

STEPPING STONES

Walking By Faith - An Autobiography

Gareth Evans
Published in 2022
Victoria, BC



GARETH EVANS MINISTRIES

Outline

Stepping Stones is the testimony of one who has learned to walk by faith.

It is always easy to look back and see the path that one has followed; it is not so easy to know the pathway ahead. Our author looks back over more than half a century walking with His Lord, to see the many ‘coincidences’ of life that he has come to recognize, were really God instances. From being a teacher with a big salary to being a pastor with ‘half’ salary to being a missionary (with no salary) and then an itinerant preacher/teacher (often paying his own way), the journey has been an exciting one, even if in an opposite direction to the desired advancement that others may seek.

The stories are told to encourage others to recognize the times the Lord may have intervened in their lives and, through such stories, to bring praise to the One who so leads His children.

We may never hear Him say aloud “This is the way, walk ye in it”, but it is evident that our souls can hear Him speak in a quiet inner voice. Decisions that we think we are making may often be already programmed by the Lord. This is truly what faith is – hearing an inner voice and obeying it.

Gareth Writes

I see so many stations or ‘stepping stones’ in my life that have led on to deeper experiences with the Lord, and, without which, I would not have the story I want to relate. Each stepping stone led on to the next, each one being a direct intervention of the Lord in my plans. It is only on looking back that I can see something of the purposes He had from the very beginning. I can now understand just why He ‘closed that door’ when I thought it should be open. I can now see how He has worked in other people’s lives, even non-believers, to fulfill His plans for me. I can now say that I know that my disappointments are often His appointments. Now, I can trust him with every part of my future for He has proved Himself in my past. I know the stepping stones are there though I cannot see them yet. If the past has set a pattern for the future, I shall not see them before experiencing them.

I have come to understand that the ‘walk of faith’ does not depend upon my great ‘believing’ but rather on my yielding when He changes the course of my life by His direct intervention. Such ‘faith’ has more to do with obedience than it has with believing. Obedience is born out of trust. If my faith were measured in terms used by some ‘faith teachers’ of today, I would fail miserably. To them, faith is something I can work up so that if I have sufficient of it, I

can persuade God to do what I desire. If I am sick, it is because I do not have enough ‘faith’; if I am in need, it is because I do not have enough ‘faith’. Yet, when I read the scriptures they teach me that I cannot produce faith or increase it in myself. That is a sovereign work of the Lord, and He does that work as I yield to His leading and make His Word the foundation of my life. As I read the great chapter on faith in Hebrews 11, I do not see extraordinary men and women commended as heroes because they believed, but rather, I see an account of God’s intervention and leading in the lives of ordinary people in order to teach us great truths and principles of Christian living.

Four Brief Stories From Within *Stepping Stones*:

Accommodation at University:

Shortly after my conversion, I was watching a cricket game between my school and the visiting school from Swansea, 30 miles away. I was wearing an “Elim Crusader” badge, as I was attending an Elim church. This was noticed by a visiting player. He introduced himself as Don and we spent some little time together celebrating our common love for the Lord. A year later I was sitting my final exams, hoping to go on to university should my grades be high enough. My preference was Birmingham University, followed by Cardiff, Swansea and Aberystwyth in that order. I had talked for almost a year about going to Birmingham but when the results came through with sufficiently high grades, I felt a check in my spirit – Birmingham was too industrial, Cardiff was too near – I think I’ll go to Swansea! I wrote to the pastor of the Elim church asking if he could help me find lodgings. I heard nothing back so, as time was running short, I took a bus to Swansea – where I had never been before – and sought out the pastor who lived outside the town. He had written down the names of 8 women in the church but had not approached any. My heart sank as without a home address I could not receive the essential grant then paid to all university students. We drove back into town where he hoped we might arrange some accommodation. On the way, we were passing the university, when suddenly he braked and turned sharply right.

“There’s a woman here who has two sons – one is going to Bible School in London. Maybe you can take his room.” This was not one of the eight he had written down. Suffice to say, that student going to London was my friend of a year before, Don. God knew where He wanted me to go when I was thinking of Birmingham and was already preparing my home-from-home a year earlier. He had caused the pastor not to act on his original list and led us straight to the one person I knew in this city of ~140 000.

