness to his wife was the first to speak up.

"Everything you say is true," he said, "I myself gave my life to Jesus while attending meetings of the Kerema Fellowship. I came back here and tried to start a fellowship but I failed. Instead I myself have backslidden. My wife and I will come with you to see what will happen tonight." Several children came with us too and we sped back down the river, to arrive just as the sun was setting.

All the children were on the playground enjoying the last bit of light playing ball games. I wondered if they had already completely forgotten their promise to come to our sleeping-place. I suggested three of the nurses go and cook our evening meal while the rest of us began a singing time so that the children would hear us and know it was time to come. As soon as we began the children streamed in, arriving in groups of eight or ten, until in no time at all the village community hall was well filled. Again we divided them into groups, to teach on repentance and to confess our own sins in order to encourage them to do the same.

I had joined the village girl who was already a Christian, Aigiri by name, and helped her encourage the children to speak out their small sins of lying, stealing and anger. We were only half-way round the big circle when a man came to the door. His wife had been bitten by a poisonous snake, would I come at once? By the light of his hurricane lamp we hastened to the furthest house in the village. I was really praying it would not be a genuine case of poisoning, as the nearest anti-venene was at Kapuna, many hours journey away. At his house he showed me the dead snake, reddish, fattish, with big blotches all over it. There was no doubt it was an adult death adder. The lady was inside with a tight bandage around her thigh and looking very worried and upset.

"Where did it bite you?" I asked her.

"Oh, it didn't actually bite me," she admitted, "I just stood on it."

What a relief! I solemnly checked the leg for signs of poisoning and was able to reassure them there were none and not to worry in the meantime. People fear snakes not only for their bite but also for magic, and they need lots of reassurance that nothing terrible is going to happen.

As I arrived back at the meeting-place I could hear that the Baptistiser had already been at work. Iti's group had finished repenting and, without waiting for water baptism, had already received their gift of tongues. Aigiri had finished counselling her group of girls too, but as usual the boys were having a more uphill time. Aigiri told all our group to ask Jesus to wash their sins away and to thank Him He had. Hardly had we prayed a dozen words when the Spirit fell not only on the girls but on many of the boys too. For about an hour those children wept and laughed, sang and shouted, praised God in new tongues, fell on the floor under the power of God or called out to Him in praise. The noise was so great it was impossible to talk except by shouting at the top of one's voice and of course many curious mums and dads came to see what their children were up to. But no-one said a word to them or us, they just stood outside looking in the windows, quite nonplussed about it all.

At last we decided it was time to move on to the next step, baptism, so we collected lamps and torches and called the children to come down to the river. There we found the tide was very low and the water now lay at the foot of a slippery twelve-foot bank. Four of us scrambled down, trampling steps for the children to follow. Then we led them one by one into the warm muddy water. As each scrambled up again another would press forward and hold his hand out trustingly to us. Some big village boys came along to shout and harass the group, but we just praised God and went on with our work until all those who wished to be baptised were thoroughly dipped. I asked if there were any others wanting to give their lives to Jesus that night and two big boys came forward so we baptised them too. Only later did I realise they had been among the mockers who had earlier tried to break up the meeting, but afterwards had come under the conviction of the Spirit.

Next I asked any who had not received the Spirit already to gather in a circle for prayer. Six came, including the two boys already mentioned. All received the Spirit and again the prayer in tongues was so fervent and joyous it seemed a pity to break up the 'Spiritual tambourine time', but it was growing very late by now.

One problem remained. A bystander, a young woman, had fallen under the power of the Spirit and now she could only lie on the grass in the moonlight praising God in her new language. At last we picked her up in the best St John's fashion and began to carry her to her house. By the time we reached it she was able to climb up the steps by herself.

"What did you see?" we asked her.

"Jesus!" she replied.

"What was He doing?"

"He was sitting on a rock."

I wondered if it was the rock foundation, laid in this same village during the revival but never built on.

These events occurred over a year ago now and since then the headmaster and his wife have both been baptised and are now strongly supporting the fellowship there.

At first we were reluctant to believe that God would be happy to start a church consisting almost entirely of children, but we have come to see that "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" is by no means a soft and sentimental thought. Children are not involved with sorcery as so many adults are. Children's minds are not full of money worries, for example unpaid bride prices and

uncollected debts. These problems are often uppermost in the older people's minds, making it impossible for them to forgive or accept forgiveness.

Sometimes we have prayed it will be the pastors, the teachers and the village leaders who will respond to outreach teams. But God has answered, "Let Me do it in My own way," and His way seems to be to reveal Himself not to the wise and prudent but to the babes and sucklings who are always ready to respond to His gentle and loving Spirit.

Chapter 16: The Bible Opens

One of the most exciting changes in my own personal life began some fifteen years ago, long before I received the baptism of Jesus. At that time I followed the traditional attitude of our church, that is, that man's reason is greater than the Bible and where they conflict, reason should triumph.

One evening a nurse came to me for help with the Bible passage set for the following day. The story was the healing of the Gadarene lunatic. I gave her the conventional explanation of those who reject the existence of evil spirits.

"Of course we don't believe Jesus really sent evil spirits into the pigs," I told her glibly. "It is much more likely that the pigs were frightened by the madman rushing around and they simply ran down into the sea by themselves."

My explanation sounded good middle-of-the-road theology -- at the time. But next day, when she got up in the pulpit and began to teach, "Of course we don't believe Jesus really sent evil spirits into the pigs," I felt thoroughly convicted. I had actually accused the apostle Matthew of telling lies! Never again did I say the Bible was not true, but still, in my heart, I labelled large areas of the Bible as 'Doubtful, to say the least'.

The story I found hardest to swallow was Jonah and the whale. I just didn't believe anyone could stay alive for three days inside any fish, no matter how big. How would he breathe? And how would he avoid being digested? Then one day Peter brought home some copies of an excellent little magazine called "The Christian Digest". There I read an extraordinary story. Somewhere about 1880 a French whaling ship sighted a whale. A boat was launched to harpoon it but the whale was too strong for the little boat and it sank with all its men. Next day the whalers tried again to capture the whale. They were successful and brought it alongside the ship to be processed. As they cut into its abdomen they noticed a movement in the stomach. Great was their amazement on opening the organ to find one of their lost ship-mates, - still alive! After a stormy illness the sailor eventually recovered and curious friends were able to ask what it felt like to be swallowed alive, particularly asking how he had been able to breathe. He told them that there had been plenty of air to breathe and that had not troubled him. It was the great heat, the action of the stomach juice on his skin, and being alive and conscious of his terrible predicament, that made the experience so bad.

Jesus tells us that Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh (Luke 11:30). Obviously he told them the story of his near-drowning and how God rescued him by the great fish, but perhaps they believed his fantastic story because of the state of his skin! Also, he suffered from the hot sun shining on his head, so he may well have lost all his hair too. Lack of acid in the human stomach is a very well-known phenomenon, and today I haven't any doubt that God could easily reduce the acidity of the whale's gastric juices to allow Jonah to stay alive in the fish a longer time than the Frenchman did.

From the time I read this, my whole attitude to difficult Bible passages changed. I began to see them as a challenge instead of as an obstacle. I began to pray for enlightenment to understand them, and if no light came I would just accept that one day I would understand. Jesus said, "We know that what the scripture says is true forever" (John 10:35). From then on I could say a hearty "amen" to that verse.

Baptism in the Spirit -- Option or Necessity?

Every book dealing with this subject has to try to answer these questions: Is it normal for every Christian to receive the Spirit as a recognizable experience or not? Should Christians who have not had a recognizable experience continue to seek the Lord on the matter until they do?

The story of the Samaritan believers as told in Acts 8 is, of course, strongly in favour of evangelists not resting until the Holy Spirit clearly comes upon new believers. However, many argue that these were an exceptional group because they were the first group to be baptised who were not Jews. What then are we to think about the group Paul found at Ephesus?

In my work of translating the Book of Acts into the Iai language I had reached Acts 18:25, "He (Apollos) had been instructed in the Way of the Lord...and taught correctly the facts about Jesus. However, he knew only the baptism of John." To translate the word 'only' in Iai, I needed to know not only what Apollos knew, but also what he didn't know. Acts 19:4 makes it clear that John's baptism is a baptism of repentance, but that still did not tell me what it was that Apollos did not know. He knew the important facts about Jesus: His death, resurrection and ascension, but somewhere he had missed something vital, so vital that Priscilla and Aquila made a point of taking him home so that they might put him right. Most teachers on the subject omit chapter 18, go straight to chapter 19 and say that the twelve men at Ephesus had not been baptised in the name of Jesus at all; but this would seem to be very unlikely, as Apollos was "teaching correctly the facts about Jesus" and this would certainly include forgiveness and baptism in His name.

So I prayed about the problem and the answer was so simple I cannot understand now why the verse ever puzzled me. It was this: "Apollos knew the baptism of John; he didn't know the baptism of Jesus." In other words Apollos had been baptised in water (the baptism of John), but he had never been baptised in the Spirit (the baptism of Jesus). In Greek, the word for 'know' can mean 'experience' and perhaps an equally good translation of the phrase would be, "Apollos had experienced only the baptism of John." Now chapter 19 was clear to me too. Because Apollos didn't know the baptism of Jesus, he in his turn had not instructed his converts on the baptism in the Spirit nor prayed for them to receive it. Consequently when Paul arrived in Ephesus he noticed immediately that something was wrong with this group baptised by Apollos. They knew that their sins were forgiven in Jesus' name, but they knew nothing of the new life that comes from baptism in the Spirit (see Acts 5:20). Paul would normally have gone to their teacher, Apollos, to straighten things out, but as verse 1 says, Apollos had already gone to Corinth, so he had to remedy the deficiency himself. Beginning with John's own teaching, he explained that the One who came after John was much greater than him as John only baptised with water but Jesus baptised with the Spirit. He then repeated their water baptism, probably because immersion in water is such a neat picture of immersion in the Spirit, laid hands on them and prayed, and Jesus baptised them in the Spirit.

Here was perfect Scriptural teaching for

- a) those who teach correctly the facts about Jesus but have experienced only water baptism
- b) those who have become believers through the ministry of such teachers
- c) those who know the Way of the Lord more fully, but find other teachers who know only part of it. Unfortunately, not every Apollos is willing to accept every Priscilla and Aquila's invitation to come home and hear more accurately about the Way! One thing did seem very clear to us: if a believer knows only one baptism and his teacher is now 'in Corinth', then someone else must accept the challenge to complete their Christian experience. I feel sure that Paul wrote a note to Apollos about this group and that Apollos was delighted to hear of the happy outcome.

The Reason for Divisions

When we sent news of the revival to our ex-missionary friends some felt we were wrong to go against the authority of the church leaders. We are most thankful that none withdrew their friendship or interest but instead, like us, spent much time in prayer wrestling with the problem. I

think there are many who, if they read this, will be shocked to know our church leaders eventually forbade us to do any Christian work at all. Nevertheless some may still feel we should have submitted rather than disobey the orders of those in authority. As well as 'medical work only' for us, the church leaders wanted all new converts to enter the prescribed one year in a Seeker's class under a pastor, to be followed by the customary interview and, if approved, sprinkling in church, and then, finally they would be allowed to take communion again - a privilege every revival Christian was already enjoying.

Sometimes we tried to picture what would happen to the new Christians if we 'confessed' we had been wrong to baptise them, wrong to preach the baptism in the Spirit, and wrong to encourage them to follow Jesus' command to eat, drink and remember Him. It would have meant widespread confusion and disillusionment, and most turning back to the wide and easy unbelievers' road that is always so very tempting to follow. But still, the final judge had to be Jesus' words, so we searched the Scriptures for an answer.

First Corinthians chapters 1 and 3 did not really help. In Corinth there was jealousy, division and argument, but they were still meeting together for the Lord's supper and to hear Paul's letters read. None of their divisions seemed to have spread beyond Corinth.

