

Chapter 1

Conversion and God's Call to Ministry

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:1-5

When God called me to preach the gospel, I refused. I had other plans and ideas. There were young men of my age to whom I often said, "I just can't understand you," and I suppose they couldn't understand me either. When they dated and kissed their girls, I declared, "I'd rather be making money than doing that." So they dated their girls, while I tried to earn money, which was of more value to me than girls. My motto was: 'Money first, the rest later.' But then the Lord Jesus entered my life.

We had a very good minister who preached better than any other minister we knew. We children had been in the habit of taking sweets along to church and, as soon as the sermons began, had usually fallen asleep or eaten our candy. But when this pastor came to us, things changed. His sermons were interesting and, best of all, very short, a fact which we found especially pleasant. Furthermore, he was quite understanding towards us children. For instance at Easter time, when the automobile races usually took place at Pietermaritzburg, we went to our minister and asked him if he couldn't shorten his sermon so that we could get to the races on time. He only preached for ten or fifteen minutes, so that we young people all agreed, "He's the right man for us!"

But in reality this pastor was a very unhappy person. At the seminary he had achieved better results in his exams than anyone else before him. A highly gifted man, but without peace in his heart, he determined to study theology, expecting that all his problems would then be solved. He spent a long time in Europe and studied there, but even so found no peace. Finally he decided to return to Africa as a missionary. His professors couldn't understand that and asked him, "Why should you want to return to Africa? Africa doesn't need a man like you. Stay here in Europe, don't waste your talents in Africa."

He answered jokingly, "You know, we have many bent bananas in South Africa. I want to try to straighten them out."

Even after he returned to his home country his heart remained in a turmoil. To overcome this he worked so hard that he finally was close to a nervous breakdown and the doctor advised him to give up his ministry for a while. In desperation he called upon an evangelist in Pretoria.

He had, in fact, a low opinion of this evangelist because many evil rumours were spread about him.

It is often a good sign if people talk badly about a person. The Bible says, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke 6:26).

The devil doesn't remain silent when God is working through a certain person or at a certain place.

Now, how could a simple evangelist help such a highly-educated man? This truly believing brother could pray. While he was speaking to his visitor, he cried out to the Lord in his heart, "Lord Jesus, I pray that you will break through with your power." As they both went down on their knees and prayed, the

pastor felt a light breaking through. He suddenly realised that, until now, he had never known the Lord Jesus in his life or in his heart. In childlike faith he asked the Lord to come into his heart, and it seemed to him like a miracle that as he got off his knees, he was a changed man with peace in his soul.

From then on his sermons were different and it was apparent that his life had been transformed.

Then the Lord began to work in our hearts. We were five brothers. We only went to church because our parents compelled us to go. I said to myself, "When I'm grown up, I'll throw all this religious stuff overboard." But God, in His grace, stepped in before I grew up. One Sunday while I was in church, I became conscious of the fact that I was a great sinner and that I needed Jesus.

Every time we left church, we brothers would be arguing even before we got home. I was also often disobedient towards my parents. I contradicted them time and time again and wanted to have things my own way. But now God showed me that, in His eyes, this was sin. I wept, and prayed "O God, in church I pledged in prayers and hymns that I would live for you, but on the way home I was already arguing. You see my disobedience." I had prayed in the morning, I prayed in the evening, but my life didn't change. Step by step, though, I had grown all the more conscious of the fact that I needed Jesus to free me from my sins, from quarrelsomeness and disobedience towards my parents, if I didn't want to go to hell.

There is no such thing as small sins and large sins, as many people believe. In the epistle of James, chapter 2:10 we read, "For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The Lord says in Matthew 5:21-22, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill!' But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement and whosoever shall say 'Thou fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire." Jesus will one day judge the world according to these words! Yes, I was a lost sinner, in spite of the fact that I said my prayers and went to church. God says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). It doesn't matter what nationality a person is, it doesn't matter if he's black or white, red or yellow. If sin rules in a person's life, that soul shall die, unless he confesses his sins and forsakes them. Otherwise we are calling God a liar. I cried to God, "Lord Jesus, I need you! Change my life and save me from my sins."

Shortly after this, God called me into the ministry. I couldn't recall that there had ever been a preacher or a missionary in my family line, so how could I become one? I loved money, it was my idol. If I became a preacher, I would be as poor as the pastors of our church. I was unwilling to go, the price was too high. So, for eighteen months, I went through hell as I rebelled against God. I prayed, "God, I can't pay that price, it's asking too much." But after those eighteen months, God made it clear to me that the price of disobedience is a thousand times greater than that of obedience. I wouldn't wish for anybody to go through what I went through.

At the end of this time of indecision, I finally prayed, "All right Lord, I will become a preacher of the gospel - on one condition: I don't want to be a preacher who entertains people on Sundays for an hour or two, who just baptises, marries and buries them. That isn't enough. I want to become a preacher who preaches the truth, I don't want to play church. It has cost me too much."

I was still quite young when I gave my life to the Lord. I had never been a bookworm; indeed I hated reading books. At school, reading was always a burden to me, but after Jesus came into my life, I loved reading the Bible, and it became my most precious book. Then I did something else. My brothers owned

many worldly books and pictures of girls. I knew that these were an abomination to the Lord Jesus, so without their knowledge, I gathered all their books together, threw them into the fire and burned them.

I became engrossed in the Bible more and more. Whenever I was invited to visit friends with my family, I sought an excuse to stay at home alone, because then I could read the Word of God, I could pray and I could sing. In school I had never sung, but had always explained to the teachers that I was incapable of singing. Yet now I could hardly stop singing. I also began learning one chapter in the Bible after the other by heart, for instance John 15 and John 17. The promises in the Bible were so wonderful and precious to me, I was especially impressed by the passage in John 15:7, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." I thought to myself, "Here is greater wealth than money. It is greater than anything the world can give us. If such a life is possible, a life in which we receive anything we ask for, (even if this were the only promise in the Bible!) how much more precious this would be than all the treasures of the world. What is the life of a person like who can pray and his prayers are answered? There could be nothing to compare with it." All these thoughts filled my heart.

