

## Chapter 39

### *Links With The Past*

We returned home from Wales to the good news that the cancer showed no signs of returning.

2009/2010 were mainly quiet years during which I had to have check-ups every three months – each proving negative for cancer, my urologist making the remark, “Mr Evans, the cancer will not return – your attitude and life-style are so positive.” I did have the privilege of speaking a few times in 2009 and much enjoyed Sidney Pentecostal Church where I presented a series of messages on ‘Revival’.

At the end of 2009 we returned to Brisbane, Australia to visit Lynette and her family – always such a joy to us. There I had some rich fellowship with an elderly retired Welsh pastor. We met each week to reminisce, share and sing together some of the old Welsh hymns. I also spoke several times at Wynnum-Manley Alliance Church.

In October 2010, I was invited to speak at a conference in Baltimore, USA. The conference, *Broken Before The Throne*, was a week long and included several other speakers on the topic of prayer. I presented the first teachings on Saturday evening and Sunday morning. At each session I was given three hours to use as I felt led, ending each time with a ‘concert of prayer’ at which I led the participants in corporate prayer. I was much impressed with Dan Biser, the organiser, and his passion to see churches back on their knees seeking God’s face. Two quite remarkable things came out of this trip to Baltimore, that have been a great source of blessing to me.

A few days afterwards, Deb Crum from Idaho wrote me an email. She had a radio ministry that was struggling financially so she and her board members were investigating how to proceed. After watching my Baltimore message ‘on-line’, she was challenged to change direction and to spend more time in prayer, seeking His direction for future ministry. Her board members balked at the suggestion of changing their board meeting into ‘a prayer meeting’ and some quit. She, however, was determined to seek God’s face and we developed a regular correspondence. Time has shown how faithful our Lord is as Deb now gives testimony to a wonderful intervention in her own life and a rich ministry to women in Idaho and neighbouring States. You can follow her blog at *Grace Tapestries*.

It was on my return journey from Baltimore that I met Rami and Nesibah. They, with their two young boys were at Toronto airport sitting near me. I offered to take a photograph for Nesibah so that all the family could be included. On boarding the plane to Victoria, I found myself sitting by Rami and one son, while his wife and other son, were in the row behind. We had such an interesting conversation for the next four hours. They were from Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and they were coming to Canada so Nesibah could attend university where Rami’s brother, Hani was already studying for his PhD. We talked about faith, Sunni and Shiite Islam, Mohammed and Jesus – without any argumentative walls between us. I told how Canada is not a Christian country but one where the main religion is secular humanism. Rami was very pleased to meet a genuine Christian as he had never done so before. Sufficient to say that at the time of writing this chapter, Rami and Nesibah, Hani and his wife, Zainab, have become like our own children

and we delight in the times we can be together with them, always talking about our passion to know (experience) God. They all have a hunger for genuine righteousness so our prayer is that the Lord might reveal Himself to them.

At the end of 2010 I received a telephone call from Boundary Community Church, Midway, BC. I had never before heard of Midway, BC, though I must have driven through it many years ago on my only trip to Alberta via the #3 highway. Their pastor needed a sabbatical leave but would not take one until the church found someone who, not only would look after the church for two months but would also take responsibility to mentor a young intern youth worker. They had tried their own denomination but no one would agree to come – maybe put off by the thought of spending a winter isolated in a very small community! Mike, the intern, and his wife Netta, knew me and had suggested I might be available. Upon expressing my willingness, I was invited to come to Midway ‘next weekend’ to speak (and for the church to give me the ‘once-over’). So it was that we agreed that I would be their pastor for two months starting in mid-February 2011. They wanted us a few weeks earlier but this was impossible as two other exciting opportunities suddenly emerged after several months of quietness.