Jesus' words in Luke 12:52 did not really help either. Jesus was speaking of divisions in a family occurring because some of the family were Christians and some non-Christians. Our situation was quite different. Our Fellowship was like cutting a chip from a block of wood. Was this ever God's will? Was the Reformation God's will? Were the numerous other denominational break-aways God's will or not?

We looked again at all the ways we now differed from the church we came from. Were these differences in belief and practice sufficient to justify our having broken away from the older church? Many people said "No". They pointed out that if you cut away the good part from an apple, the piece left usually becomes even worse. They felt that we should have 'hung in there' in the hope of influencing the whole church to do all these things. We, on the other hand, felt that none of these things would have spread beyond Kapuna unless we had separated. We had also hoped that our resignation from the traditional church would help many others to ask themselves, "Why are these people leaving? Do they feel our church is so hopelessly bad it can never be reformed? Are they, in fact, right?" (I must again emphasise here that it was not the total church that was against us. It was our particular region of it).

One day, while still wrestling with this topic, I felt the Lord was explaining His point of view to me. It came across like this: "When I began My church, My twelve disciples were very close to Me, like the relationship of the centre of a daisy to its petals. But gradually, over the centuries, the message of salvation was changed, sometimes deliberately and sometimes through human mistakes. Divisions became inevitable so that the ones who were in the right might be clearly seen. Some of these divisions were good, because one of the groups then came back more closely to Me. Other divisions were not in My plan because the two groups both remained as far away from Me as they were before. These divisions were from the Evil One."

I wanted to know when a church was sufficiently bad for Christians to leave it. He referred me to Ezekiel 34:1-10. I am sure there are no two situations alike, but if your church's rules make it impossible for you to obey all of Jesus' commands then I would suggest you follow Jesus and let your church decide whether they still want you in their group or not. If it had not been that Peter and I were mission doctors running two cherished training schools in a remote and unpopular area, we would have been asked to leave the church much earlier. You may not be as difficult to replace as we were!

Chapter 17: Little Visits with God

On many occasions I have puzzled over a Bible verse or a story until at last the Spirit has explained its meaning to me, then later on I have found that other people have been having the same problems and are interested to hear the answers to my prayer questions. Perhaps you may be too. I have jotted down both questions and answers in a book and here quote just a few of them.

Question: Do the parables have many meanings or only one?

Answer: Like much scripture, they have many meanings. The only exceptions are the parables of the sower, and of the wheat and tares, which Jesus explained Himself.

Question: What is the meaning of the parable of the unfruitful fig tree? (Luke 13:6-9).

Answer: The main meaning is this: the three years refers to the period when Jesus came to Jerusalem looking for signs that His teaching was accepted. The one year refers to the forty years between Jesus' death and the punishment of Jerusalem. The fertiliser is the signs and wonders done by the Spirit through the apostles and others during that period.

Question: What was the cup that Jesus did not want to drink?

Answer: It was the cup of sin. He shrank from wounding the heart of His Father by becoming the greatest of all sinners.

Question: What did Jesus mean by saying, "It is finished"?

Answer: He meant He had finished drinking the cup.

Question: Why did God first punish the children for the sins of the fathers and then later punish people only for their own sins?

Answer: He wanted to teach two things. First, that every sin has to be paid for, but that it can be paid for by people other than the sinner. Secondly, every person must take full responsibility for his own sin. When they stand before God no-one can escape punishment by blaming others.

Question: Why did some believe in Jesus but others reject Him as the Messiah?

Answer: The two groups who were able to accept Jesus as Messiah were firstly, those who had no theological opinions, e.g. women and children, beggars and prostitutes; and secondly, those who relied on revelation e.g. Simeon and Anna, or simply on the evidence of their own senses, e.g. The blind man of John 9; the shepherds at Jesus' birth.

Question: What is the meaning of Matthew 12:40: "In the same way that Jonah spent three days and nights in the big fish so will the Son of Man spend three days and nights in the depths of the earth?"

Answer: The verse refers to Jesus and not to His human body. His human body lay in the tomb from the time Nicodemus and Joseph placed it there until God raised it on the third day. But during this time Jesus Himself was in the depths of the earth, in the world of the dead.

Question: What situation was Jesus referring to in Luke 16:18: "Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery; and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery?"

Answer: Jesus was thinking of the man who divorces his wife in order to marry another woman, and also the man who persuades a married woman to divorce her husband in order to marry him.

Question: Are there only nine gifts of the Spirit or are things like 'helping' and 'administering' gifts of the Spirit too?

Answer: Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone for all services." Think of a manufacturer of farm tools. He makes engines of different strengths and sizes. Then he produces different machines to put them in. Some are small like rotary hoes, others are large and heavy like tractors. Then he invents an assortment of attachments to add to the machines. In the same way God designs different abilities for people, and those are like engines of different types. Jesus decides what kinds of work He wants done and where, and then places the 'engines' in those He has chosen to accomplish His different tasks. Then the Spirit adds special attachments from time to time as the people in those places need them. The abilities, the ministries, and the gifts are different.

Question: What is the meaning of the story of the ten girls?

Answer: One meaning is this: many Christians say to themselves as they light their lamps, "If it is only a short time before Jesus comes back or I die, I can keep going. But if the Christian life gets too hard or nothing happens quickly, I will just drop out." This sort of Christian makes only a short-term commitment. The oil he takes is a measure of his commitment. Others say to themselves, "This is for life, no matter what happens." They are like the wise girls, who have enough commitment to carry them through their whole life.

Question: What is the meaning of John 9:3: Jesus answered, "His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parents' sins. He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him"?

Answer: Jesus meant that the man's blindness was not due to his sins as an individual, nor to his parents' sins. It was just one of the many evil results of mankind's sins. God gave free will to both angels and men. He knew both would sin and He knew He Himself would have to pay the price for their sins. Yet in this way God's glorious graciousness and power would be shown to mankind. He could never have done this if He had made both angels and men unable to sin.

Question: Why did God send John to baptise in a river?

Answer: To make sure that those who do the baptising have their feet washed before they baptise others.

Question: Is the sprinkling of water and blood described in the Old Testament equivalent to baptism?

Answer: No. Sprinkling was a sign that the guilt of sin was removed. Baptism is a sign that the power of sin over the person has been broken. He is dying to sin.

Question: What does 'dead to sin' mean?

Answer: Once Jesus tried to prick your conscience to guide you but you didn't respond. It was as if you had local anaesthetic injected into your conscience. But sin, or Satan, could easily arouse your interest. Now you are a Christian, you have become 'deaf' or numb to Satan's voice but respond quickly to small pricks of conscience through which Jesus speaks to you.

Question: What does Mark 9:49-50 mean?

Answer: "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again?" This means it is good to have people of strong character in the Christian group. If a group loses all those with vision and purpose, it will become tasteless, like the world. "Have the salt of friendship among yourselves and live at peace with one another." This means firstly, that it is a choice: everyone can become different from the world if he chooses to. Secondly, salty Christians are more likely to cause friction than tasteless ones, and they need to be aware of the importance of keeping at peace with each other.

Question: What does Matthew 10:28 mean? If God can destroy body and soul in hell, why doesn't He?

Answer: He can and He does. God is just and men are punished for varying lengths of times according to their sins. In Mark 12:40 and Luke 10:14, Jesus taught that punishment is not equal for all. 2 Peter 2:12 and 13, and chapter 3:7 also speak of destruction as one of God's punishments.

Question: But many teach that all the wicked will be tormented for ever and ever?

Answer: Jesus revealed to John that the Devil, the Beast and the False Prophet will be tormented day and night, for ever and ever (Revelation 20:10). These three are evil angels who have eaten of the tree of life. They cannot be destroyed in the way that men can be. Remember that God in His mercy prevented Adam from eating of the tree of life after he had sinned.

Question: But in Matthew 25:46 it says the wicked are sent off to eternal punishment. To be destroyed is different from being punished isn't it?

Answer: Is capital punishment not punishment then? To be thrown into the lake of fire, even if it means instant destruction for some, is a very real punishment. And for many the torment is long and real (Rev. 14:9-11).

Question: Why does God allow them to be tormented in view of the angels?

Answer: As a warning to God's angels and God's people. Remember it is possible to sin, even in heaven. That is where Satan began to sin.

Chapter 18: I Am Coming Soon

Years ago, when I was a medical student at Auckland Hospital, I lived with a nice old lady whom I called Aunty. She was very fond of the social life and used to go to garden parties and bridge parties all year round. In this rather unlikely house I found a book on the Second Coming of Jesus in the 'library' (our euphemism for the toilet, based on our custom of providing interesting reading material there for its users). I cannot even recall its name though I am sure it was printed by the Methodist Press. It began with an arresting statement on the meaning of the verse, "Remember this! All these things will happen before the people now living have all died" (Matt. 24:34). It said that either this verse must have been fulfilled or else Jesus was a liar or a madman. It decided on the first alternative and then proceeded to examine each of Jesus' prophecies and to show how they could in fact, have all come true before Jesus' own generation all died. For example, it showed that a number of wars, famines and earthquakes occurred between A.D. 33 and A.D. 70. It told me that the prophecy of the stars falling from heaven was probably fulfilled by the meteorite showers known by astronomers to have occurred around those years. Later on I was intrigued to find that the stars had fallen from the sky at least once before (Isaiah 34:4) and the sun and moon had not only been darkened but had actually crumbled to dust! (Isaiah 13:10 and Ezekiel 32:7-8). It taught that Jesus would still come again to judge the world, but it did suggest it was useless to look at current events to find out when the final return would be. After reading this book, I too accepted that Jesus had returned as He promised He would, finding ample support for this view in every book of the New Testament.

Then one day I saw in a shop window in Queen Street, Auckland, an amazingly detailed world-history panorama, showing all the future as well as all the past. According to the chart, Jesus' return, as He prophesied it in the Gospels, was still definitely in the future. Their viewpoint was backed up by much reference to Daniel and Revelation. All of this was quite out of my depth so I decided to leave the problem to the experts and keep quiet if the matter was discussed when I was around.

It was many years later that I began to translate the gospel of Mark. Suddenly, as I reached Mark 13, there was the whole problem back in my lap again. If I translated verse 30 exactly as it appeared in the Greek, it would certainly mean that Jesus promised everything He had spoken about, from the beginning of His discourse to the end, was going to happen in the lifetime of His contemporaries. Furthermore, this was the meaning boldly given in the Bible Society's approved translation of the Bible, the "Today's English Version" or, "Good News for Modern Man".

The full implication of the word 'generation' was also explained in their Translator's Handbook, a book firmly based on the original Greek. The authors of this Handbook said the obvious meaning of 'this generation' was "the people contemporary with Jesus". Nothing, they said, could be gained by trying to take the word in any sense other than its normal one. They further stated that in Mark the word always had this meaning. These Greek scholars also dismissed any attempt to say that Jesus did not include His return among "the things" that would happen in that time. They pointed out that the Greek words used here by Jesus are identical to the Greek words used in the disciples' question in verse 4. I had no choice. I translated the sentence exactly as it stood, but I was left as puzzled as ever. How could so many Christians accept that Jesus had prophesied a long list of events and then deny that these prophecies had come true within His predicted timing? This was supposed to be the mark of a false prophet!

Then came the revival. One night the girls received a message in a vision that brought the whole problem up again. Several girls were in the Spirit and all saw Jesus. The world was hanging from His finger like a ball on a string. He said to them, "I am moving this string along My finger. When it gets to the end, it will fall off and that will be the end of the world." This was the first word we had had from the Lord Himself telling us the end of time was near. At first we were quite alarmed in case He meant there were only a few days left. We did not know whether we were to warn people or to keep it to ourselves.