I already knew what the world had to offer. There was a huge dance hall at our home where parties, engagements, and weddings took place. All the folks living in our area would gather there. So it wasn't as if I didn't know the world. I knew what it meant when people boozed and danced until the early hours of the morning. All this was done although we considered ourselves good Christians and never missed the church services. But when Jesus came into our lives, we lost all pleasure in such things and were only interested in Him and His word. All the many promises of the Bible became dearer to us than anything the world could offer.

Again and again I read John 14:12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." Then I would search all the gospels to see what Jesus had said and done. I would pray and ask, "O Lord Jesus, didn't you make a mistake?" I would read again the passage in John 14:12, "...the works that I do shall he do also." And the Lord Jesus didn't stop there. He said we would do greater things, because He was going to the Father. I often reflected on this passage for days. Even in my dreams these words would occupy my thoughts. I would ask myself, "Is such a thing possible? Does that include me, for I do believe in the Lord Jesus." In the end I couldn't but accept Jesus' words. His promise was meant for everyone who believed in Him, and therefore for me as well. I should do what Jesus did and not only that, but greater things. Not because I was something special, but because He has gone to the Father.

I can't recount all the promises that had become especially precious to me in those days. I shall only mention one more of the many. In John 16:24 the Lord Jesus says, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." It is not necessary for us to obtain joy from the things of this world. We can receive complete joy by asking for it in Jesus' name.

Regarding my calling to the ministry I often prayed, "Lord Jesus, if I am to preach the gospel, then I want to preach like you." The Lord Jesus didn't just preach in the synagogues, so I saw myself not only preaching indoors but out in the open as well.

After I had completed my training, the Lord Jesus did something completely unexpected. He showed me that I should not only preach to the whites, but also to the black people, to the Zulus. This was most extraordinary to me because, before my conversion, I was of the opinion that blacks weren't equal to us whites. Until then, I couldn't imagine that blacks had the same feelings and thoughts as whites. Today, I am ashamed of the attitude I used to have. Most of my time since then has been spent with blacks, I

have lived among them, and that which I had previously so rejected I came to accept when Jesus came into my life.

Initially I couldn't speak Zulu, much less preach in Zulu, because I had never wasted time with this language and wasn't even interested in these black people, whom I despised. But because of my love for Jesus I overcame my dislike and was prepared to go.

Chapter 2

The Struggle Against Powers of Darkness- In God's Service Without Authority

I was a missionary for twelve years before the revival broke out. I preached straight from the heart, although I knew pastors who didn't. Some of them stated that you needed to be careful what you preached, because, if you preached the truth, people might possibly walk out of the church. But I said to the Zulus, "Repent and change your lives. If you don't, you're on your way to hell."

Then the Zulus would respond, "We hear what you say, but you've got to understand:- Christianity is the white man's religion. We Zulus have our own religion. You are a Christian because your forefathers were Christians. If you had been born into a Zulu family, you would be like us."

"Christianity is good, and we've profited considerably from Western civilisation. You've built churches and schools for us, but Christianity is just not enough. We also wish to hold on to our traditions, we want to retain our ancestral worship. Even if we are Christians we must take our sick children to the witch doctor to find out why the child is ill and who has cast a spell to make it sick."

"When someone has died, we must celebrate a feast for the departed in order to bring back and worship his spirit, because the spirit of a deceased person inhabits a snake's body. It is our custom to take a 'mancishane' (small beer jug) and a piece of meat during the feast and set them before the spirits of the dead." (This is usually done in a special place at the back wall of a Zulu hut).

I strove to make clear to them that ancestral worship was demonic and that we didn't need any such things if we had Jesus, but they explained to me in their own way that, for them, Christianity was like water that one pours on a fire: it kills the flame, but the glowing embers remain. That is why they wished to keep their old traditions, which, in their opinion, penetrated to the root of the matter. My attempts to demonstrate to them that it suffices if you have Jesus were all in vain.

One day I prayed earnestly, "O Lord, please be with me today when I hold the service. Grant me wisdom and the power of your Holy Spirit. Give me your word and the authority to convince these Zulus that you are not just the white man's God, but the Son of God who died for all mankind, who rose again and ascended into heaven."

I worked out my sermon very carefully, beginning in the Old Testament with what the prophets had foretold regarding the coming of Jesus Christ. Isaiah, (who lived six hundred years before the Messiah was born), prophesied the virgin birth. I told the Zulus how all these promises had come to fulfilment, and how the Lord Jesus had eventually died on the cross for our sins and rose again so that we should have life.

I said to them, "We don't need to worship Mohammed. We can go to his grave where his bones still lie. We don't need Buddha. He died and that was the end. Those are dead gods. But Jesus is a living God.

His grave is empty because He rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven and all power in heaven and on earth is given unto Him. There is no other name given among men by which we can be saved other than the name of Jesus. For all men, independent of the colour of their skin, there is only one way: Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth and the life. He does not change, He is the same today as He was two thousand years ago. Just as people came to Him then, we can come to Him today as well."

I had hardly finished my sermon, when an old woman came up to me and asked, "Mfundisi (Pastor), is it true what you told us?"

"Yes," I replied.

Is Jesus, the white man's God, really alive, just as you said?"

"Yes!"

"Can you speak with Him?"

"Of course. You can speak to Him too. That's what we call prayer. Everybody can pray."

"Oh," she said, "I am so glad that I have found one person who serves the living God. I have a grown-up daughter who is completely mad. Could you please ask your God to heal her?"

I didn't know what to say. What a fool I had been! I thought I had been cornering these people, but instead, I had cornered myself without even leaving a loophole. How should I get myself out of this awkward situation? I couldn't just ask God to heal the girl. What should be done now, what could I do? I had here a simple-minded heathen woman before me. If she had at least been an intelligent person, I could have asked her: "Are you sure that it is God's will that your daughter should be healed?" or "Might this not be the cross you have to bear?" or "Is it God's time that He should heal her now?" The Bible addresses such problems as the cross that we must bear, submitting to God's will, and appointed times which the Lord lays down. But if I wanted to explain all that to this simple-minded heathen woman she would only become confused. So I was at a loss, and didn't know what to do. I remained quite calm outwardly, not betraying my perplexity, and finally asked the woman, "Where is your daughter? Is she here?"

"No, she is at home."

That was a bit of a relief. I thought that if I could only gain some time, I would most certainly think of something. "Where do you live?"