In November I received an email from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. I had been the chaplain to Malaysian students at Canadian Universities (mostly Ontario) in 1980/2 and had been privileged to visit some of them on three occasions since. Now they were to celebrate a 30 year reunion in January 2011 and wanted Anne and me to join them for two weeks – all expenses paid! How could we refuse such an invitation from such special young people who had given us such warm memories. We booked our flights with great excitement, not least because we were also to take a four-day stopover in Hong Kong, our home in 1967-69 (see Ch5). In Hong Kong we stayed at the YWAM base (for \$10 a night!!) and were able to visit so many of our old haunts, even though the former British colony now has twice as many people with multiplied more skyscrapers. We had the privilege of once again meeting with Jacqui Pullinger and seeing the remarkable work she continues to lead among the addicts, gangs and prostitutes. Everyone should read her book *Chasing the Dragon* to understand Jacqui’s passion for this city. She well deserves the recognition given her, exemplified by the stone raised to her honour at the site of the former ‘walled city’, the infamous place of her work. There is much written about her on the web.

From Hong Kong we flew on to Kuala Lumpur to be greeted by Vincent and Shirley Cheah, our hosts for the next two wonderful weeks. What a joy to meet again quite a number of our ‘Canadian’ students and to see how well they have prospered. It was also my privilege to speak at a local church and at a house fellowship in Penang. We visited the Alliance Missionary School in Penang and spent a weekend in Singapore at the Cheah’s condominium there, having opportunity also to spend some time with Prudence, Anne’s schooldays friend. Vincent owns two restaurants so we ate very well! Before we left he invited us to join him and Shirley in China, en route to our next visit to Australia. He would meet us in Hong Kong and take us on a brief tour of that great country. That was planned for the end of 2012 but the big C would again intervene to change those plans – not in me but in Anne.

From Malaysia we returned to Vancouver, from where Anne took a short flight to Victoria - but I would go on to Haiti, via Toronto and Montreal – a 42-hour journey! In December, I had received an invitation to travel to Port au Prince to speak at the staff retreat of Quisqueya Christian School. The retreat, with about seventy participants, was held at a beautiful beach

resort, some distance from the devastation of Port au Prince caused by the earthquake of a year earlier. The city still lay in ruins as there was so little heavy equipment available to lift the large slabs of concrete that had been homes, shops, apartments, etc. Many bodies were still buried beneath the rubble and the stories of the survivors were heart-wrenching. There were hundreds of blue tents everywhere to accommodate those who had lost their homes – or were too afraid to enter them again. I stayed at the home of Shane and Kristie Mattenley, missionaries we had come to know well during the times we visited them in Lorraine, Oregon. I have warm memories of their hospitality and the times I was able to speak in Haiti. After the retreat I was invited to speak to all the students at a morning assembly lasting about an hour each day. I was also invited to speak again at Quisqueya Chapel, the International church of Port au Prince – quite a privilege! At this morning service an unusual thing happened. As I rose to speak, the PA system cut out! One has to expect such power outages in underprivileged countries. There were over 400 people present in a large church, so I had to stand at the front steps of the platform and speak very loud and clearly. However, it was probably a blessing in disguise as everyone had strained to hear my every word, with apparent success according to their comments. As I finished the PA system came back on!

In the midst of all the devastation, one was thrilled to see God's hand moving in the lives of so many Haitian young people – people who will be the leaders of this country one day.

I arrived home mid-February and the next day, we left the coast for the long journey to Midway, BC. Crossing by ferry to the mainland, we met Mark, the pastor of Boundary Community Church, and his family. They were about to leave for a sabbatical which included time in New Zealand and then at our home in Victoria. However, their daughter Lena would join us on the trip to Midway and would help settle us into our new home.

Our ten weeks at Boundary Community Church were a great blessing. We enjoyed so much the quiet country life and the fellowship of these lovely people. We hiked the local mountain trails and visited many of the local, historical beauty spots. My ministry was well received and we left having made many new friends. I so much enjoy these times of looking after a new congregation, this being the third such extended time.

If 2009/2010 had been a quiet time, things had certainly turned around at the end of that time – and more was to come that made 2011 a most exciting year.