Nothing at all unusual happened over the next few weeks so we all forgot the message and did nothing about it. Then one of the same girls saw Jesus a second time. He showed her His finger and said to her, "Do you see? It has moved since you last saw it. That shows the time is getting close. But you are not giving the message to the others. You must tell them."

So we began to tell people this new message. Earlier, we had said, "We don't know when Jesus will come, but we must be ready." Now we said, "We know Jesus is coming soon because He has told us so. And He told us to tell you too." Here in P.N.G. the reaction of the Christians was usually, "We already know. He is telling us the same thing." But when home in New Zealand, we found the Christian reaction was very different. Some had no interest or expectation of Jesus' return at all. They were busy building churches that would stand for hundreds of years, making long-term investments of their money and so on. Others based their expectations almost entirely on Bible interpretation. I did not at that time meet anyone who had heard directly from the Lord on the subject, but have been told recently there are a number of churches where the same prophecy is being given on the basis of revelation from God.

Here is a conversation I had with a 'pre-tribulation' follower, obviously impressed by the 'prophecy' suggested by the popular film, "A Thief in the Night".

"My problem is that I just can't forgive my husband," she confided. "He ran off with another woman."

"I am really sorry for you," I said, "but for your own sake you must forgive him. Jesus can't forgive you your sins until you do."

"Well, if I should get very sick I would forgive him, but if I got better again, I would unforgive him again!"

"But suppose you should die suddenly?"

"Oh, I am very careful when crossing a road. And anyway, I believe Jesus is coming back soon."

"And how will that help? Jesus' coming is just like dying suddenly. We must get ready before it happens."

"Oh no, there will be seven years tribulation before He comes back finally and I can repent and forgive him during that time!"

It seemed that this lady had misunderstood the Scriptures in two ways. Firstly, she thought repentance and forgiveness were like a tap which could be turned on and off at will. Secondly, she thought that Jesus will come twice more; a secret rapture first to warn everyone, followed by seven years' tribulation during which more can repent at their leisure because they know just how long they have got before the final return and judgement.

It was at this point that I began to really read Revelation for myself. The first thing that became clear was that none of the visions the Christians at Kapuna had seen bore any resemblance to the tribulation of Revelation or to current millennial teaching. The biggest difference according to the Kapuna visions, was that at Jesus' return the rescue of the Christians and the destruction of the world would happen simultaneously, with neither a seven-year tribulation nor a 1000-year millennium between the two.

For example, one girl dreamt that as she saw Jesus coming down from heaven she was drawn up to him like a magnet (her own simile). At the same time fire fell down on the earth, burning the people up, and though they cried out to Jesus they were not saved. Another dreamt a gang of young 'rascals' surrounded a group of Christians, mocking them. Suddenly a house descended over the group of Christians. Its doors were open and the Christians begged the boys to come in but they refused to listen. Suddenly the doors swung shut and the house rose into the air while fire fell and burnt up the boys. In other dreams the Christians have gone up to heaven in an aeroplane or a boat but they have looked down and seen the world being destroyed, sometimes by fire, sometimes by earthquake, sometimes by flood, sometimes by a combination of these. No political event has ever been given to us so that we might know when Jesus' return is imminent.

Here is another typical dream from a nurse called Gedawa: "I was with my mother and brother and we were beating sago. I heard a loud noise like a conch shell blowing. I said to my mother, 'Someone is lost and they are blowing the shell to help him find his way out of the bush.' Then I felt a strong wind blowing. I looked up and saw many people in the sky.

'The Lord is coming! Come on brother!' I cried. But my brother ran away crying.

My mother said, 'He is not a Christian, you know.'

'Well,' I said, 'I can't wait for him,' and I went up into the air too. We were all drawn to a high mountain covered in grass and trees like a park. The top of the mountain was covered with smoke. Many people were on the mountain witnessing to others.

I said to them, 'It's too late to witness. Jesus has already come.'

Then a Voice spoke to me, 'No, it is not too late. I have not yet come. But when I do it will be just like this. There will be no warning.' "

The point I am making is that even though in Gedawa's dream 'one was taken and one was left', both her mother and her brother saw her go, so it was not a secret rapture. She was also busy about her ordinary village works. There was no suggestion of an atomic disaster preceding the trumpet being sounded, nor of any supernatural warning being given by, for example, tribulation disasters, while there was still time to repent.

Perhaps these dreams and visions seem slender evidence to a Western mind, but a Papua New Guinean sees them as the normal way God uses to communicate secret truths to him. In Job 33:15-16 we read, "At night when men are asleep God speaks to them in dreams and visions. He makes them listen to what He says and they are frightened at His warnings".

In the same way it is normal for Christians here to pray about the meaning of their dreams and to receive the interpretation. Sometimes two people dream almost the same dream. Sometimes someone dreams, wakes to go to the hospital to attend to a patient, comes back and asks the Lord to let her finish the dream. She goes back to sleep and it continues to its proper end.

To return to the theme of this chapter, it puzzled me that all the visions and dreams showed the world ending in quite a different way from that described in popular books today. The only similarity was that, before the end, there would be persecutions for those who follow Jesus. This is by no means a new or unexpected message and has already been fulfilled here many times, just as it has in every country in the world.

I read every recently published book I could find where God had spoken to others about the future or the end of the world. Without exception, the actual messages from God were the same as the ones we had received: "Jesus is coming soon. You must be ready for Him. There is a time of persecution ahead for those who follow Him, but be faithful till He comes." God never spoke of a new empire taking over the world with only those with the number 666 on their hands being able to buy and sell. He never advised His Christians to stock up cellars full of beans or gold coins or to pile up atom bombs to be ready to fight Satan, Gog, and Magog at Armageddon. All

these ideas seemed to come from the author's own imaginations as a result of hearing the Lord say: "Jesus is coming soon." Some had not even had this direct message from God but had worked it out for themselves on the basis of Daniel, Revelation and the world news.

I continued my study of Revelation hoping some light might filter through to show me whether the Kapuna Christians were getting the wrong picture of Jesus' return or whether, incredible as it seemed, it was others who were mistaken. One night I was reading Revelation 11, the story of the two witnesses, usually thought to mean that Enoch and either Elijah or Moses, will return at the end of the world. As usual I was completely bogged down in John's visions and had almost given up hope of finding any light on today's problems. I idly remarked to myself, "I wonder who those two witnesses were?" So quickly that I was quite startled, the Lord answered, "Peter and Paul, of course." "Lord, I stammered, "I wasn't really expecting an answer." He quietly remarked, "If you ask a sensible question, you'll get a sensible answer." What a wonderful invitation! I decided to start again at Chapter 1 of Revelation and ask the Lord to explain it to me section by section as I went along. This time the first thing that struck me was the many indications the angel gave John that the whole Book was soon to be fulfilled. Somehow I had quite overlooked these verses before because I had always read Revelation with the preconceived idea that most of it was a book about the future. Immediately my thinking radically changed. I shifted the events it described from over the horizon in front of me, to the distant past, where I am now convinced 99 percent of its facts belong, just as the Gospel facts do.

The first problem to come up was the seals, the trumpets and the bowls. "Lord," I prayed, "I'm stuck already. What do these things mean?" "They all have the same meaning," He said. "They all refer to the same events." An interesting parallel came to mind. Pharaoh first saw fourteen cows and then fourteen heads of wheat. Joseph explained that they had the same meaning, and that because the dream was repeated, it meant that the event described would soon happen. If described three times it would surely happen even sooner!

Next I saw for the first time that the judgements of Revelation perfectly fulfilled the prophecies of Jesus (Mark 13, Luke 21 and Matthew 24). There were the earthquakes, the famines, the destruction of the cities, the persecutions, the wars, the signs in the sky, the signs on earth; the false Messiahs and false prophets; the miracles that would deceive; people fleeing to escape from the wrath of God, calling on the rocks to hide them; Jesus coming like a thief; judgement and division; punishment and rewards. In His lifetime Jesus had promised all these things would happen to the people of His own generation. Not only was this prophecy made during the Holy Week teaching time in each of the three Gospels, but Jesus repeated it to the women of Jerusalem as He went to the Cross (Luke 23:28-31). Surely this showed how important and urgent Jesus felt the whole matter was. Even in His hour of personal agony He paused to give one last warning of the terrible fate awaiting not only Jerusalem but all the people of Judea in just a few decades' time.

My next questions were: When did Jesus return? When was the wedding feast of the Lamb? And, how did they fit into first century history? This time the answer I had was not quite so explicit. The Lord said, "Every time the word 'you' is used in the New Testament it means exactly what it says. As in the Gospels it always included the people I was speaking to, though it can refer to others too."

I began at Matthew and in no time at all I collected over a hundred examples of the word 'you', used in reference to future events. Here are a few examples: "I tell you, you will not finish your work in all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes," (Matt. 10:23).

"Then, if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There He is!' Do not believe him..." (Mark 13:21)

"Let the fig-tree teach you a lesson ... when you see these things happening, you will know that the time is near, ready to begin..." (Mark 13:28-29)

"...You do not know when the master of the house is coming ... he must not find you asleep." (Mark 13:35-36).

"You will all see the Son of Man seated on the right of the Almighty and coming with the clouds of heaven!" (Mark 14:62).

As you will notice, these uses of the word 'you' show that Jesus knew that there were at least some of His followers who would still be alive when He returned. Paul also emphasises this with his repeated use of the word 'we', showing he also expected Jesus to become visible to him while he was still on this earth. But now the Lord showed me a further step. This was that His parables repeatedly show that His return, His rewards and His punishments all happened as part of one event. The wedding feast of the Lamb was part of Jesus' return and therefore was first celebrated nineteen hundred years ago (Matt. 22:1-14).

These are some of the parables as Jesus explained them to me: The Judge and the Widow (Luke 18:1-8): He was promising God would soon send Him back to judge in favour of His disciples and their converts - and He wouldn't wait two thousand years before He came to do it either!

The Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14): The wedding feast for the King's son refers to Jesus' feast in heaven with all who came safely through the great persecution. The servants and the guests are the disciples and their converts. They were entitled to be called the bride of Christ and to eat at His wedding feast (Rev. 7:14-17; 19:5-9). Those who grabbed the servants and beat and killed them were the Jews. They were then punished by the King (God Himself) and their city (Jerusalem) burned down. The servants invited the outsiders (the Gentiles) but some of these tried to come in without repentance and baptism, that is, they didn't wash their robes and make them white. They were put in the same place of punishment as the rebellious Jews.

The Parable of the Ten Girls (Matthew 25:1-13): The bride in the previous story was the servants plus the guests. In this story, the bride is the five girls. Jesus was warning His disciples that His return was further ahead than they would wish. As He said another time, "The time will come when you will wish you could see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it" (Luke 17:22). In other words, the bridegroom would seem to be late in coming (see also Rev. 6:10-11), but God was waiting for the total planned number of martyrs to be killed. When Jesus finally did come some would have given up because they did not have lasting faith (Luke 8:8). The wedding feast began as soon as the first group of 'brides' arrived at the bridegroom's house.

The parable of the Three Servants (Matt. 25:14-30) and the Parable of the Gold Coins (Luke 19:11-27): In both stories the servants left in charge were the ones who were actually judged. In Luke Jesus told the story specifically to show He would not be setting up His Kingdom until after He had been away to be made King. Verse 14 teaches that while He was away, the Jews would try to spoil His plans to set up a Kingdom on His return. "We don't want this man to be our King" is just what the Jews said to Pilate and to the apostles. The servants were called in front of their master, and as in the wedding of the King's son, one of His own people was found unfaithful and he suffered the same fate as those who did not want the new King (Matt. 25:30 and Luke 19:27). Both were judged and punished immediately the King returned.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Matthew 25:31-46): This is a continuation of the previous story of the master who went away on a trip. There is not a couple of thousand years between the two parables. Jesus was saying that just as His hearers had agreed to the division between the good and bad servants and the foolish and wise girls, so now they must agree with the division between the sheep and goats. He would deal out appropriate rewards and punishments when He returned, as He had already promised, in their own lifetime. Jesus made it

plain that the destination of the wicked was hell itself, the same place that was already prepared for the devil and his angels.