"Not so far away, about one kilometre."

"Can we get there by car?"

"Halfway, and then we must walk."

"All right, just give me some time. I'll finish here, and then I'll come with you."

On the way there, she told me that she was a widow and that her husband had passed away four years previously. She had only this one daughter, and a married son who was working in Durban. When we arrived at her home, I looked into the hut and cried out in dismay, "But you didn't tell me half of what I see here!"

In the middle of the hut I saw a girl sitting on the floor, her arms bound to the centre pole with wire. The wire had cut deeply into her flesh, so that blood was flowing down, and she was covered with scars and wounds. Some of these had healed, but others were still fresh. She pulled at the wire with such

vehemence that it cut deeply into her arms. She spoke incessantly in foreign languages, and at times it was not possible to determine which language it was.

"How long has she been bound like this?" I asked her mother.

"For the past three weeks she has been talking non-stop, day and night. She does not eat anything and she does not sleep. We bring her food, but she takes the plate and throws it against the wall."

"But why don't you use something softer to tie her up? It's cruel, to bind her with that wire."

"We've already tried everything else. She breaks the strongest ropes, then she runs around and we can't catch her. She gets into the neighbour's fields and gardens and pulls out the cabbage, the maize and the other vegetables. She destroys everything. The people are afraid of her and the men take their sticks, beat her and set their dogs on her. Often she runs into the mountains and doesn't come back." The woman looked at me, and with tears in her eyes she asked me, "Can you imagine what it means to a mother's heart, to have such a child?"

She continued with her story: "The girl tears her clothing to shreds and runs around naked. She is very dangerous. There is a man here who has a big scar where he was bitten by her. When she bites someone she won't let go until somebody else comes to the person's rescue. Once she ran into the school and the children all jumped out the windows and fled from her in fear. The school committee has informed me that something must be done to prevent these incidents. Look at my cattle pen. I don't have any cows, sheep or goats left. Every animal I owned I sacrificed to the spirits. The cows I didn't kill I had to sell to pay the witch doctor. I haven't got any more money. I'm at the end of my strength."

Weeping, she finished her story with the words, "You know, I have often wanted to take a knife and cut my daughter's throat. At other times I've wanted to bring my own life to an end. But something always held me back. What would become of my daughter? Nobody would look after her. Now I am so glad that I have found a person who serves the living God! Perhaps there is still hope."

When the woman said that, I felt as if my heart had stopped beating. In my innermost soul I cried out to God, "O Lord, you are still the same God as of old. Can't you do something?"

I went to some of my colleagues and shared my experience with them. I asked them to pray with me for this girl. Next I drove to my parents' farm and asked them for a room where the girl could stay while we prayed for her. My parents readily agreed and prepared a room. Together with a few other men I fetched the girl and brought her to my parents' house. Everybody in the whole area, the entire tribe, knew what was going on.

I said to my colleagues, "Look, for years we've been praying for revival, but up to now it has failed to come. Maybe this is the match that we must strike to make the fire burn. If this girl is healed, then the revival might finally break out, because the whole tribe knows her: the chief, the children, all the people, young and old. What a mighty victory it would be for our Lord Jesus if the girl were healed. Then the Zulus would realise that Jesus is the only true God."

But we had hardly brought the girl into her nicely furnished room, when she turned the table upside down and began destroying the chairs. We were eventually forced to remove all the furniture, leaving only the bed. But then she attempted to pull out the springs in the mattress, so that we had to take the bed out of the room as well, leaving her only with an 'icansi' (a grass mat) and a blanket. The next thing

that our protégé did was to break the panes and frames of the windows. Within a few hours that room looked like a pigsty, in which not just one but many pigs were living.

We prayed day and night for three weeks, but the girl wasn't healed. Instead, I was at the end of my strength and close to a nervous breakdown. The girl sang her satanic hymns incessantly. Someone advised me to plead the blood of Jesus, which the devil would fear and flee, but to no avail. On the contrary, the girl began to blaspheme the blood. Again and again those horrible, sacrilegious songs resounded through the room, renouncing the blood and death of the Lord Jesus as only the devil could do it. All this time the girl would sit half or fully naked in her excrements, blaspheming. She would stamp on the concrete floor with her bare feet, like somebody attempting to demolish it with a sledge hammer. She carried on like that for hours on end, and the noise and blasphemous songs could be heard from far away.

I couldn't understand it. We had done what the Bible taught us, but it didn't work. Our experience belied the theory. I felt like the evolutionists, wise people of this world, who claim that there is no creator and no God. Millions and billions of years ago we were supposedly all fish, and these fish developed legs. Not only did they then evolve into frogs, but also into monkeys, which somehow lost their tails and thereby initiated the human race. The advocates of this theory can explain all the details most precisely, even down to the number of years required for this development. But, strangely, there were always missing links. Many years ago it was announced that a certain Prof. Smith had caught a Coelacanth (a fish long believed to be extinct). They believed that this fish constituted a missing link, but to their great disappointment, this could not be verified. And that is exactly how I felt in my position: The theory was correct, but in practice it didn't work.

What was I to do? Go back to the girl's mother and tell her that her daughter had not been healed? Everybody in the area knew that we Christians were praying for this girl. They had heard me preach, "Don't go to the witch doctors, don't sacrifice oxen and goats to the spirits. Jesus is the answer to every problem, come to Him." They were all waiting to see what would happen, and now we Christians had failed. We prayed with all our strength, "O God, it's not our name which is at stake here. People won't say that we have failed, they will say: 'It is their Jesus who has failed.'" But heaven seemed barred and we received no answer to our prayers. In the end we all gave up and were compelled to take the girl back.

Then I beseeched the Lord, "O God, I beg you to send me somewhere else. I can no longer stand before these people and preach to them. I've got to be honest with them. I just can't support something that doesn't work! I have to be honest with myself as well, because I, too, have a heart and a conscience." After all, I couldn't go to these people and say that there is no God, that the white man's religion is worthless. The best thing would be to go somewhere else. But I said to myself that I would never again preach so foolishly as to evoke a situation as difficult as the one I had landed in now.

