

Recollections

by

Gregory Mayhew

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Foreword

Almost six years ago, I concluded a ministry meeting at the White Hall Assembly in Barbados by sharing a few of the experiences which the Lord had brought into my life. Afterwards, standing on the steps of the chapel, a young man, Henderson Patrick by name, suggested that I put these experiences in writing. I smiled and thought no more of the suggestion.

On October 13, 2007, while in conversation with two of my friends Rose and Jean Burrowes, that suggestion was again made. They had no knowledge of the conversation which had occurred six years before. This time I responded that I was no author. Later, upon reflection, I began to realize that the Lord was speaking, and decided I would just pen my thoughts and allow the Holy Spirit to use them as He saw fit.

There have been seasons of joy, times of great pain and many trials. I can only touch on a few of them, as some are deeply personal and known only to God and the lady who has shared my life for the past 48 years. My earnest desire is that the Lord will get the glory from my reminiscing, and that many might be encouraged in their Christian pathway.

My thanks to those from whom the suggestion emanated, and for their encouragement along the way; to my dear wife, Cynthia, who has been a partner in my work for the Lord, and has been by my side through these times. I am also indebted to my sister, Sylvia Anderson, for her help in the preparation of these recollections and her constant encouragement, and to two dear friends, Cecil and Diana Dowrich who have been there for me when the waves of trial battered me.

The anecdotes are not listed chronologically, but as

Dedication

This booklet is dedicated to my daughter, Andrea, whose devotion to the Lord, her family, and the utilization of the many talents given to her by the Lord, has given us, her parents, much joy.

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You Have Cancer!

“Call upon me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not” Jeremiah 33:3.

You have cancer! These three words are probably among the most chilling any patient can hear from a doctor’s lips. Regardless of what you may have said or preached in the past, you are suddenly faced with the reality of your own mortality.

God often brings circumstances into our lives which at the time of the occurrence seem unexplainable. It is only in the light of future experiences that we see the wisdom of God in His dealings with His children.

Eleven months prior to hearing those words from a physician's lips, I had suffered a serious kidney stone attack while in Barbados. In considerable pain, and with no knowledge of specialists practising in the island, I called my close friend and sister in the Lord, Jean Earle. She tried to make contact with an urologist only to find that he had left the island for the holiday weekend.

This may have seemed like a setback at the time, but the Lord had other plans. Covering for him was a dear brother in Christ, Trevor Shepherd who agreed to see me at the hospital where he was on duty. Again the Lord placed another dear friend and brother in Christ, David Rice, in the way to provide transportation to the hospital.

After his examination, Dr. Shepherd suggested that I remain there overnight so additional tests could be done. Medication prescribed by him had begun to give relief from the pain, so I was not in acute distress at this point. Since many of the ancillary staff were off-duty for the holiday, he arranged for another physician to come in the next day (Saturday) to take the x-rays needed. They confirmed that we were dealing with a rather large stone.

Since I was scheduled to leave Barbados on the following Tuesday, continued treatment by Dr. Shepherd would have caused me to miss my return flight. He therefore suggested that I contact the airline to see if an earlier flight could be arranged so further treatment could be done by a physician in the US. The Lord in His grace permitted me to get a seat on the Sunday morning flight.

I was discharged on Saturday afternoon and given a prescription to help manage the pain. Pharmacies were closed, but the friend who drove me from the hospital and worked for a pharmaceutical company, was able to get a partial filling of the prescription. My relationship with this friend, Peggy Sobers, goes back almost sixty years, and both she and her sister, Pam are like my younger sisters, so having her assistance was a great comfort.

The flight home was one of the most unpleasant I have ever experienced. Despite the medication, I was in excruciating pain the entire way. Upon reaching home, Cynthia began searching for an urologist through a medical telephone service which has since been discontinued. She obtained a name with which we were not familiar, but the credentials of the physician were outstanding. A call was

placed to his answering service, and we received a return call about two hours later.

After the situation was explained, the doctor asked me to come to the local hospital about 6:00 a.m. the following morning so he could see me before beginning his surgical schedule. However his advice was that if the pain became unbearable, I should go to the emergency room and have them place a call to him. At about 3:45 a.m. the pain did become unbearable and I followed his advice. At 6:00 a.m. he arrived, examined me and ensured that the pain medication had given some relief. It was explained that it would take a laser treatment to get rid of the stone.

A week later I visited him in his office for a scheduled follow-up appointment. A detailed personal and family history was taken. The family history revealed that I was a high risk candidate for prostate cancer so he was insistent that I undergo a Prostate Specific Antigen test every three months. I expressed my reluctance but agreed to submit to the blood test. I was not quite prepared for his next statement as he informed me that any increase in my PSA level would require that I submit to a biopsy. About five months went by without further

a slight spike in the level. He immediately scheduled me for a biopsy and it was done in his office two weeks later. What a feeling of relief when the lab reported that the results were negative!

Several months went by before there was another increase in the PSA level. Of course I knew what to expect – another biopsy. I tried, without success, to persuade him that it was unnecessary since I was not experiencing any of the symptoms associated with the disease, my energy level was high, and I was feeling in the best of health.

The biopsy was completed in September 1998, and one week later, the doctor called with the results. I can still hear his words as if it was yesterday. He said: “We found it.” I responded: “Found what?” I knew without asking what the test had revealed, but it seemed I could postpone the inevitable by asking the question. Then came the chilling words: “You have prostate cancer”. Words cannot describe my feelings at that point, but there was a need to be positive since I now had to break the news to Cynthia. I could not allow her to see the deep concern that I was feeling as I knew the conclusion she would reach would be that the end was near.

A meeting was arranged for the following week in the doctor's office to discuss the various treatment modalities and hear his recommendation. We were trusting the Lord for guidance and for the wisdom to make right decisions. The doctor showed us the lab report which identified the malignancy as a very slow moving strain of cancer, and indicated that it was confined to one lobe of the prostate. It was decision time, and the doctor strongly suggested that the prostate be removed so I could, as he put it, "get on with my life."

For me the decision was not as cut and dried. From the research I had done in the few days since receiving the diagnosis, and information He had given me, I knew the surgery was delicate, and could result in some seriously adverse side effects. I told him that though I respected his skill, such a crucial decision needed some consultation with the Great Physician who would guide his fingers if he had to do surgery.

The next week was spent in deep reflection, prayer and searching the Scriptures to see what God, through the Holy Spirit, would say to me. Late that week the answer came in the form of Jeremiah 33. My spirits were lifted and there was a new sense of

peace. I was able to give the surgeon the "green light" and complete the pre-op preparations.

The morning after successful surgery the doctor entered the room and as he approached my bed, gave me the thumbs-up signal, His next words were cause for additional thanksgiving to God. "We got it just in time" he said. That 'slow moving' malignancy had in one month after the report not only moved to the other lobe of the prostate, but was about to break out of that organ and affect the organs around it. Timely intervention, you say? I say: "God's hand at work." Have you realized that had the Lord not permitted me to have that kidney stone attack a year before, and introduced me to a physician who was persistent in his diagnostic approach, you might not be reading this today? To God be the glory!

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*“...for out of the abundance of the heart
the mouth speaketh.
A good man out of the good treasure
of the heart bringeth
forth good things...”
Matt. 12:34-35*

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