Quite apart from the parables, I found that Jesus gave much direct teaching that He would soon return to judge, punish and reward, and also set up His Kingdom (Mark 8:38-9:1; Matt. 11:20-24, 23:34-36; Luke 13:22-30). I just marvel now that I read these verses so often and yet never saw their real meaning. A verse from 2 Peter perhaps explains why I did not, "Above all else, however, remember this: no-one can explain, by himself, a prophecy in the Scriptures."

Chapter 19: Swallowing the Scroll

By now I was completely converted to the idea that practically all prophecy in both Old and New Testaments had already been fulfilled. I had not yet worked out, however, how to answer the many objections that I knew had been put forward when others before me had expressed this view. I decided to try out my thoughts on my family and see if they and I together could see further light on the whole problem.

At that time we had staying with us our son Ted, daughter-in-law Christine, daughter Valerie and her husband Bryan, all mature Christians and very interested in the Bible. We often gathered in the evening to share new scriptural insights we had received, but because the teaching I was bringing was so new I typed a summary of it and gave it to each of them the night before, to read over and to pray about its truth. It was Bryan's reaction I was most apprehensive about. He was a Bible School graduate and already had definite ideas on the subject. His analytical mind would certainly spot any flaws in my arguments and his opinions would carry a lot of weight with us all. I always much preferred to have him on my side in any doctrinal argument!

Ted was the first to give his reaction: "Mum, when it comes to Bible study, there's just no way you can go against the 'heavies'. You would have absolutely everyone against you if you tried to show Jesus has already come."

"I agree with Ted," said Christine, "and besides, I don't have any trouble believing all those verses speak about the future."

Peter was the only one who had done what I had asked them to do. He had prayed about it. To his surprise the Lord had said to him, "Well, have you got a better explanation?" He added, "And I had to admit I hadn't!" From that time on he became a keen supporter of the message I was trying to give and encouraged me many times to keep on publishing it abroad.

Valerie frankly admitted she didn't know what to think. She felt she could see both sides of the problem.

Then it was Bryan's turn. Quietly and calmly, he began to tear all my arguments to the classical shreds. 'Generation' really meant 'nation'. The budding of the fig-tree meant the restoration of Israel in 1948; the 'you' in the same verse (Mark 13:28) referred to 'mankind' and not to Jesus' hearers; Jesus' coming as King (Matt. 16:28) referred to Pentecost, and so on. Furthermore, how could Jesus have returned without the recognised historian of this era, Josephus, hearing about it, especially as "every eye would see Him"? And anyway, everyone knew Jesus was coming soon; He had often told the Kapuna and village Christians this Himself.

Although I felt I had answers to all his objections, it was obviously not the right time to bring them out, so I hastened to assure Bryan that no-one believed in Jesus' soon return more than I did. It was just that I believed this was His third 'coming', not the second one. In fact it was because He had come back just as He said He would, that we could be sure He was coming again, just as He says He will. I read Amos' message, "The Sovereign Lord never does anything without revealing His plan to His servants, the prophets" (Amos 3:7), and tried to point out that this is just what God is doing today. He is telling many people all over the world that Jesus is coming soon, but it is the people themselves who insist on tacking most of the book of Revelation on to the simple message of God.

Nothing more was said about fig-trees and the Greek word for 'generation'. I decided I had mistimed the giving of the message and now I had better bury it decently and forget it. It was a few weeks later that Bryan himself brought up the topic again. He and Valerie were packing to return to New Zealand and just as they were collecting up their pyjamas and toothbrushes Bryan said, quite casually, "Oh, by the way, if you've still got the notes you made that paper from, I'd like to look at them." Scarcely able to believe my ears, but glad to find a last resting place for my unpopular eschatological efforts, I passed them all over to him and thought no more about it.

It was some months later that Bryan sent a tape back from New Zealand. "Mum," he said, "I've been praying and searching the scriptures about your Bible study and I've decided you are absolutely right. In that context, 'generation' can only mean one thing - the people living at the time of Jesus. I've completely changed my mind and now the whole thing is fitting into place." He went on to share a dream he had had. He saw large drops of water falling from heaven. The drops turned into people giving messages. The first set of five were those given by the Old Testament prophets, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, finishing with John the Baptist. The second set of three began with Christ, then Paul, then John, as each drop hit the ground a person emerged and proclaimed a truth. Yet out of the three came a fourth - not a person but a message: the message I had shared with Bryan. This had confirmed the truth of it for him, but still he felt a great reluctance to say openly that he no longer accepted current New Zealand thinking about Jesus' return.

Sometimes he would hear this kind of teaching: "Jesus is coming soon, but not until there are ten nations in the Common Market." Or perhaps this, "Jesus is coming as soon as China has two hundred million horses." Not long ago Bryan was in China and asked the tour guide if China already had the prescribed millions of horses. The guide thought it incredibly ridiculous. He said, "I only wish we did have that number of horses."

Then Bryan talked to the Lord like this: "At least the church has the main message right. You are coming soon. What does it matter if their arguments are all wrong?"

But the Lord answered him, "To Me it does matter."

After listening to Bryan's tape Peter began to urge me to rewrite the message for wider circulation. I felt that in the form I had written it, it would convince only those who were already searching for a different answer from the standard ones, and there seemed to be a great scarcity of this type of reader. In fact one day I was complaining to the Lord that He should find someone else, someone in the centre of things, and give them His message. Whatever was the use of giving it to someone who lived in the depths of the jungle of Papua New Guinea?

His answer was, "Most of the people in Bible Schools and churches have either made up their minds or else they are not interested." I had to agree with Him. I had taken my notes to New Zealand with me two years earlier and came across only one person interested enough to even look at them. Ten years ago I would have had no interest either!

I prayed for more wisdom and understanding for the task. One of the questions I asked the Lord was this, "Which of the many statements about Your coming is the most helpful for me to point to?"

He said "Acts chapter 1."

I opened the Bible to the passage and He directed me to verse 11, "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that you saw Him go to heaven."

As I thought about this, so many more things became clear. There was Jesus' promise to Nathanael: "I tell you the truth: you will see heaven open and God's angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man" (John 1:51). Nathanael would see Jesus go up with a cloud of angels on Him, yes, and he would also see the Son of Man and the angels coming down! I noticed that

Jesus went up from the Mount of Olives, and, according to the angels' prophecy and that of Zechariah (14:1-5), just after the terrible destruction of Jerusalem of A.D. 70 the Lord would return with His angels and stand on the Mount of Olives. I then began to wonder how it was that Jesus could rise in the air in such a public place, in the daytime, without creating a sensation. Where was Josephus? Where were all the other historians? We might say several things. For example, that it was all over in a very short time. Or we might say there were no historians there. Or if the people there told the historians perhaps they didn't believe them. Or perhaps the historians did write about the event but the records, apart from Luke's, were lost. But all these arguments could apply equally well to lack of documents on Jesus' return if this was in the same way He went up!

Another possibility occurred to me. God managed to make many of Jesus' miracles appear easy and natural. Jesus never 'staged' them. The crucifixion was deceptively ordinary to the casual onlooker. Even the resurrection disappearance of Jesus' body was explained away to the satisfaction of many people. Could Jesus' return have appeared differently to different people? In other words, while every eye may have seen Him, many may have seen nothing unusual about Him! This is what John actually says, "Look, He is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, including those who pierced Him" (Rev. 1:7). John, I noticed, did not say everyone would see Him coming with the clouds. Also I noticed the scope of the word 'everyone' is not defined. It could mean just 'everyone present at the time'.

I spent an interesting hour searching the Bible for places where God 'hid' people from those He chose to 'blind'. First there was the story of the two angels at Sodom who blinded the homosexuals of the city so that they couldn't find the door (Gen. 19:11). Then the story of Elisha causing the Syrian soldiers to fail to recognise both him and the city of Dothan (2 Kings 6:18-20). Then Jesus Himself used the same simple method a number of times. John described some typical situations: "They picked up stones to throw at Him but Jesus hid Himself and left the Temple" (John 8:59). "Once more they tried to arrest Him but he slipped out of their hand", and "After Jesus said this He went off and hid Himself from them," (John 10:39 and 12:36). Then another idea struck me. Was Jesus' ability to hide Himself by either simply disappearing or looking like someone else a well-known fact? Is this why Judas offered to betray Him? And why the Pharisees were so eager to accept his offer? The soldiers may have said, "We don't want to go and arrest Him because He will slip out of our hands again. Somehow when we walk up to Him, we can't see Him anymore and this makes us feel so stupid. So we'll get Judas to go first and make a friendly gesture, like kissing Him - and then we can seize him quickly before He realises we are His enemies and hides Himself." But in spite of their carefully laid plans they still seemed unable to recognise Him. It was almost as if they couldn't believe Jesus' own admission as to who He was. In answer to Jesus' question "Who is it you are looking for?" (John 18:1-7) why didn't they say "We are looking for you"?

With these and many present-day examples before me I had no difficulty in believing that John's cryptic verse (Rev. 1:7) could perfectly well mean

- a) that Jesus would soon return with the clouds, just as He went up.
- b) that He would be visible, but perhaps not recognisable to everyone in the vicinity, a group which would include some Romans, perhaps even the identical soldiers who pierced Him.

As I had seen in Zechariah 14:5c as well as in Jesus' prophecies, His return was to occur very close to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Jesus told the women of Jerusalem to weep for themselves and their children because they would live in the time of the burning of "the dry wood." They would hear people saying to the mountains "Fall on us!" and to the hills "Hide us!" In Revelation 6:16 I read that this happened at the breaking of the sixth seal when people "hid themselves in caves and under rocks, on the mountains. They called out to the

mountains and the rocks 'Fall down on us and hide us from the eyes of the One who sits on the throne, and from the eyes of the Lamb. For the great day of their wrath is here and who can stand up against it?' "

By now I was thoroughly convinced Jesus had fulfilled all His own prophecies, but I still felt I needed a clear mandate to send this message out. So I prayed rather as Bryan had, "Lord, what reason have I got for trying to upset everyone's ideas on the subject? What excuse can I offer for trying to reopen a problem almost everyone feels is already perfectly satisfactorily solved?"

His answer was: "I want the truth of My Word established."

I wrote a four-page circular and a suitable note to go with it, and with the aid of the P.N.G. phone book, our own address book and the authors of the Christian books on our shelves, we prayerfully sent out about 120 copies of it.

One pastor wrote back, "If you write for a free copy of our correspondence course you will find the Scriptures explained there!"

Another replied "People have been saying for years that Jesus is coming soon but He never does." She had failed to see that all previous messages were based on either mathematical deductions from the book of Daniel or the interpretation of present-day events by identifying them with the events of Revelation. Our message is really this: "Jesus is coming because He says He is. The first time God told Zechariah and Simeon that Jesus was coming and He did. The second time Jesus told John, Paul, Peter and His other apostles that He was coming back for them, and He did. Now He is telling people all over the world that He is coming again and, once again, He will do it. Here in PNG there is a group of Christians who know very little of modern teachings, but they are giving a simple and clear message which we now pass on to you."

Another said, "Perhaps the end of the world is near but we shouldn't waste time worrying about it." But if the Master is due back soon shouldn't the servants recheck the list of things they were supposed to accomplish before His return? Will He be satisfied to find them quarrelling with each other, getting drunk, cheating each other, unconcerned about looking for the lost or binding up the wounded? Surely if we really believed Jesus was coming soon, we would be seeing tremendous changes in the priorities of the churches of today?

Another correspondent answered, "The Scriptures about Jesus' return are far too difficult to understand. Don't even try." I asked the Lord what He thought about this one. As you might guess His answer was, "Any Christian plus the Holy Spirit, can understand the Scriptures. I rebuked the people of My day, and My own disciples, for not understanding the Scriptures." (Mark 12:24 and Luke 24:25).