From then on I could no longer believe that the Bible was God's Word and that everything in it was true. I deemed it possible that parts of Scripture were true and other parts weren't. Anything that couldn't be reconciled to my experience and my own train of thought, I rejected. I was like a fool sitting on a throne and passing judgement on what is true and what is not. I would say, "This is legitimate nowadays, but that is not. This might have been valid two thousand years ago, but not today. Things have changed. We can't expect everything in the Bible to be true."

During all those years I had preached the gospel and sometimes hundreds of people had come forward in one meeting to accept the Lord Jesus Christ. Then I would usually pray the sinners' prayer with them

before they went home. I knew these young people and the kinds of books they read at home. I knew that some of them even possessed pornographic magazines. I was acquainted with young men who couldn't pass a book shop without looking at the pictures of naked women hanging there. Some of them would even buy them, and then hide them from their parents - and all of these young people had accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord!

The Lord Jesus said to the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again, but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (John 4:13-14). No, I said to myself, it's not true. Are there people in this world who are thirstier than the Christians? Some Christians even crave abominable sins, and if they can't sin openly, they'll do it secretly. At some point in time they came to Jesus and they drank, but they're still thirsty. Some crave cigarettes, some crave alcohol, some crave sex and other worldly things. Children ask their parents why they aren't permitted to dance or go to the cinema and enjoy their lives like other people. The parents have a hard time raising their children correctly, but they are all Christians!

Perhaps Jesus made a mistake, or at least the authors of the New Testament did. Probably John didn't write down exactly what Jesus said. What I experienced was different to what was written. These young people came to me, I prayed with them, and they accepted the Lord Jesus. But they remained dirty. They dressed just like the people of this world. Yet the Bible teaches us, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 John 2:15). If you see a Christian and a non-Christian walking down the street, you often can't tell the difference. Yet the Bible says, "Be not conformed to this world!" (Romans 12:2). I doubted the truth of many such verses in the Bible, because I couldn't believe what was written there. I believed in what I had experienced, in what I saw and what I heard.

I continued preaching for another six years, and after twelve years of ministry altogether I arrived at Mapumulo. I thought about it over and over again, and I began to recall the time when God had first called me to preach the gospel. Hadn't I declared, "Lord, if I'm to preach the gospel, I don't want to play church." But when I asked myself, "Erlo, what have you been doing for the past twelve years?" I had to admit I had been playing the whole time. I had preached the gospel for twelve years and there weren't even twelve true Christians, in conformance with biblical standards, to show for it. I remembered the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1,5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof: from such turn away." I thought, "Where are the people that have this power of which the Bible speaks? I haven't got it myself. I can't carry on like this. I see other people who are apparently enjoying their lives. They're making money, and here I am, a poor missionary, preaching something that doesn't work."

I assembled my Zulu congregation and said to them, "I'm finished. I just can't go on like this any longer." Maybe my problem was also due to the fact that I used theological ideas to try to explain things away. I used to say that, possibly, these people didn't live the lives they should because they were too primitive, too uneducated. If they were more educated, they would be better able to grasp the truth. But there was one verse in the Bible which I could not forget. The Lord Jesus took a little child one day, put it in their midst and said, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein" (Luke 18:17). Every Christian and every pastor should take that to heart. Jesus says in Matthew 18:3: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Now when Jesus says we need to become "as little children," he doesn't mean we should become childish, but that we should become childlike in our faith. There's a distinct difference.

This word out of the mouth of Jesus was the decisive factor in my decision to abandon all my so-called wisdom and to read the Bible in childlike faith. I then asked the Zulus whether they would be prepared

to come to two Bible studies a day: at seven in the morning and at five o'clock in the evening. I said, "We will take our Bibles and we won't explain anything away. We won't justify ourselves, either, but accept things as they are written. If God is really the God of the Bible and His word is true, then let us try it and see if it works. Jesus said that He hadn't come to judge the world, but the word that He spoke would judge the world. We will try it and test ourselves accordingly. Also, let's not say, 'This is not valid nowadays. This was written for people who lived two thousand years ago.' Let's just accept things as they are written." They all agreed to my suggestion.

Chapter 3

Dynamis - The Power of the Holy Spirit

It was towards the end of the year 1966 that we began our Bible studies in Mapumulo. We had decided not to take a verse here or a verse there, like little children, picking out all the raisins in a cake. It's understandable when children behave that way, but when grown-ups conduct themselves in such a manner, it's just plain childish. There are people who are constantly quoting their favourite verses from the Bible. A certain spiritual school of thought, for example, establishes its teachings around the verse: "God is love". And because He is a God of love, there can be no hell. That is how false doctrines arise. So we said, "We don't want to do that. We will take one book of the Bible, beginning with the first verse, examine the text, through to the last verse. We will then have the whole picture and not just a part of it."

The Zulus have a legend which applied to our situation. Three blind men desired to know what an elephant looked like. Somebody agreed to drive them to a safari park in his car. Once there, they were led to a very large but tame elephant and each one of them was allowed to step forward and touch it. The first man walked up to the elephant, grabbed hold of its great big hind leg and exclaimed, "Is this what an elephant looks like?" The next blind man took a few steps forward and encountered the elephant's gigantic body. As his hands stroked along its belly, he cried, "My, is this really an elephant?" "Yes," he was told, "that's what an elephant looks like." The third blind man was standing near the elephant's head, so he grasped its trunk and examined it from top to bottom. All three of them were utterly thrilled to have finally "seen" an elephant, and they returned home very excited. There they were asked if they now knew what an elephant looked like. The first man described what he had observed, "I tell you, an elephant is like the trunk of a large tree." To which the second gentleman exclaimed, "Man, what are you saying? I really examined it. You can't fool me! An elephant is like a huge balloon." Finally, the third man intervened, "Where were you two anyway? I felt it with my own hands. An elephant is like a big hose pipe." And so they ended up getting into an argument. They had all "seen" the elephant, but the trouble was, each of them had only touched a part of it.

This story was a parable for us. We did not want to act like those three blind men, although Christians can be blind, of course, blind to many things regarding the Scriptures.

I can't recall today exactly how it happened, but we began with the Acts of the Apostles. Throughout the years I've always had a soft spot for the first Christians and I feel one can hardly read the account of the early church without being affected by it. So we began with the first chapter, at the first verse, and right from the outset the Lord took hold of our hearts.

