

Chapter 4

GO FORTH, YOUNG MAN!

The four years I spent at the beautiful campus in Brynmill, Swansea were very rewarding. Though I had entered university to study mathematics, a switch was made to the physics department during the second year as I found a growing interest in the latter subject. In retrospect, this also can be seen as the leading of the Lord. I had first thought to go to Birmingham as that university was noted for its mathematics department. Now I was studying physics at Swansea, a college noted for its physics department! I achieved a better degree in physics than anyone expected and, in my final year, a diploma in education. On leaving the university I took up my first employment teaching Physics as Head of Department at a new secondary school.

The Evans' home became a special place where I was treated as one of the family. Indeed, to this day they are still family to me. We attended the same church together and I joined the Swansea Gospel Male Voice Choir, of which Mary Evans was the pianist and Aubrey Evans the librarian. Mary used to make sure I ate really well while her husband, Aubrey, though an uneducated man, gave me some of those gems of insight that have stayed with me throughout the years. Once, when I was a little frustrated at the apparent lack of zeal among the youth of the church, he took me aside, and said,

“Remember son, that those who follow afar off, can still see the Lord, but those who go one step ahead of the Light of the World, can no longer see Him and find themselves walking in their own shadow.”

Russell studied Metallurgy at University and is now Senior Professor at that same college. He was a fine student and a great help to me as I struggled through my honours courses in nuclear Physics.

Don Evans went to Bible College, pastored for a few years and then entered Swansea University College to study Philosophy. He is now a professor there, and one of the world's leading academics in the field of Medical Ethics. He travels widely, both in academic circles and as a speaker in the charismatic renewal movement.

It was during those wonderful years in Swansea, I met Anne, a secretary who was attending the same church as myself. Her father was Norwegian and had been a faithful minister of the Gospel even though his health had been poor for many years. He provided me with many insights into the deeper things of God, and I still treasure devotional books he gave me. Mum had been brought up in the church where Evan Roberts was the leader of the youth at the time of the outbreak of the Welsh revival in 1904. She knew many of the 'saints' of that time and was, later, a member of Rees Howells' prayer band. With such a godly heritage, it is little wonder that Anne has displayed the deep Christian character I have learned to appreciate in her.

We were engaged on the day of my graduation and married one year later at the completion of my teaching diploma course. We moved into our first home in time for the start of my teaching at Cynffig Comprehensive School. I never understood how I obtained that position. One of my professors approached me asking if I had found work yet. I answered in the negative but without concern as there was still some time before University would end. He then suggested I write to an address, which he had written down for me, and enquire about any positions available. Shortly afterwards I was invited for an interview for the position at Cynffig. As far as I can ascertain I was the only one interviewed and was then offered the job teaching physics up to Advanced level.

It was in my third year at that first school that I was invited to teach with the British Forces in Germany. The British Army of the Rhine had several schools where the children of military personnel were educated and I was to teach at the Windsor Boys School which, like its sister Girls School, was home to over five hundred secondary school students. I was the youngest teacher ever employed by the Ministry of Defense at that time, having done neither 'National Service' nor the five years of teaching experience normally required.

I had not realised those requirements when I first, tentatively, applied to teach with the B.O.A.R. so was a little disappointed when I received their first refusal. I had given up all thought of such a teaching post when, a few months later, another letter arrived telling me that there was a vacancy to teach in Hamm, West Germany. Apparently the physics teacher at that school had been promoted to the position of deputy headmaster and mine was the only name of a physics teacher with suitable qualifications that they had on their books. God can even override army regulations!

Those were good years for Anne and me. God had already blessed us with one daughter Corinne, born in Wales, and now He gave us two more, Andrea and Lynette to complete our family. We made many German friends and enjoyed living cross culturally. On Sundays we traveled to a neighbouring Canadian army base where the Salvation Army held an evening service. As we fellowshiped together, my heart warmed to these hospitable people from the land of Indians and Inuit, 'mounties' and trappers, bears and eagles, pizza and salmon. Thus it was, at their encouragement, that we began to pursue the possibility of teaching in Canada.

I soon received a letter informing me that I had been accepted to teach Physics at a noted technical college in Toronto, Canada. I was to send them photocopies of my degree and diploma certificates to verify my qualifications, and they would inform me of flight arrangements to the great land of the North.

Our documents were mailed off to Bloor Street, Toronto, and soon a reply informed me that I would probably be eligible for a "Type A Specialists Diploma". Thorough medical examinations followed, visas were obtained, my resignation was given at the school and we waited....

A second letter was not so pleasing ! A mistake had been made! Three teachers had been appointed for two vacancies and, as I was from outside the country, I was the one to be disappointed. The embarrassment was great as we told our friends the latest news. We had given such glowing testimony of God's goodness to us and now it proved but vain words. We had no job for the new school year and would have to return to Wales to find some other work for at least a term. Our prayers were full of questioning, little realising that the Lord knew exactly what He was doing !

Three days later another letter came. This was from the British army saying how they regretted my resignation and inviting me to reconsider. They wrote,

"We have another post available as Physics teacher in Hong Kong. Would you please consider that post and let us know your decision a.s.a.p."

As our closest friends were also going to Hong Kong, the decision was easy to make. We were to discover again, that the Lord was a few steps ahead of us.