Most replies were friendly and gracious and we were deeply touched by the number of important people who took the trouble to write personal letters to us. But we had to admit that somehow or other we had still failed to get our message across to the great majority of our readers.

"Well, Lord, what next?" we asked. "Don't you think you had better give your message to someone else who might be a bit more successful in passing it on? What about a Billy Graham or a Pat Boone this time?"

But in the words of Jeremiah He seemed to say "Whether they listen or whether they refuse to listen, just keep giving the message." So with Barbara as my Baruch, I sat down to write the whole thing in book form. Perhaps some copies would reach those eager to read the teaching, even though other 'scrolls', again like Jeremiah's, might be tossed in the fire!

Chapter 20: Knots and Puzzles

While I was getting my thoughts on to paper, Bryan began to do the same. Working from different angles we often came up with the same results. He studied the meanings of the original languages and researched ancient history. I prayed and meditated. Peter at this time became sick and Valerie and Bryan came up to help me care for him. We four had time for many discussions together and one of the subjects we talked about was:

The Wolf and the Lamb

We had now accepted that there was no thousand years of bliss on earth to look forward to, because Jesus had clearly timed His Kingdom to begin in the lifetime of His generation (Matt. 12:28). This meant we had to reassess many Old Testament prophecies as well as New Testament ones.

Isaiah chapters 11 and 65 seemed a good place to start. "Lord," I asked, "does the peaceful kingdom and the new creation refer to life in heaven or not?"

Jesus almost seemed to laugh. "We don't have nests of poisonous snakes in Heaven. Babies can't die in infancy! And people don't live out their life-span, they live forever!"

"Well then," I asked, "When will these things begin to happen?"

"They have often happened already," He answered, "and they will happen again. The trouble is that people insist on putting 'all' in front of every word. Not all wolves lie down with all sheep, but some wolves have lain down with some sheep. In the same way some lions have refused to eat Christians, choosing straw instead. And remember, these promises apply only to those who live on My Holy Hill."

How wonderful that we can expect God to honour not only verse 24, "Before you finish praying to Me, I will answer your prayers," but also all the promises in both sections as they describe the blessings God wants us to enjoy now, today!

The New Earth and The New Jerusalem

In Isaiah 65, along with the babies and the wolves, there is the promise, "I am making a new earth and new heavens ... the new Jerusalem I make will be full of joy." Bryan told me that the word used here for 'make' is really one used for 'remaking' or 'restoring'. Searching for other scriptures on things made new I found these verses: "Repent then and turn to God ... so that times of spiritual strength will come from the Lord, and He will send Jesus, who is the Messiah He has already chosen for you. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for all things to be made new, as God announced through His holy prophets of long ago." (Acts 3:19-21). Only the prophet Isaiah speaks of a new heaven and a new earth, so I concluded Peter was referring to this very same chapter (Isaiah 65). Obviously Jesus was to return and make all things new so that Isaiah 65 would be fulfilled. Why then, if He had done this already, did they look like the same old earth and the same old heavens?

The Lord showed me that He first founded a physical kingdom, Israel. He chose an earthly king to rule it, King David, and told his son Solomon to build a physical temple, on a physical hill, Mount Zion. But when Jesus came to set up His kingdom, God destroyed the old temple, the old kingdom, the old city and the old kingly line. Then He set up the new kingdom (Luke 21:31) - in the hearts of His people; a new temple, in the bodies of His people; a new city and a new hill. The new kingdom could not be seen at all (Luke 17:20-21 and John 18:36); the new temple,

in the sight of man, was not half as grand as the old but to God it was much more delightful; and the new Jerusalem and the new hill, made especially for this new type of 'temple', while very grand indeed, were also completely invisible (Heb. 12:18-22).

After digesting all this information I asked, "Lord, if the new city was to come down from heaven and be part of Your kingdom, why didn't You mention it in the Gospels?"

"I did," He said, "I said, 'You are like light for the whole world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matt. 5:14). I also told My disciples I was going to prepare a place for them. That was the New Jerusalem, the home for My bride, the dwelling place for Me and the Father" (John 14:23).

I remembered a vision one of the girls here had. At the time she and another girl were praying for two village women to receive the Spirit. She saw a great city with high walls and gates. They approached the gates but an angel stopped them. "What do you want?" he asked.

"We want to come into the city," they answered.

The angel told them, "Well, you two can come in because you have white robes but these other two cannot." The angel then went away and brought white robes for the two women. They put them on and then all four were allowed in.

Paul had a clear word to say on the subject of the new Jerusalem too. In Hebrews 12:18-24, I found that he drew a series of parallels between the Israelites at Mount Sinai and the Christians on the new Mount Zion. The Israelites received the old covenant at Mount Sinai: Christians receive the new covenant on Mount Zion, a spiritual mountain but related to the hill of Calvary. The Israelites came to a fire, gloom and storm that they could feel, see and hear: Christians come to a spiritual city that cannot be seen, heard or felt, except in visions. The Israelites were terrified: Christians gather joyfully. The Israelites saw no angels: Christians, in visions, often see thousands of them. The Israelites were all alone in the desert: The Christians are surrounded by a large crowd of witnesses (verse 1) and are allowed to stand in the company of God's oldest sons and of those already made perfect. The Israelites were cleansed by the blood of animals yet had no confidence to draw near to God and in fact begged Him not to speak to them: Christians, cleansed by Jesus' blood, come boldly to God, the Judge sitting on His throne, and to Jesus, for their names are written in the book of life.

How neatly Paul's picture fits with that of John - a 'Jerusalem' where God's saints meet, and where angels guard the gates; 'a Mountain' where heaven meets earth and nothing harmful or evil may enter in (Rev. 21 and 22).

Here is another teaching the Spirit gave me on John 10:1-16. On this occasion there were three questions I asked. First, are the folds of verses 1 and 9 the same? Second, who is the gatekeeper in verse 3? Third, are the two thieves of verses 1 and 10 the same?

These are the answers I had to my questions:

The first fold is the wall God put around Israel. This prevented any nation from destroying the chosen ancestors of Jesus. God put a door in it so that one day the Israelites might move out and become one flock with the Gentiles again. Many came like thieves but the doorkeeper, the Spirit, would not open the door for them (Acts 5:36, 37). When Jesus came, the Spirit, working through John the Baptist, opened the door for Him. His sheep recognised the Shepherd's voice and came out from the fold. Jesus then set up a new fold with Himself as both door and shepherd. Thieves and a wolf came. The thieves were Jesus' enemies who killed Him and the wolf was Satan, whom He overcame by His death. The shepherd was killed and the sheep were scattered but only for a short time. Jesus rose from the dead and again called His sheep together. Now He is their Good Shepherd. They feed on the Hill of God. Often they go into the city, in the Spirit, but their

pasture is still outside the city, the place where they live and work and give light for the people of the world to walk by.

I was still left with the problem of why Isaiah and John wrote about a new heaven and a new earth and not just a new kingdom, a new city and a new temple. This is the picture as I finally saw it. Jesus' plan was to make all things new. He did this in two ways. Some things He destroyed or abandoned before He set up the new ones. But three things: the sky, the earth and our bodies, He did not destroy. Instead He cleansed and renewed them by the power of the Spirit (Col. 1:20). Making a chart helped me to see this more clearly.

Old Order	Its Fate	Outward Appearance	New Age or Order
Adam's race	Died Genesis 2:17 1 Cor. 15:22	Alive and well	New race of Christians sprang from Jesus 1 Cor. 15:45-49
First Israel	Divided into a) Christians b) non-Christians	Few Strong modern nation	Joined the Gentile Christians to become New Israel. Eph. 2:15 & Rom. 15:12
First Jerusalem	Abandoned Matt. 23:38	Strong modern city	Replaced by New Jerusalem Gal. 12:22
First two Temples	Destroyed	Still not rebuilt	God dwells in individual believers 1 Cor. 3:16-17
First Mt Zion	Abandoned	Still a mountain	New Mt Zion Hebrews 12:22
Sinful human spirit	Taken away Ezek. 11:19	Invisible Change	New spirit given and joined to God's Spirit Rom. 8:16
Sinful human mind	Transformed Romans 12:2	Invisible change	New mind given 1 Cor. 2:16
Sinful human body	Dead but given new life Rom. 8:10-11	No outward change	Joined to the body of Jesus 1 Cor. 6:15 2 Cor. 5:17
First heaven and earth	Changed like a garment Heb. 1:12	No outward change	New heaven and new earth Isaiah 65:17, 66:22 2 Peter 3:13

The Antichrist

I had often read other people's opinions as to who this mysterious figure would be. The hot favourites were usually the Pope, the Catholic Church, the Communists or in recent writings, a handsome military hero who would soon appear on the political scene. Yet I found Jesus had clearly prophesied that many false prophets would come in His own generation (Matt. 24:24). Paul was obviously expecting a Wicked One to appear shortly (2 Thess. 2:7, 8). John said, "My children, the end is near! You were told that the Enemy of Christ would come and now many enemies of Christ have already appeared, and so we know that the end is near" (1 John 2:18). It

was very interesting to search out descriptions of the Wicked One, the enemy of Christ and the false prophet(s). I found that they had much in common. Not only that, but I found in Revelation that John used still another name for the same 'person'. There he was sometimes called 'the second beast'.

These are the things this character will do: According to Jesus he will perform great signs and wonders. He will attempt to deceive God's chosen people (Matt. 24:24).

According to Paul, he will oppose everything that men worship and consider divine. He will put himself above them all and go in and sit down in God's temple and claim to be God. He will come with the power of Satan, and perform all kinds of miracles and false signs and wonders. He will use every kind of wicked deceit on those who will perish. Finally the Lord Jesus will kill him with His breath, and he will be put in hell (2 Thess. 2).

John's list for the second beast is as follows: He will force the earth and all who live in it to worship the first beast. He will perform great miracles and so deceive all the people living in the earth.

His list for the false prophet is shorter but similar. (The false prophet and second beast are never mentioned together.) He will perform miracles in the presence of the first beast. By those miracles he will deceive those who have the mark of the first beast, and those who worship its image. An unclean spirit will come out of his mouth. With the first beast he will be thrown alive into the lake of fire where he will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. (Rev. 13:11-15; 16:13-14; 19:20; 20:10).

I wonder if you have noticed the same thing as I did about these lists? The two characteristics that Jesus described were the ability to perform miracles and the ability to deceive people. These two characteristics are prominent in every subsequent description of him. But Jesus said he (or they), would appear in the lifetime of His hearers, not two thousand years later.

John's timing completely agrees with that of Jesus. He saw the Enemy of Christ as already come, in his own day. "But anyone who denies this about Jesus does not have the Spirit from God. This spirit is from the Enemy of Christ; you heard that it would come, and now it is here in the world already" (1 John 4:3). Obviously John saw the Enemy of Christ not as a man but as a powerful evil angel in competition with the Holy Spirit. This explains why he was able to send a demon out of his mouth, why he claimed to be God and why he stopped true worship and forced men to worship evil angels like himself. When men did these things they too became false prophets. Finally it explains why, like Satan, he was thrown alive into hell, there to be punished forever.

Babylon, the Great City

I found the chapters on this subject very difficult. When reading the title of Revelation chapter 17, "The Great Prostitute", I thought "Obviously this refers to Jerusalem," because God often accused the kingdoms of Judah and Israel of being like prostitutes (Ezek. 16 and 23). Then I read that the city was "built near many rivers." So I changed my mind and decided it was Babylon that John was referring to. A little further on I found this city was "drunk with the blood of those killed because they were loyal to Jesus", so I decided 'Babylon' would have to be either Rome or Jerusalem after all. Ah, here was the answer, she "sat sat on seven hills." Quite clearly, the city was Rome. But a little lower down came the prophecy that the city would one day be completely desolate. The only city that applied to was Babylon, or perhaps Nineveh? Yes, certainly it must be Babylon because of the angel throwing the stone in the sea, a symbol of Babylon's fate that Jeremiah also used (Jer. 51:63-64). But once again, as I read on, this solution did not really satisfy me either, for the people in heaven shouted, "The smoke of her burning goes up for ever and ever." How could this be true as Babylon is just a heap of ruins today?