The Acts of the Apostles commences with the words: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Luke wrote about what Jesus had begun to do, and the Acts of the Apostles is a continuation of what Jesus did. When the Lord Jesus lived in this world, it was

only the beginning. His work didn't end with His death. Jesus actually said to His disciples, "I came to send fire on the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!" (Luke 12:49-50). That was no baptism with water, that was the baptism of His agony and death on the cross. The Lord Jesus couldn't kindle the fire of the Holy Spirit before He had fought the battle in the garden of Gethsemane. There His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground. After His death on the cross, His resurrection from the dead and His ascension into heaven, He could at last accomplish what He had come for. Now He could continue His work in the fullness of His power, sitting at the right hand of the Father. At last the moment had come to kindle a fire. In Acts we can see the Lord working in His resurrection power, His omnipotence, through His disciples. The people of that time said: "These men are drunk." Others mocked them or were appalled, but Peter said in answer to them, "Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

When we had read those words we said, "But we are nearer to the last days today than the people two thousand years ago. If that promise was meant for them, how much more for us now." It doesn't take very much insight to realise that we are still living in the same period of time as the early church, and that this age will not come to an end until the Lord Jesus returns to claim His bride. Spiritually speaking, we are still living in the same 'week'. God's word says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." So two thousand years, that was just the day before yesterday. We haven't even reached the middle of the week yet. Undoubtedly, the same things that applied to the early church apply to us as well.

The further we got, the more our hearts were touched. We read that the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples not to depart from Jerusalem before they had received the baptism John the Baptist had spoken about. These days, there is much discussion about baptism. Some say it must be done like this, others say it must be done like that, while others say it must be done at a certain time. I remember a big open-air meeting in Pretoria in 1952 or 1953, in which Dr. Edwin Orr did something most extraordinary. He asked a Dutch Reformed minister and a Baptist minister to come forward. Then he asked them the following question: "When you baptise, which one of you uses more water?" I thought to myself, "Oh my, how can such a learned man ask a question like that? One shouldn't do such a thing." Then Dr. Orr explained, "Look, no matter how much or how little water you use, when you baptise someone, that person's tongue always remains dry." Do we understand that kind of language? Water baptism doesn't change our tongue. It might do whatever people say it does, but is it not so, that baptised children and baptised grown-ups utter things that should never be heard from the lips of a Christian? But the baptism with fire, of which the Acts of the Apostles speaks, means more.

The Lord Jesus says, regarding John the Baptist, that there is none greater born of women. There was Moses; there was Abraham; there was Elijah: all of them great men of God. But the Lord Jesus says that none of them is greater than John the Baptist. Wherein lay his greatness? We don't know of a single miracle attributed to his name, not one blind man whose eyes were opened, not one lame man who could walk again.

Maybe the Lord Jesus knew about our doubts. Therefore He says in this verse, "Verily I say unto you ..."
In spite of the fact that Jesus calls John the Baptist the greatest born of women, John the Baptist could

say, "One mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."

We know what fire is like. If you place black iron in a furnace, it doesn't take long before the colour changes; the iron becomes red-hot and finally turns white. The heat of the blaze penetrates to the iron's core. That's how it is when a person is baptised with the Holy Spirit; the fire of the Spirit penetrates to every part of his being, including his tongue.

As already mentioned, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, that they should be baptised with the Holy Spirit and thereby they would receive the power to become Jesus' witnesses. The Lord had to command His disciples to stay in Jerusalem. There was a special reason for that. Maybe His disciples would have fled. That's what we humans are like. When the going gets tough, we would like best to run away.

If a woman has a husband who doesn't understand her or doesn't do what she wants, she feels like fleeing. We have the same problem with children who believe their parents are being too strict with them. Often they will turn their backs on their homes for this very reason. There are even Christians who are constantly moving from one church to the other because they can't get along in the church they are in. To such people I usually say, "If you can't prove yourself where you are, you won't be able to prove yourself anywhere else, either." The Zulus say, "If you put a rotten potato in a bag full of good ones, the rotten potato won't get better, but the good ones will turn bad." If we don't succeed where God puts us, we won't be a blessing anywhere else. Therefore it is best to persevere until God reveals the next step.

Wasn't Jerusalem the most dangerous place for the disciples to stay? Jerusalem, where their Lord and Master had been nailed to the cross! They had fled behind locked doors, afraid of being killed as well. One can understand that, for them, this was the worst spot on earth. But Jesus told them to stay there until the Holy Spirit had come upon them. We read of the disciples' reaction to this command, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But the Lord's reply was like a verbal slap in the face: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

It is possible for people to be sitting at Jesus' feet, and while Jesus is speaking to them they are preoccupied with other problems. Of what use is it if we are busy with prophecies and we haven't received the power of the Holy Spirit to obey God's Word and do what the Lord Jesus expects of us?

I don't think there has ever been a time in history in which people have talked about the Holy Spirit more than today. All around the world people are talking about the Spirit of God. Unfortunately, people have also never been quite so ignorant with regard to the Holy Spirit as today. Some time ago I spoke about revival in a series of meetings in Holland. One preacher stood up and said, "Up to now I had a false picture of revival. I always assumed that revival had something to do with noise." Some people mistakenly believe that a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit behaves as if he were full of wine. I testify to this fact - and I speak from experience - that when the Spirit of God moves, those are the most silent moments in the life of a person or a church.

Let me tell you about two Christians who got into an argument. One of them claimed, "Our church is more pentecostal than your church." To which the other man replied, "No, we are more pentecostal than you are." "But how can you prove that?" "We shout Hallelujah much louder than you do." I was

told that this is a true story, not just a fairy tale. In Holland I met a man who was of the same opinion. We mustn't mistake emotionalism for the working of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus talks about a distinct characteristic which results when the Holy Spirit comes upon a person. He shall receive the power of the Holy Spirit! (Acts 1:8). If there must be a sign, let us accept the sign of which the Lord Jesus spoke. The Greek word for power in the New Testament is 'dynamis'. It makes me think of dynamite. Dynamite has power, and you don't use that kind of power on soft sand, you use it to blow the hardest rocks to pieces. The power of the Holy Spirit is for situations where the ground is as hard as granite. That's where the Holy Spirit is most effective.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye shall receive power!" When we speak about this power, the first thing that comes to many people's minds is physical healing. They completely forget that healing the spirit is of far greater importance than healing the body! It is a thousand times more valuable to be set free from one's sins than to be healed of one's sicknesses. Spiritual events must always take precedence.