Teaching with the British Forces:

I had four wonderful years at Swansea, graduating with an honours degree in Physics before starting a teaching career. After two years of teaching, I became interested in an advertisement seeking teachers for the British Army schools. I applied and was invited to London for an interview. When my interviewer suddenly realized I had only taught for two years, he apologized for bringing me all the way from Wales when the army minimum requirement was 5 years of teaching plus the two years of National Service all previous graduates would have had to do – making 7 years of post-university. “Come back in three years,” he said, “and I’ll find you a position.”

A month or so later, he contacted me again – a position had arisen in Germany where they needed a Physics teacher – would I be interested? Thus, I took my family to Germany – a wonderful time – being at least five years younger than any other teacher in all the British Army Schools in the world! From there we were posted to Hong Kong where I knew Jacqui Pullinger and went with her into the “Walled City”. But, even then, God was preparing even something greater for me!

Toronto Hebrew Academy:

In 1975 we immigrated to Toronto, Canada where I taught at a private school. I wished to have my credentials recognized so that I would be eligible to teach in the public school system. For this, the first step was to obtain a Letter of Standing approving my British qualifications. My friends suggested I should go ‘down-town’ to the University of Toronto Education Dept on Bloor St - wrong advice. As I entered their darkened hallways, an elderly man was leaving. I told him of my need of a letter of standing, informing him that I had written to an address on Bloor Street concerning a position some years before. He invited me across the street into his offices where, within a minute he had found my letter of ten years before! He instructed me to go to another building several streets away, where I could obtain my Letter of Standing, giving me a note to assist me in bypassing the long queue that I found there. The note was signed by Prof Carlyle, Chief Education Officer, Toronto. I obtained that Letter of Standing with little delay.

The following summer, Toronto University Physics Dept was presenting a six-week school to enable teachers to upgrade their teaching qualifications to Type-A. I wished to apply but had not yet received my Type B certificate, a minimal requirement for teaching in the public

schools, though I had been assured it was “in the mail”. On the application deadline date, I telephoned the university to ask what extension they would grant me. The young lady said that no extension could be considered as this was a very select course. As I was about to put my phone down, she asked “are you by any chance, Mr. Evans?” She then told me that Prof Carlyle had already entered my name! I had not even applied yet!

Sufficient to say that I enjoyed that course very much, was then granted my Type-A certificate and began to consider what posts might be open to me. I was finally appointed as Head of the Science Dept at Toronto Hebrew Academy – the only non-Jew on staff – where I had the glorious privilege of sharing the gospel with all the senior students in the company of the senior rabbi!! None of this could have happened without my meeting Prof Carlisle, at that time in the wrong building. God had led me again, this time to the one man he had prepared in a city of ~ two million!

Hazelglen Fellowship:

A month after arriving in Canada we began to attend Brimley Rd Alliance Church in Scarborough, Ont. We found this wonderful fellowship with the same Biblical position that we enjoyed in the Elim Church in Wales. However, I really missed the many opportunities to preach on Sundays, so common to Christian laymen in my homeland. This was especially so when I began to teach at the Hebrew School before I was afforded the privilege mentioned above.

I visited my District Superintendent asking if laymen could somewhere fill a pulpit. He said that there were many ordained men in the churches who could fill in when the senior pastor was away. Then he asked, “Why don’t you become a pastor?” I replied that that would be a great honour but I would not consider it unless I knew that God had called me. “What are you looking for,” he said, “a flash of light from heaven?” “Yes!” I replied. “All I’d look for is the witness of the brethren,” he said. When I then told him that I could not afford to go to seminary for three years he added, “I do not want you to. I want you just as you are!”

Over the next weeks, several things happened showing me that this was the Lord’s leading so, a few months later I informed the Superintendent of my availability. He immediately invited me to consider Hazelglen Fellowship in Kitchener, Ontario, about 120 kilometres away. Looking back, I could not have chosen a better place to start my pastoral ministry. Over the next four years, we saw many miracles in lives being changed and young people growing in their faith. Numbers grew from ~ 40 to over 120 and a new building was erected to seat over 350 – all paid for in a few years. God was so good to us!

At my farewell from the Hebrew School, they showed me so much favour, even pronouncing a Hebrew blessing over me, “that I would be mightily used by God to bring many people to know Him!”

Gareth Concludes

These are just four of the experiences the Lord led me into. Each was the culmination of many ‘stepping stones’ – God-incidences. The book *Stepping Stones* contains many more such stories including the smaller stepping stones on the way.