It was this last verse that led me to an answer that seemed much better than any other. In Rev. 14:11, it says that the smoke of the lake of fire and sulphur also goes up for ever and ever. The obvious deduction was that Babylon was in the same place of punishment. Pursuing this line of thought to its conclusion, it seemed to me that 'Babylon' was really the name of an evil angel, just as 'Enemy of Christ' was. Perhaps other names for this angel are 'Sodom' and 'Egypt' (Rev. 11:8). Perhaps the work of this angel was to build thrones for Satan in every large city (Rev. 2:13). Many 'great cities' have at different times become centres of Satan worship and they have bitterly persecuted God's people - Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Jerusalem and Rome. They have corrupted the earth with their immorality and idolatry. God has punished them or destroyed them, one by one, but finally He cast their evil guardian angel into hell, where she is punished for ever and ever.

Paradise, the Garden of God

Some years ago, before I became seriously interested in the topic of Paradise, I had a dream. I saw Jesus in the dream and I asked Him, "Jesus, where is Paradise?" He answered, "Paradise is where I went after I died on the Cross. If you have a body you have to be somewhere, and that is where I was."

I was somewhat puzzled by the dream but felt sure it was a spiritual one with a significant meaning because it did not fade. Now as I pondered over Revelation 22 it came back to me with fresh interest. It seemed that at His death Jesus received a spiritual body just as we do, so that we may stand before God to be judged or rewarded. In this spiritual body He went down to Paradise. On the third day (Jewish method of calculation) He rose from this place of the dead to enter the tomb. There by the Spirit's mighty power His physical body was, in some indescribably wonderful way, fused to His spiritual body, and He left the tomb ready to convince His doubting disciples that He was both the crucified Jesus and the risen Lord. The point of His message to me in the dream was that even in a spiritual body He could only be in one place at any one time. Although a spiritual body can travel at incredible speed, yet it is a body and cannot be everywhere at once. By becoming a Man, Jesus surrendered His right to be everywhere simultaneously. Spiritually speaking, Jesus is everywhere in the sense that thousands all over the world might see Him at the same time in dreams and visions, but I believe He can only be seen as a real physical presence in one place at any one time.

But the dream posed a new problem too: what was the relationship between Paradise where Jesus went, and Hades, where He also went? In Jesus' story of the rich man and Lazarus I found the clue to this puzzle (Luke 16:19-31). Lazarus was at the right hand of Abraham. The rich man was in torment in Hades, yet Abraham and the rich man were able to see each other and carry on a conversation. Obviously, in the time of Jesus the two places were closely related, and therefore both in the depths of the earth. Yet once Paradise had been in Mesopotamia and according to Revelation 2:7, it would be in Heaven when the Christians reached there.

It took the Lord a long time to explain all this to me, but I will tell you how I see it now. Paradise was once a piece of God's own special garden in Heaven. As Jesus said, His Father is a gardener (John 15:1). When preparing a place for Adam to live, He transplanted a piece of His own heavenly garden for him, including the trees of knowledge and of life and the stream that runs from under His Throne. The water from this stream ran out of the Garden and watered the earth. After Adam and Eve sinned they were driven out of the Garden lest they eat from the tree of life, and live forever. (They must have already drunk from the river of life, but apparently this did not give them immortality.) God then sent His angels to remove the entire Garden from earth. Though water continued to flow in the old stream beds, this was not the original water but natural, earthly water.

God then prepared a place of death, for He had said to Adam that on the day he ate the fruit he would die. The place of the dead was divided into two. One half was called Hades. The other was the transplanted garden of Paradise (Ezek. 31:18). There was water there, as I noted in the story of Lazarus. (The Lord pointed out to me that this is a true story and not a parable.) Even a drop would have cooled the rich man's tongue so that he would never have thirsted again. There were good things to enjoy there. It was very different from Hades. When Jesus died He stayed there for three days and nights (apart from short visits to earth) preaching to the spirits in Hades (1 Peter 4:6). When He finally returned to Heaven He took Paradise and all its inhabitants with Him. Once again it became part of heaven. As before, its waters again flowed from beneath the throne and there the saints who had been killed because they had proclaimed God's words, waited for their fellow servants and brothers (Rev. 6:9). The Lord reminded me that they waited 'underneath the altar' but the altar stands before the throne (Rev. 8:3).

I was still puzzled over the relationship of Paradise to the place described in Ezekiel 47:1-12. But when I read this chapter again more carefully I saw it did not refer to Paradise at all. Instead, Jesus Himself had explained its meaning when He said, "Whoever is thirsty should come to Me and drink. As the scripture says, 'Whoever believes in Me, streams of life-giving water will pour out from his heart. Jesus said this about the Spirit, which those who believed in Him were going to receive.'" (John 7:37, 39). I noticed that Ezekiel's stream was not called the river of life but rather the river that "wherever it flows it will bring life." Also, although there were trees on each side of this river they were not called the trees of life. They were described as 'all kinds of trees'. They 'provide food', rather than bear fruit, and their leaves are used for healing 'people' rather than nations. Nevertheless they are watered by the stream that runs from under the entrance to the temple and beside the altar. Their leaves never wither and they bear fruit every month.

This is how I understand it now: God showed Ezekiel a vision of the temple as He wanted it built by the returning exiles. God also planned that after Jesus had come to this world, had died, risen and ascended, His disciples would gather in this temple and Jesus would pour out the Holy Spirit on them there. The Spirit would first flow east, refreshing all of Israel and making the towns as full of Christians as the Mediterranean is full of fish. The trees full of fruit whose leaves bring healing represent the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, as seen in the lives of the apostles and those who accepted their teaching. Three thousand new trees in the first day! The deepening and widening of the river shows how swiftly the Spirit-filled group multiplied in those first months.

When I looked at Zechariah 14:8, I found it spoke of a slightly different event. After the looting of Jerusalem (verse 1) and the Lord's return (verse 5) he speaks of the spread of the Gospel. "When that day comes fresh water will flow from Jerusalem, half of it to the Dead Sea and half of it to the Mediterranean. It will flow all the year round, in the dry season as well as the wet. Then the Lord will be King over all the earth; everyone will worship Him as God and know Him by the same name" (verses 8-9). I saw this prophecy as meaning the Jews would later take the message to the lands along the Mediterranean coast, just as Paul planned to do. The river of Spirit-filled Jews would continue to flow east and west. Even though the physical temple and city were destroyed, yet in God's eyes the source of the river was still the stream that He poured out from heaven on the day of Pentecost. In this way then, I came to understand that neither Ezekiel's river nor Zechariah's refers to the river of Paradise but rather to the stream of the Holy Spirit, flowing not from the altar of the temple, but from the south side of it. How interesting it would be to know if the upper room, where the 120 received the Spirit, was actually on the south side of the temple.

Chapter 21: Prophecies and Problems

Who is the apple of God's eye today? Is it the Christians or the nation of Israel? I decided to first research the words of Jesus. To my surprise I could not find a single word from Him that supported the idea that the nation of Israel is still the special object of His favour. In fact, every parable showed that unless Israel accepted His Gospel and His Kingdom, it would be totally rejected. On the other hand there were abundant comforting and encouraging words directed to all those who obeyed and followed Him regardless of their race.

I went on to Paul's writings and I found that, apart from one verse, he said exactly the same thing. Only the name of Jesus could save men. The Jews, like the Gentiles, were to save themselves by repenting and being baptised. He even said: "There is no difference between Jews and Gentiles" (Romans 10:12), "There are no Gentiles and Jews . . . You are the people of God" (Col. 3:11-12), and "If you belong to Christ, then you are the descendants of Abraham and you will receive what God has promised" (Gal. 3:29). Just a little further on in Galatians Paul gave a very strong teaching on the fate of the Jews who had rejected Jesus. Paul said that the city of Jerusalem in his day was a slave, along with all its people. But the people of the heavenly Jerusalem (i.e. the New Jerusalem that came down from heaven) are free. He then says, quoting Genesis, "Throw out the slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the father's property with the son of the free woman" (Gal. 4:30). I could see only one possible meaning here: The Jews who reject Jesus will inherit none of God's real property. They may inherit property or land in this world, as Esau did, but they are cut off from the line of Jacob and the promises made to him.

I then went back to the Old Testament to see if I could find any prophecy concerning the dissolution of the old covenant and its promises. Paul of course boldly proclaimed that circumcision no longer meant anything to God (Gal. 5:6), and spoke of the old covenant as being replaced by the new (Hebrews 8:13). I asked the Lord which book would show me just when the old covenant was cancelled and He said, "Zechariah."

In Zechariah 11 I found what I was looking for. The Spirit explained it like this. God told Zechariah to act the part of Jesus. He was the shepherd of the sheep who were going to be butchered by their owners, the Romans. Their own shepherds, the priests, often co-operated with the Romans in this. Jesus looked for the lost sheep of the house of Israel but only a few heard His voice. The prophet took two sticks to represent two of the promises God had made. The first was Favour. The covenant it represented was the one God made to Abraham, "I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you" (Gen. 12:3). In this covenant, God promised to bless every nation that would be kind to Israel and help them. Zechariah broke the stick and cancelled the covenant. God had also promised the Israelites that when they returned from Babylon and from the other nations they would again be one nation, rather than Judah plus Israel (Ezekiel 37:22). Their unity depended on them accepting God as their shepherd. From the time the second stick was broken this covenant also no longer applied. They still had the right to their land, just as other nations have to theirs (Acts 17:26), but they were put on an equal footing with other nations, except in one thing - their past history was more glorious (Acts 10:34-35).

My next question was this: "Just when was the covenant broken? If Zechariah was acting the part of Jesus, when did Jesus break the two covenants?"

The answer was, "On the Cross." I understood that the two sticks represented the Cross itself. By causing Jesus to die, the Jews had brought their own curse on their heads: "Let the punishment for His death fall on us and on our children." God had many times said to them, "I will be your God and you will be My people," but now they plainly said, "We are not your people. We reject the King that You have chosen for us." Long before this Moses had warned them that if they did not accept the prophet God sent, then they would be separated from God's people and destroyed.

Lastly I came back to the verse of stumbling in Romans, "And this is how all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26). I always mentally attached this verse to the preceding one. I read it like this: "When the complete number of Gentiles come to God at the end of the world, then all Israel will be saved." I thought it meant they could be saved without repenting and without accepting Jesus as Saviour. I thought it somehow applied retrospectively to the entire Jewish race. It all seemed very much like favouritism.

This is how the Lord explained it: Firstly Paul was not talking about the end of the world. He was talking about the same event as John was in Revelation. He meant that when the complete number of Gentiles was reached (Rev. 6:11), then a large number of Jews would also be saved. Their stubbornness would be taken away. This I believe happened as Jerusalem was destroyed. Many extraordinary things happened in the last years of Jerusalem's existence. For example, there were strange signs in the sky, including a battle-ground with a battle being fought, and a star like a sword which was seen over Jerusalem for months at a time. There were strange signs in the temple itself: a cow gave birth to a lamb in the courtyard; the east gate of the temple, after being closed by fourteen men and bolted to the rock, was found to have been mysteriously re-opened. I believe many Jews saw these signs, repented and were saved before they died.

