

Chapter 31

2002

I had much ministry in 2002, both at home and abroad, with visits to Haiti, Manitoba, UK, Portland, Fortaleza and back to Australia.

In Haiti, my good friend Dave Knippel of Portland USA and I, were the guests of Kevin and Karen Hull who were developing a children's work in the west of that island. I was to teach the material of Circuit Teaching International at several pastoral meetings but there were also many other preaching opportunities. One in particular stands out as it was at the largest English-speaking congregation in Haiti, Quiskeya Chapel in Port au Prince, the capitol. We arrived a little late as Kevin had problems with his car, so I had little opportunity to meet Pastor Olsen before the service. There were several hundreds crowding the sanctuary as I was led to sit by him and his wife a few rows from the front. After the opening worship songs, he arose to welcome visitors to the service, inviting them to stand to be recognized. As I listened to the names and ministries of the many people who were visitors, especially from the USA, I began to wonder how on earth I had been favoured to be their speaker this morning. I spoke on *Offenses* and sensed such anointing that I knew the Lord was speaking through me to many present that day. At the end of the service I thanked Pastor Olsen for this opportunity and presented him with one of my books, *The Key in My Hand*, which he evidently found to be a blessing, as later he wrote to me in Victoria, asking for a dozen more copies, as he wanted to give them to all his board members of this International Church, they being in Atlanta, Ga.

On the journey back to our base in the west, Kevin, Dave and I stopped off to have lunch and fellowship at a small mission station. There we heard a remarkable story. One of the missionaries had a program of bringing three doctors each week from the USA. They would be taken to a remote village to treat the people there, write up their reports for the resident missionary doctor and then return home. He would do this each week, having a circuit of thirteen villages where they would minister. On this day he had just been to the airport to exchange the doctors for this program, when he told us of the remarkable thing that had just happened. The three men had completed their work and were writing up their reports, when they noticed a fire up in the hill above them. They realized this was back in the village they had just left so, climbing into their four-wheel vehicle, they returned to discover the village voodoo doctor standing beside the burning ruins of his home. They began to commiserate with him until he said, "No! I have just given my life to Christ, so I decided to gather all my voodoo paraphernalia into my house and to burn the lot down. It shall no longer have any control over me!" What a wonderful example of repentance!

My visit to Manitoba, Canada, was to speak at the annual dinner of the Manitoba Bible Society. There we had renewed fellowship with John and Eileen Wiebe whom we had known in Hamm, when I taught in Germany in 1967-67. John was then in the Canadian Forces but was now a vicar with the Anglican Church of Canada. Also at the dinner as guests, were two ladies who had recently been involved in the Spiritual Awakening taking place in the new Canadian territory of Nunavet. What a story they could tell – one can obtain a video documentary called *Transformations #2*. Other speaking opportunities were given to me, as we enjoyed such warm fellowship with believers there, even though the temperature was so cold for April!

Trips to UK and many other speaking engagements in BC took up most of the year, but in October we journeyed to Portland to visit Dave and his wife Ellen. This was also a time to teach at the small house group they hosted. In 1982 they had been members of our church in Kitchener while students at the local YWAM base in Cambridge, Ontario. There Ellen had been much involved in dance, but a tragic accident had left her with physical and brain damage, so now she was confined to home and could only move about slowly with the aid of a 'walker'. It was a joy to spend time with them, to see the joy our visit brought to Ellen and to hear her pray for us.

In November I journeyed again to Fortaleza in Brazil, for what would be my last visit to Tony and Christine, Marcello and Aline, and to the many friends I had made on my previous visits. As I have written earlier, this was also a time of blessing to see that every church at which I ministered, had many more adherents than before the evangelistic campaign of 1998.

The year ended with our three-yearly visit to Australia to see Lynette, Philip and their three children, Michael, Chloe and Emma. As was becoming our norm, we would stay for six months through our Canadian winter, with lots of speaking engagements. Among the highlights were two retreats at Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains, with The Christian & Missionary Alliance seminary staff and students and with the family camp of the Woden (Canberra) C&MA church. Also very special, were my weekly meetings to pray with Ron Williams an Aboriginal pastor, at the shrine he had planted to honour all the Aboriginal men who had died in the wars, men unrecognized by the Australian government though numbering over a thousand! As we parted, Ron said to me, "Next time you come, I will take you to meet my people!" Little did we know that he would die of cancer before I could return, and that he would receive great recognition from the government, by having his memorial service in the hall of the legislature at Canberra. What an honour it was to be called his friend. He had also honoured me by incorporating into his teaching aid, a key representing my book *The Key in My Hand*. This teaching aid was a board picturing 'the path of the emu', very symbolic to Aboriginal peoples, showing their journey from ancient past, through the coming of the white man, up to the present day. It had many stories of 'shed blood' before Ron pointed out the shed blood of the cross being the only remedy for man's sin, and the necessity of reconciliation between the white man and the aboriginee. In the middle of the board was a key, carved from some exotic wood, symbolizing that reconciliation.

We returned home to Canada in 2003 with a stopover in New Zealand to see our good friends, John and Marion Brignall, formerly the engineer on the M/V Anastasis. We flew to Wellington, where Dave Knipell met us, and then drove on to Masterton where his sister lived. Nancy was the widow of a Wycliffe Bible Translator so I asked her if she also understood Greek. I had recently produced my digest of the excellent book *Christ's Paralyzed Church X-rayed*, a book long out of print, by the Greek scholar McCrossan, and I wished to present her with a copy. I ministered at her church that Good Friday and Easter Sunday before she drove us several miles north to Lake Taupo where we would meet the Brignalls who had driven south from Tauranga. En route, Nancy visited a friend who now had a small gift shop, including a few shelves of used books. Imagine my surprise when she found a copy of the original book almost in mint condition! The Lord continues to surprise me with His 'coincidences'!