Now we mustn't take this verse out of context, or we will falsify its meaning. Let's pay attention to Jesus' statement: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me." What is a witness? We say a witness is a person who bears testimony of what he has seen and heard. In Greek the word for witness is 'martyr'. In English we also use this word. A martyr is a person who is prepared to suffer death rather than renounce his faith. So Jesus actually meant: When you have received the power of the Holy Spirit, you will have the power to become martyrs. How strange! We might say: "You will have the power to love. But the power to die? Well, we aren't martyrs, and we would have to live in countries in which Christians are persecuted and die for their faith to become martyrs." Nevertheless we can still become martyrs. In Hebrews 12:4 we read, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." What does that mean? Simply this, that a person is prepared to say, "I would rather suffer death than tell a lie! I would rather die than whore with another man's wife! I would rather die than steal! I would rather die than be a hypocrite or a coward! I would rather die than be unfaithful to the Lord Jesus! I would rather die than sin!" That is power to be a martyr for the Lord Jesus.

Peter denied his Lord. But after he had received the power of the Holy Spirit, he became a faithful witness for his Lord and was eventually crucified as a martyr. Before he was executed, he said, "I am not worthy to die in the same way as my Lord and Master. Rather nail me to the cross with my head down." By the power of the Holy Spirit he was able to die for Jesus. He died for the truth.

The Apostle Paul says, "I die daily" (1 Corinthians 15:31). What does he mean by that? How can we die daily? The Lord Jesus experienced death in Gethsemane, so to say, before He physically died on the cross. There His sweat became like great drops of blood and He was close to despair, until He was finally able to say to His Father, "Not my will, but thine, be done." He died to Himself. If we can pray in this way, then we no longer seek our own will; we humble ourselves under God's will and deny ourselves. To die to oneself is extremely difficult. It is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

When we look at the apostles, we see how the power of the Holy Spirit became evident in their lives. Acts recounts how Peter and John went to the temple to pray. A man sat at the gate of the temple, who had been lame from birth. Peter said to him, "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" And the lame man stood up! Observe Peter's exact words. He didn't say, "such as we have give we thee." He said, "such as I have give I thee." John didn't have the gift of healing. We don't hear of a single healing miracle that the apostle John worked, although he had the power of the Holy Spirit as Peter had. These two apostles had different gifts. If we

inquire into the nature of John's particular gift, we find that it lies in the distinct manner of his preaching, his way of teaching the churches brotherly love, fellowship and unity amongst one another. John experienced the power of the Holy Spirit to such an extent that he could write (1 John 3:6,8): "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: Whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him. He that commiteth sin is of the devil." That is how we recognise a born-again Christian! John goes so far as to say that it is not difficult to know whether a person is born again or not: If someone sins, he is of the devil. If he is really born again, he does not sin. That's pretty rough language, which makes the theologians scratch their heads and say, "Oh no, John couldn't have meant it that way."

It's a good thing that John and the Christians of the early church are no longer alive. Maybe we would start a revolt against them. We can well understand why John the Baptist was beheaded: because he told the truth. Look it up in Matthew 3:7-12. What would happen if we had preaching like that in our churches today? The apostle John was filled with the Holy Spirit to such an extent, that he couldn't understand that a born-again Christian could still lie. He couldn't imagine a person having experienced a rebirth through the Spirit who was yet a friend of this world. He couldn't understand that such a person didn't have the capability to conquer sin in his life. A greater power is necessary to vanquish sin, to go from victory to victory, than to heal the sick. These days we have become so superficial in our judgement. If a person speaks a few words in an unknown tongue, then we say he is filled with the Holy Spirit, but this person might still be lying or living in adultery. What an immense difference to what the Bible teaches, if we have an ear to hear.

Chapter 4

The Early Church

The more we studied Acts, the more our hearts were broken. We reached the verse where Peter, John, James, Philip and all the others were gathered in the upper room in prayer. Even the women were there, and the brothers of our Lord, and Mary, His mother. It is written that they all continued with one accord in prayer. This happened even before the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. The Lord's death on the cross, His Resurrection, and the events leading up to the Ascension were enough to unite these people in prayer. To me, this seems to be the greatest miracle of all: the unity of the Christians! Normally, they quarrel and slander behind each others backs and kill each other with words. But the death of the Lord Jesus and His Resurrection moved them so deeply that they were drawn closely together in prayer and it was possible to say of them: they were one in spirit. How deeply has the cross of Jesus moved our hearts? What does it mean to us?

Later, we find these same people at Pentecost, at which time three thousand people were converted. When the Holy Spirit descended as the Comforter, (Greek: paracletos) He did exactly as His name indicates. The Comforter comes down to stand alongside us, shoulder to shoulder, and speaks the same language we speak. That is what happened at Pentecost. All the people present could hear Peter's sermon in their own language. We may all speak the same language and yet remain on different wave lengths. There is the language of theologians, the language of students, the language of politicians. We learn to speak foreign languages and can't even understand our own, but when the Holy Spirit is at work, He speaks to each person in a language he can understand. At such a time it doesn't matter whether we are educated or uneducated, whether we belong to this race or that. The Holy Spirit can speak in such a way that even a little child will understand. That's literally what happened at Pentecost. Therefore it is important not to read the Word of God superficially, but to hear it with proper ears and convey it in an unadulterated way.

At a Christian meeting I once heard a well-known preacher exclaim, "Now let's pray as they prayed at Pentecost, when they all spoke in tongues." And then the whole congregation spoke in tongues. People of different nationalities passed by outside, but none of them could understand even a single word of what was being said. Pentecost, however, was different. Everybody could hear what was being said in his own language. I am not against the gift of tongues, but it must be worked by the Holy Spirit. That is why the apostle Paul writes to Timothy that he must rightly divide the Word of Truth, i.e., to keep those things apart which must be kept apart, and to keep those things together which belong together.