But, I still argued, this doesn't really help, because Paul says in Romans, "All Israel will be saved." The Lord told me to join verse 26 to verse 27 and read it again. I still could not get the meaning so He suggested I put the name of a hypothetical nation in where the word 'Israel' is, e.g. 'Gentiles', and read it once again. Now the verses read, "And this is how all Gentiles will be saved: The Saviour will come from Zion. He will remove all their wickedness and make a covenant with them when He takes away their sins." Now it became clear to me. The verse really meant that all salvation is through Jesus, and Jesus only. God was saying that all the Israelites who were going to be saved would be saved by the Saviour from Zion taking away their sins. Paul quoted Isaiah just a little earlier, "Even if the people of Israel are as many as the grains of sand by the sea, yet only a few of them will be saved" (9:27). So the meaning of 11:26 could not contradict the meaning of 9:27 where it says not all but only a few of the Israelites will be saved. In this way Paul accurately reflected Jesus' own teachings concerning the nation who rejected the chief corner-stone chosen by God.

Seven Times Seven

Everybody has heard of the fiasco caused by those who prophesied Jesus would return in 1844. This prophecy was based on mathematical calculations from the book of Daniel. Undeterred by previous failures, prophecies are still made using the same data, and still fail. It was therefore with much trepidation that I set sail on the well-charted but many-reefed waters of the prophetic chapters of this book.

I got nowhere. All seemed hidden in mystery, even Jesus' reference to the book of Daniel (Matt. 24:15) was quite incomprehensible. Then one day, quite unexpectedly, a big box of books arrived in the mail-bag. They were from a Swiss friend of ours who had been to Bible College in Port Moresby and now was off to Australia. Among the collection was an Old Testament Apocrypha. The Apocrypha is a book most Protestant Christians are strongly warned not to read. I had previously dipped into the New Testament Apocrypha and I could see why it was counted

unimportant or even dangerous, but because of the long gap between Malachi and Matthew I had always wanted to read the historical books of the Maccabees. I turned to 1 Maccabees and began to read. Immediately I realised that here was much of the answer to the puzzling prophecies of Daniel. For example, the Awful Horror (or Abomination of Desolation) is fully explained in the very first chapter. Then the meaning of Daniel's little-horn king became completely clear as I read the story of Antiochus Epiphanes.

I went back to Daniel 2 and read again about the multi-metal statue. Daniel said it stood for five empires. I tried following the usual teaching: gold for Babylonian, silver for Medo-Persian, bronze for the Greek, iron for the Roman and who-knows-what was meant by iron-and-clay kingdom. The Lord corrected me. "The iron kingdom is not the Roman empire," He said.

I looked at the handy little chart at the back of the Good News Bible to see who overthrew the Greek rulers of Palestine. There I read: "198-166 BC: Palestine ruled by the Seleucids. " But if the iron legs meant the Syrian empire, then what did the iron-and-clay mixture refer to? A little further on (Daniel 11:6 and 17) I found that two different kings of this kingdom had tried to dominate the kingdom of Egypt by marriage alliances. Neither were successful "because iron will not mix with clay."

Daniel also prophesied that in the time of these rulers God would set up His own kingdom which would last forever and cover the whole world. This could only be true if all five kingdoms preceded Jesus' birth and came to an end as His kingdom grew. As I knew, this was exactly the fate of all these five kingdoms. I looked then at the prophecy in Daniel 7. There Daniel describes a vision of four beasts. I already understood that the first beast was the Babylonian empire, the second was the Medo-Persian empire, the third the Greek empire under Alexander the Great and its four heads were the four generals who became the four rulers of the empire he won. Obviously the fourth beast must be the Seleucid empire of Syria. Its iron teeth were probably a reference to the iron legs of the statue. From this empire came the little horn that boasted proudly - Antiochus Epiphanes. While Antiochus was bragging and boasting, God sat in judgment on him and his empire. His empire was destroyed and thrown into the fire but the Greek, Persian and Babylonian empires were not totally destroyed at this time. After the Syrian empire was destroyed, Daniel saw Jesus returning triumphantly from earth to heaven to receive all authority and power (Revelation 5).

Daniel then asked the meaning of the beast with the bronze claws and the iron teeth and its little horn. He was told the beast was an empire which would crush the whole earth. This puzzled me as the Syrian empire was actually smaller than the others. The Lord told me that in the Bible 'the earth' is a term often used for the land of Israel. This empire tried to destroy the Jewish religion in a way no others did.

The next vision of Daniel (chapter 8) was about a goat with four horns. Gabriel explained to Daniel that the goat represented the empire of Greece. It divided into four kingdoms and as these were nearly at their end, a 'little horn' arose. Daniel saw this king "attack the army of heaven and throw some stars to the ground; defy the commander of the heavenly army and stop the daily sacrifices offered to him; desecrate the Temple and cause people to sin there."

Interpreting Daniel's vision, Gabriel said, "He will bring destruction on powerful men and on God's own people. Because he is cunning he will succeed in his deceitful ways. He will be proud of himself and destroy many people without warning. He will even defy the greatest King of all but he will be destroyed without the use of human power." He then warned Daniel that the vision about the evening and morning sacrifices would come true but not for a long time. As I read through 1 Maccabees, I found every one of these prophecies was fulfilled by Antiochus.

Next, in Daniel 9, Gabriel returned to further explain the same vision. It was here that the mysterious use of the number seven was given to 'date' these future events. Different versions of

the Bible gave very different translations of these verses but one thing seemed plain - none of the dates fitted known events nearly so neatly as the modern books of prophecy said they did! Here were the simple facts: Gabriel said that the time from the command to rebuild Jerusalem until God's chosen leader came, would be 49 years or seven times seven (Daniel 9:25). The edict of Cyrus, the only command given to rebuild Jerusalem, was made in 538 BC. Forty nine years later would be 489 B.C. Obviously the 'chosen leader' was not Jesus. He was, perhaps, Zerubbabel. Then the city was to be rebuilt and stand for 434 years. Well, the city was completed by 443 B.C. and it should have been destroyed about 9 B.C. This is a long way out from the destruction of the temple by Antiochus (about 160 BC), or the destruction of the city and temple by the Romans (70 AD).

Once again I took my problems to the Lord. This was His answer: "When I told Peter to forgive his brother seventy times seven what did I mean?"

I said, "Everyone knows You meant to forgive over and over again. The figure is not exact."

"You are right," He said. He also explained that some things happen more than once and one prophecy may refer to two happenings. The placing of the 'Awful Horror' in the temple was one of these. Daniel said it would be done in the time of the evil King of Syria (Antiochus). Jesus said it would be done when the temple was destroyed (by the Romans) before His generation would all die. History books told me that the time between the desecration of the temple and its rededication in the time of the Maccabees was 31/2 years. Also the siege of Jerusalem in Roman times lasted 31/2 years, so the prophecy in Daniel 12:7 could have a double meaning covering both events.

There were still a few problems bothering me in the last chapter of Daniel. To save space I have omitted my questions and given only the answers that have come as I prayed and listened. Daniel 12:1. This is the same time of trouble that Jesus spoke of in Mark 13:19 and refers to the destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans. (If anyone thinks Jesus was exaggerating they should read the accounts of Josephus of these wars.)

Daniel 12:4 refers to the book of Truth which the angel showed to Daniel (Daniel 10:20-21). The seal put on it till the end of time meant that it would not be explained until after the events had happened.

Daniel 12:13. In this last verse Daniel was assured that he would rise from the dead and receive his reward. I was interested to see that throughout the book, Daniel had no concern for himself. His whole concern was that the temple worship be restored (9:17, 20). The angels too were deeply concerned at the thought of the sacrifices being stopped (8:13, 14).

I put the Book of Daniel down with the same thought that I had as I left the study of Revelation. These books are not too hard if we will only accept that their messages were fulfilled when the writers said they would be. In the case of Revelation this was 'very soon'. In the case of Daniel it was to be before the everlasting kingdom was set up.

I know that these last three or four chapters may upset some Christians who have a different interpretation of the Bible. It seems to me that God never reveals all the truth about either the past or the future, to any one person. The best we can do is peep through our small knot holes and describe the glimpses we see of the tremendous acts of God. I have been enormously helped by messages shared by others and will be more than satisfied if any of my small contributions help others in the same way.

Chapter 22: One Flock One Shepherd

I have already explained how we came to the conclusion that in some circumstances, it is God's will that a Christian group divide, rather than the whole group move further and further away from Him. The opposite question, that of restoring unity, also greatly concerned us. Our particular denomination had spent many years negotiating with another large denomination to produce a union of the two. Over the tedious period of meetings and endless circulars on the topic we had plenty of time to think about it. Long before the union was achieved we felt sure that this was not God's method of answering Jesus' prayers that we all be one. I remember one negotiator announcing with a sigh of satisfaction, "Yes, it's true, other churches have had problems after union, but ours won't. We have thought of everything." Yet it seems to be working no better than other unions do - that is, when the world saw it they were no more moved to believe in Jesus than they were before the union. Where did we go wrong? Or is Jesus' prayer actually impossible to answer?

There seemed to be two problems that faced us, just as they do every Christian who earnestly seeks to fulfil this prayer. First, how can I change myself so that I am able to love all other Christians just as Jesus loves them? And second, how can I help to change my church so that, as a unit, it will function as Jesus planned it would? When I asked the Lord for some practical steps to take, these are the three points He made.

Firstly, "Get rid of the labels." He showed me that there was no place for the names of saints, heroes, or systems of government in His family. The name of 'Christian' or 'Christ's man' is above all other names, and should be sufficient honour for all who have the privilege of using it. In obedience to this message we took down the hospital notice-board with the denominational name on it, stopped using this name on our radio skeds and changed our letter-head to, simply, Kapuna Christian Hospital. We thought some would ask us why we did this, but not one person even commented on it. We also started to avoid asking people their denominational labels. Instead we began to just ask if they were Christians or not.

Secondly, He said "Attend other churches' services as often as you attend your own." We found this command easy to follow whenever holiday or business took us to places where there is more than one church. We have friends in many different denominations and much enjoy the fellowship in their places of worship. Each has its own particular flavour and we have been greatly blessed by the warmth of the welcome and the good teaching given in so many different churches.

Thirdly, "Give to every Christian group that is doing a good work." Again, this was an easy command to obey. So many groups are doing good work both in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. It was a source of joy to us all too, to receive their letters of thanks. Many were, of course, surprised at our donation, but nearly all accepted the money in the spirit we offered it and prayed for our own work as part of their thanks.

When we were about to go on holiday to New Zealand, I prayed about what message to take. The Lord said, "Tell them I don't want just new Christians, I also want a new church." Ever since then we have been urging people to be like Johnny Ortiz's mashed potatoes, willing to shed their denominational jackets, and to let the Lord mix us all up together just as we will be mixed in heaven. I truly believe this is possible without any greater outlay than a little paint to remove the denominational name on the notice board, and a one minute announcement from the pulpit. It

might go like this, "In future please feel free to attend other churches' meetings as you wish. And if you want to bring friends from other denominations here, they are welcome to eat at the Lord's Table with us. You may be sure you will not be embarrassed by them hearing anyone here speak against our Christian brothers in other churches." Would not many of you rejoice if your pastor should announce this?

We talked over this problem of inviting Christians of different beliefs to share the Lord's Supper. Suppose they were not right with the Lord and drank judgement on themselves? But someone pointed out that Paul says each person is to examine himself and not the elder or leader to examine the life of each person. So to help each to do this at Kapuna, we put a notice on the church entrance each Sunday -- it reads like this, "STOP! This is Holy Ground. Examine your life before you come in front of the Living God. If there is anything that is not right, before you enter God's House go to the building opposite and put it right." Sometimes one person will stand at the entrance and quietly ask those entering if they have had a time of prayer that morning before coming to the meeting. If they haven't, he or she is asked to do so, and they do.

