

**CHRISTIAN TESTIMONIES:** When Adrian Plass decided to write the story of a quiet but remarkable Church Army officer turned vicar he called it *A Smile on the Face of God*. It was a story with lots of loose ends, unanswerable questions and memorable incidents, a story to make you cry or make you laugh at other times.

Most of the Christian 'testimony' books we see are about apparent endless 'success' stories which, even if their contents were true, omit most of the failures and bad times and ordinary days. But suppose it was your/my story that was being told, what are the memorable incidents? What impact has God made on your/my own story? And have you/I brought smiles to His face?

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**God is not easily impressed** - but then He never asks us to try to impress Him. It is as if He turns to us when we are consumed with our own unworthiness and are tempted to avoid meeting with Him, then He cuts across all our excuses and says: *'Relax, I already know you.'*

Any Carmichael captures the feelings of such an exchange in her book *'His thoughts... His Father said...'*

The son said, *'But I am not successful'*.  
His father said, *'At the end of the day will  
my word be,  
come, thou good and successful servant?  
If only you will walk humbly with your God it will be,  
'Come, thou good and faithful servant.'*

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**We are not called by God to be successful, but to be faithful -  
so relax!**

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*'This is our vocation; to convert...the enemy into a guest and to  
create the free and fearless space  
where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully  
experienced.'* Henri Nouwen

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**WHY?** In the early years of the C&MA, and most likely all Christian churches/missions, there were more missionary graves than converts. I wonder why such passion to see people reconciled to God, even in 'safe' home countries, is difficult to discern among Christians today? Has something crept into our lives that is obscuring the Great Commission? Might it be that God has changed his priorities without letting anyone know? Do we know that God is going to hold us accountable for all those we live and work among? It is worthwhile asking this question especially of those who are unwilling to consider what might be an inconvenient obvious answer! *And don't think that blaming church leaders is acceptable as they frequently, with a few exceptions, are people appointed to their position for their administrative abilities rather than their passion for living in obedience to Jesus.*

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*Father God, it's a relief to know I don't need to get my act  
cleaned up to come to you.*

*How aware I am of my weakness and failures!*

*Help me to rest in Your assurance that if I call out to You, You'll  
redeem and equip me.*

1 Thessalonians 5:17 'Never stop praying.' NLT

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**Everyone coming away from Christian preaching needs to**

**know they have  
genuinely heard from God and NOT just some preacher!**

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Never give up, in the name of Jesus Christ, keep on breaking  
through for God is with you!

Read Colossians 3:1-4; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-7

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*Only to sit and think of God,  
Oh what a joy it is!  
To think the thought,  
to breath the name  
Earth has no higher bliss.*

Frederick W. Faber