When the three thousand people at Pentecost were pierced to the heart by the message of salvation, they repented. The consequences of this event can be read in Acts 2:42: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." They remained together daily in unanimity of the Spirit, as one heart and one soul. What a miracle! Thousands of people, young and old, men and women, surely also teenagers and children as well. They didn't just belong to some church or religious organisation, as we often do. There are Christians today who say, "Oh am I glad that I don't need to live with that person in our church. She gets on my nerves. It is good that we can go home after the service and I don't have to get along with her anymore." The Christians of the early church cultivated their devout fellowship daily in complete unity of the Holy Spirit. That is the testimony of the Word of God.

There were only approximately forty Christians at Mapumulo at that time, but, oh, was there friction and fighting amongst them! I often needed to be a peacemaker, because they just couldn't get along with each other. One would criticise the other. Instead of going to their adversary and settling the matter, they would rather speak about the other person's mistakes behind his back. Their own sins they would prudently conceal - the result of which was proper, double-faced, hypocritical Christianity.

In Acts 4:31 we read of the early church that, when they had prayed, the place was shaken. No wonder! When these people prayed, things happened. Such a prayer could shake the world. Have there ever been as many prayer meetings and prayer groups as in these times of ours? But what happens? Have Christians ever been more shaken than they are today? We pray and we don't move the world, the world moves us! One can understand why. Our very own children confuse us, our own congregation confounds us and we ask in amazement: How can such things happen? Even in our own churches there are couples who have to get married, and yet they are members of the church.

In 1966, as we considered the first Christians of the early church, we said to ourselves, "That church is far away from us, not two thousand years, but as far as the east is from the west. What a difference! If we compare that church to ours, which we believe to be the best and most pious, how will it be when things come to light..." We then took a closer look at these people, and got the impression that Jesus wasn't just their hobby or something for the weekend - no, Jesus was their very life! They lived for Him every day of the week. Whether they were together or not, their lives were the same. Every day of their lives Jesus was their all. Some of them sold their possessions, their fields, then brought everything and laid it at the apostles' feet. Jesus meant more to them than anything else. They came together daily and had everything in common, without being communists. Nobody said, "This is mine!" They weren't self-centred, they didn't think of themselves, they were Spirit-filled and lived for the Lord Jesus. Here we see what a Spirit-filled person should be like. He doesn't live for himself, he lives for his neighbour. That's exactly what we saw when we studied those first Christians.

But then the Acts of the Apostles relates something quite astonishing in chapter five. The devil, who doesn't sleep, filled Ananias' heart. So the devil can influence us as well! That's why the Bible says that we shouldn't give the devil any room. This is directed at Christians. We mustn't be of the erroneous

opinion that the devil can't sneak his way into a Christian's heart. A person who makes such a statement doesn't know what he's saying. We know that a Christian can also lie, although he is born again, even if he calls it a "white lie". In that moment the devil comes into his heart. That's exactly what happened to Ananias. We don't know the reason why. The Bible only informs us that he and his wife agreed to sell their property. We don't know which of them had the idea, but one of them started the ball rolling. Maybe this couple wanted to do the same thing the others were doing. Sometimes we Christians can be brilliant imitators. If somebody does something, we imitate it without knowing why. The prophet Isaiah says, "All we like sheep have gone astray." We are like sheep. One sheep copies the other. Ananias and Sapphira said to themselves, "Let us do likewise." So they sold their possessions, maybe they even prayed about it. God even sent a buyer - wasn't it wonderful? But then they somehow reconsidered: "Let's not take everything to the apostles. We'll withhold some of it. We'll pretend that this was everything, but part of it we'll keep." We don't know their motives. Maybe they were thinking of their future. But possibly they agreed in their bedroom to give just a portion of it to the apostles and to keep the rest in reserve.

Ananias took the money, brought it to the apostles and laid it at their feet. Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, who is a Spirit of truth, and the Spirit said to him, "Peter, there is something fishy here, there is something wrong." This inspiration prompted him to say, "Ananias, tell me, is this the price you got for the land?" And Ananias answered, "Yes." Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to me but to God." And what was the consequence of this lie? When Ananias heard those words, he fell down dead.

We see that the early church didn't tolerate sin, not even a white lie. They had no room and no time for sin, and dealt with it most severely. So much so, that a man had to die for a lie. That was what the early church, the church of Christ, the risen Lord, was like.

I sometimes ask myself whether we have a right to call ourselves the church of Christ, when we see the kinds of things that go on in our churches nowadays. In the early church a man had sinned: he had told a lie. We might not even call it a lie. But that little falsehood was taken so seriously that it cost him his life. The early church and the Spirit of that church said, "Rather dead in the grave than alive with a lie in the church."

What do we do? We worship God as our King, have fellowship with one another, and tolerate sin in our midst! Upon what foundation are we building? We say, "But he is a member of our church, born into the congregation and baptised." On Judgement Day that person will burn like stubble, for nobody is a member of the church of Christ, until he is a member of the body of Christ Himself, the living and holy Lord. He cannot just belong to an organisation, but must be genuinely born again, and the fruit of his life must show that he is born again.

Let's return to our account in Acts, chapter five. About three hours later, Ananias' wife, Sapphira, comes in, not knowing what had happened. We must remember that these were simple people, they had no telephones or cars. One would assume that the most obvious thing to do would be to notify the wife of the deceased, so that she could make arrangements for the funeral! But we read that several young men carried him out and buried him. Now his wife comes along and doesn't know that her darling husband is dead. Immediately, Peter confronts her and asks, "Sapphira, tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" Well, she had to stand by her husband. They had agreed as to what they were going to do. So she was faithful to him and answered, "Yes, that is the price." Peter said to her,

"How could you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." Upon hearing those words, she also fell down dead.

In 1966, we asked ourselves whether we would want to become a member of such a church, one which was like the first church. What would become of people like us, with our white lies and our petty little sins. I thought to myself, Thank God there is no church like that today and thank God that I didn't live in that time, because I might have felt it to be my duty to warn people: "Beware! That's a dangerous place. Terrible things happen in that church. People die there. Peter can't be a man of God, filled with God's love. Nobody whose heart is filled with love would act like that, it's cruel. He didn't even give her a chance. Why did he expose her in front of all those people? Why didn't he go to her and warn her?"

Maybe we can thank God that we didn't live in that time. We might possibly have been filled with the Holy Spirit, but I can tell you one thing: if you pray for revival, you are asking for something the world doesn't understand. You might even be asking for something that you don't understand yourself. Consider what happened in this first church when the Spirit of God descended in all His power and worked amongst its members.