Now I am going to change my role. Instead of being a recorder of events in a far-away land, I am going to comment on the situation in such places as New Zealand and Australia. I feel that here at Kapuna we have done all we can to fulfil Jesus' prayer for one flock and one shepherd. But what about you? Perhaps you need to start almost at square one, just as we did. Ask yourself: "Is the Kingdom of God and being right with Jesus the real priority in my life 24 hours a day, 365 days a year?" If you can answer "yes" to that, there is a second question: "Are you also baptised in water and in the Spirit?" However enthusiastic or energetic you may be, I believe no Christian can succeed in changing the church unless he has the same preparation that the Twelve had for laying its foundation.

Next I suggest you read "Disciple" by Juan Carlos Ortiz. Try to find one other person to share this with, either in your own household or in your present congregation. Pray together about in which church you will start your "Operation Love One Another." Do not leave your own church but attend it alternately with your new place of meeting. If anyone there asks you why are also attending another church you can say, "I didn't feel I was loving the brothers and sisters in the other denominations, because I didn't know any. So I am getting to know them." When someone in this new church says "hello" to you, invite them home for a fellowship meal, that is, a meal between just the two of you, no third person present (assuming age and sex make that suitable). Tell them what you are doing. Meet and share regularly. Repeat with other churches in a radius of a mile or two depending on your area. When you have been meeting for a year or so with four or five people who care more about obeying Jesus than anything else, then, provided all are now baptised in water and the Spirit, they should be ready to do just what you have done and start inviting people from other churches into their own homes. I would strongly suggest that all your visitors be of your own sex. Ideally you would meet with one person, your spouse with another and any teenage children with their own peers. I am not suggesting families break up to do this. Suppose the Browns who are Baptists, meet the Blacks at their Salvation Army meeting. The Browns invite the Blacks to a meal. Mrs Brown and Mrs Black sit on the sofa and share problems and their life-stories while they eat. Mr Brown and Mr Black sit at the kitchen table and discuss where they are as Christians. Joan Brown and Mary Black will sit on the hearth rug and talk about their ideas and experiences. After the Blacks to home, the Browns will get together and sum it all up while no doubt the Blacks will do the same. Why not try it and decide for yourself if this is not more profitable for the Kingdom than the six of you sitting around the table talking generalities? One word of warning: when you start studying the Bible or discussing doctrine keep to these rules: No theological quotes, no commentaries, no arguments over 'what our church says'. Pray for God to show you the Truth from His Word, and then share the exciting revelations God will give - so often He will show you something new altogether!

But where is all this heading? The goal is to rebuild the church as it was in New Testament times: groups of neighbourhood Christians meeting in the nearest convenient house where all welcome the stranger and the traveller, all pray for the sick, bring messages, teachings, revelations, encourage one another and speak God's message. This flock does not belong to anyone but Jesus. Jesus said clearly to Peter, "Feed My sheep" not "your sheep." There is only one shepherd who walks in front of the sheep and that is Jesus. The under-shepherds of 1 Peter help carry the sick and round up the strays or move on the lazy ones, but they have no flock of their own that follows them. They are not rulers over the sheep as Peter is so careful to point out (1 Peter 5:1-3), they are only 'older sheep'. The sheep do not bite or butt each other for position, but all endeavour to be as close to the Shepherd as possible. Being sheep, this means the lambs automatically try to get close to the Shepherd too. Tommy Reid, in "The Exploding Church" tells how God taught him that the home is God's Christian life centre. God showed him the world as seen from heaven at night. Tommy saw lights on church spires. He identified his own. "That's my church!" he cried. Then he saw many new lights. The lights were from homes. "Those", God said, "are My church."

Hong Kong faces the possibility of a take-over by the Communists in a few years' time. In the church they have at present, there are well-paid, well-educated pastors, a high-powered theological college, big congregations in fine churches. The Chinese Christians know that this kind of church will never survive a takeover. The only kind that will survive is a New Testament type of church with each fellowship self-supporting, independent and, though weak in the world's eyes, mighty in battle in the Lord's.

Why should God have to use Communism to persuade us to change? Is the battle against Satan in New Zealand and Australia of less importance to us? We may enjoy singing "Father, make us one", but is God able to answer this prayer while we refuse to take such simple steps to become one? Can we sing "I love this family of God" when we will not invite our sisters and brothers of other denominations to eat with us? Can we claim we love one another when we cannot even eat at Jesus' own table as one group?

I often remember an event in one church we visited in New Zealand. Our host made a big wooden cross at our request. During the service we held it up and invited the congregation to come close and touch it. Of course the latecomers had to really push hard to get their arm through the arms of the first arrivals. Then we asked "What are you touching?"

Everyone chorused, "The cross."

"Anything else?"

"Yes," they answered, "each other!" Such happy smiles as they all saw the point.

But in the corners of the buildings were those who hung back. They were not crippled or blind -- the price of getting close to Jesus' cross just seemed too great for them. But Jesus wants us to eat together, to praise Him together and to encourage our brothers who are doing good works for God. Praise God for a missionary ladies' group who understood this. While shopping in Woolworths I recognised an old school friend behind the counter. We got talking and she promptly invited me to her home and then to her church. When I expressed surprise at the warmth of their welcome they said, "We like to hear any missionary speak. You are all doing the same good work."

Of course if you are bold enough to try my experiment, then in some churches you can expect to be ridiculed, misunderstood, insulted and even put out of your fellowship. If, however, sufficient people are willing to accept this, if they are determined to love one another, to be one flock and to follow but one Shepherd, then we have Jesus' assurance that the world will believe. And is any price too high to pay for that?

Chapter 23: Up, Up to Glory

It is now the end of 1984 and more than two years since I began to write this book. Soon after I began it my husband found that he had an enlarged liver. The bowel cancer he had had removed earlier had returned. He fought a brave battle against the disease, holding out as long as he could against each stage of it. Always he encouraged the rest of us in every aspect of the work here, both Christian and medical. Two church leaders came to visit him about a month before he died. They invited him to apologise for his part in the revival but he refused to take the opportunity. He told them, "All my life I have been happy but these last few years have been the happiest of all. It is the Holy Spirit who brought revival here. How can I apologise for His work or for letting me be part of it?"

Once again we challenged them in the same words that one of our nurses had used to a previous top church leader, "What is wrong with what we are doing? Why are you not pleased that so many are coming to the Lord? What are we doing that is not in the Bible?"

Their predecessor had said, "All you are doing is in the Bible but it is not our church's way." On this occasion one of the men answered, "Last year only K53 came in from this district. This year nothing has come in."

I do not think there are many Christians in the world who can afford to throw stones at the leaders here. I am sure that if we had done in New Zealand the things we have done here the result would have been similar. We would have been asked to leave our church. I do not know any denomination that tolerates lay people baptising those already accepted as its full members. Nor do I know any hospital that allows its doctors and nurses to actively evangelise every patient that enters it. I am quite sure our action in baptising school children without their parents' express permission would be condemned by a great many. Perhaps some will feel Peter and I deserved all the criticism and persecution we have had. Everyone must make up his own mind about when to follow and when to lead.

Three weeks after this visit Peter became much weaker. One morning I was sitting with him when He saw Jesus walk in through the window. I saw and heard nothing but Peter was overcome with joy. After He had left, Peter whispered to me, "He said He is coming for me tonight. The Holy Spirit was here with Him. Isn't He wonderfully kind? You and I have always wanted to see Him like the nurses and orderlies do and so He came especially to let me see Him." Soon some of the orderlies came in to say "hello" to him. They were all looking solemn and long-faced to see their doctor so thin and pale. Peter really rebuked them. "Smile!" he commanded, "Jesus was here just a few minutes ago! Don't look sad!"

We called Bryan and Valerie on the radio and a Missionary Aviation Fellowship pilot, in a wonderful gesture of kindness, brought the whole family straight down from Mt Hagen where they had gone for a brief trip. The weather was wet and the strip was closed but the chief pilot came down himself and the strip was opened for an emergency landing. They reached home while Peter was still strong enough to pray with the seven of us, one by one. We watched beside him all night but he did not leave us then. In the morning he was still conscious but his voice had faded to a faint whisper as he said "I'm so thankful they came last night. I couldn't have said goodbye to them to-day."

Later that morning Bryan came and shared a vision which he had seen when he had woken in the night. He saw Jesus walk in the window and call, "Peter, I've come for you. Now is a good

time to go when nobody is looking." Peter tried to get out of bed, but as soon as he did this we all took hold of him and wouldn't let him go. So Jesus said, "They won't let you go. I'll come back for you another time."

When Bryan shared this I decided I must consciously ask the Lord to come for Peter and we all agreed to pray this way. A few days later, this was exactly what the Lord did. None of us were in the room at the time he took his last breath. I was reading stories to my grand-daughter just outside his room. When I came in to check him, he had already taken Jesus' hand and gone, leaving his tired old body on the bed.

We buried him near the baptism creek, a place he dearly loved to go. He never missed a baptism if he could help it. Hundreds came from the two nearby villages. Some even chartered a plane from Kerema and arrived in time for the funeral, though this was held the same day that he died. All of us praised his life and prayed that our lives might be as fruitful and effective as his had been. Village leaders and many others took the chance to say thank-you to the Lord for his life of service. Nobody wailed, nobody cried. How could we cry on the day that the one we all loved had received his victory crown? Valerie, in a vision, actually saw him having it placed on his head!

Peter had told me more than once, "If I should die at Kapuna I want the bush to grow over my grave." So we would allow no cement or headstone, just frangipani and hibiscus, crotons and the red leaves used for dressing up at celebrations. A nearby fellowship asked permission to put a wooden railing all around it and we agreed to this. We ourselves held a picnic close by soon after he died, and later the nurses decided to make their gardens there. Locally all the traditional thoughts and teachings on death seemed to have been turned upside down just because Peter chose to die among the people he served. As far as I know he is one of the very few modern missionaries in PNG to die and be buried at his place of work. How natural and peaceful and right it all seemed.

At the end of the year my temporary employment with the church was terminated. However, because I had Papua New Guinean citizenship, and because no other doctor could be found, I was allowed to stay, and Colin and his wife have stayed with me. Many problems have arisen but God has always saved us from them or through them. A New Zealand sister has come and been a tremendous help. Colin and Barbara have worked hard to pass on all the teaching they can to those who have emerged as leaders of the fellowships. A change in the church structure has eased much of the pressure on us personally, but at village level persecution is still very strong. Several families have this year torn up their ancestral roots and moved out of their village to start homes elsewhere. Blessings still abound, the Lord is still adding people almost daily to those being saved. Wonderful messages are still coming that we must not grow weary or give up. He wants, on His return, to find each one of us actively witnessing, teaching others His Word, sharing our money and other things with the poor, forgiving one another, and confessing our sins to one another. He promises He will soon be coming for us and this time we will be able to stay in His home with Him—forever.

About the Author

Linnie Bryant Tombleson was born and raised on a New Zealand high-country sheep farm. She studied medicine at Otago University. After graduating in 1949, she married Dr Peter Calvert. Together they felt the call of God on their lives and in 1953 they left New Zealand with their one year old daughter to work for the London Missionary Society at Kapuna, a small bush hospital in the Gulf of Papua New Guinea.

Lin assisted Peter in the hospital as well as being mother and school teacher to their four children. She was also involved in the translation of the scriptures into the local language. They became well known to many missionaries in the country through their medical radio service.

Peter died at Kapuna on 23rd of July, 1982. Lin has continued to run the hospital.

Let the Fire Burn is a revealing account of Peter and Lin's walk with God and where it led—to Revival. Reading this book, you will empathise with their frustrations and their joys as you realise that any mighty move of God requires faith, obedience and stepping out of the traditional, secure framework we have built around ourselves.

Personal testimony and first hand experience are the hallmarks of this book. It is written in an easy-to-read manner while at the same time challenging us to become part of the mighty move of God that is sweeping many countries of the world.

Let the Fire Burn is a tribute to a man named Peter. It is the story of a faithful, loving, patient God and the way He moves so that all might hear the gospel, repent, and find eternal life — Jesus Christ Himself.