I asked that little congregation of Zulus, "If I had been Peter, what would I have done? If you had been Peter, what would you have done?" The trouble is that we read the Bible so superficially that we cannot grasp what it's all about. Just imagine if we had been there. What would happen if such a church as the early church were in existence today? Maybe we would drive those people away and reject them as fanatics, as too extreme, unloving and without grace. If I had been Peter, and Ananias had come to me, I might have hugged him, given him a brotherly kiss and said, "Brother, God bless you." I probably wouldn't have worried about whether he was telling a white lie or not, I would have looked upon the generous gift he contributed and thought: "that's what we need." We know the financial costs when thousands of people come together every day. Maybe I would have received him with enthusiasm and said, "Brother, the Lord be with you. At the next board meeting I'll propose that you are appointed as a deacon." Those are the kinds of people we need in the church: people with money.

Peter, however, reacted differently. One could imagine that he was saying, "To hell with you and your money. We have no room for you in the church of our risen Lord. We can't tolerate a person who lies, is dishonest and speaks half-truths. It is better to be eaten by maggots, than to live like that in the church." That is how they dealt with both the husband and his wife in those times.

We didn't get very far in our Bible studies. We turned back to the third chapter of Acts, where Peter and John went to the temple to pray. Peter said to the beggar at the gate, "Look on us. Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" Let's examine carefully what Peter said. First he said to the beggar, "Look at us." How could Peter make such a mistake? No theologian would express himself in such a manner. We would say, "Look at Jesus, look at God, look at the Bible, not at us!" Of course, we can understand that Peter made such a mistake. He didn't have our theological seminaries with professors and teachers as ours. But we must qualify this assessment. Peter had the greatest Professor and Teacher, he sat at the feet of the greatest Master. But, even so, how could a person who had just been filled with the Holy Spirit say, "Look at us." Didn't he know that one had to look at Jesus? We then delved into the word of God and found 2 Corinthians 3:3, where it is written, "Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart." And verse 2, "You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men." We could now understand Peter. The hand of God was at work in the apostles' lives. The Spirit of God did something to

these people. That's why they could declare without shame, "Look at us." Even before Peter began his healing ministry he could proclaim with authority, "Look at us!"

Can we, as witnesses of Christ and ministers in the church of God, say to the world, "Look at us!" before we begin to witness? Can we as parents say to our children when we reprove them, "Look at us and the life we live!" Are we setting a good example for them? Can we say to the maid or the garden labourer, "Look at me," before we tell them about Jesus? Don't we usually declare, "Don't do as I do, do as I say!" That's exactly what the Pharisees did. In Matthew 23:3 the Lord Jesus says, "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works, for they say, and do not do." The Pharisees didn't practice what they preached. That is the distinguishing characteristic of a Pharisee! The Pharisees and scribes of the twentieth century are exactly the same. They preach the truth, but they don't practice it themselves. I emphasise: the Truth! Very often, we believe that Pharisees are people who preach lies. But then Jesus wouldn't have said to His disciples, "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do," if they had been telling them fairy-tales.

In order to demonstrate what I mean, let me tell you about a famous preacher. This man received so many invitations, that he couldn't possibly accept them all. On one of his tours he was asked to speak in a large cathedral, and his wife, who had also been invited, accompanied him. Two of the congregation's leading women welcomed his wife and escorted her to church. Then this preacher got into the pulpit. He was such an orator that everybody was completely spellbound. While he spoke you could hear a pin drop. His mode of expression was perfect and he never repeated himself. When the sermon was over, they all departed silently, deeply impressed. After the three ladies had left the cathedral, one of them turned to the preacher's wife. "Oh, it must be wonderful," she said, "to be married to a man who can preach like that!" To which the minister's wife retorted, "Oh, you don't know what he is like at home!" If our lives can't even impress our own wives, how much less our children and even less the devil. May God grant that the people to whom this applies, and who feel this is directed at them, repent and turn from their Pharisaism.

In 1966, we recognised that we had no right to open our mouths and preach to the world or the heathen Zulus before we could say, "Look at us." Let us hear Peter once more: "Such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!" We might ask anew, "Peter, aren't you ashamed? You had let the Lord down so terribly, you denied him! And now you say, "Look at us!" He may then reply, "Yes, my brother, I can speak in such a way. I sinned, but I repented. I was able to cry because of my sin and I received forgiveness. When God forgives, He forgets, and I may forget as well." This is the gospel: we needn't live in the past; the past has been dealt with. If we have truly, genuinely repented and brought our life in order with God, then through the forgiveness of our sins we can continue without shame.

Peter went on to say, "Silver and gold have I none." Just imagine! If we had come to the point where we had no money, could we still say to people, "Look at us?" When we're on top of the world, when we've won lots of money, when everything is going fine and glistens like gold, then we smile. Then we say to the people, "Look at us." However, when things go wrong, when we are bankrupt and at our wit's end, can we still say, "Look at us?"

Was Peter being honest when he said, "Silver and gold have I none," or was that just a trick to get around giving the beggar some money? We may have conducted ourselves in such a manner! We might have said, "I am sorry, I haven't got any money at the moment," although in reality our pockets were full of money.

In spite of these questions, we must accept that Peter was speaking the truth, but he wasn't ashamed of the fact that he had no money and he continued by saying, "But such as I have..." - notice what Peter said, he had something! - "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!"

At this point, I told my little Zulu congregation the story of a Roman Catholic priest, whose services were attended by thousands of people in a huge cathedral. This priest didn't use the customary collection plates for the offering. Instead, he set up a large table near the door for this purpose. After the people had left, the table was laden with money, with silver and gold. As the old priest was counting this money with his young curate at his side, he said, "Look, young man. Peter can no longer say, 'Silver and gold have I none.' Nor can the Pope say that today." To which the young man replied, "Neither can he say, 'In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!'"

We see that the tables have been turned. What they once had, we no longer have. Somewhere along the way something got lost. What they didn't have, we do have, and it plays quite an important role in our lives. Money is a significant factor when we decide whether or not to go into the Lord's ministry, and it assumes a decisive role in regard to our decision. Perhaps we are a bit like Judas Ischariot. Peter, however declared, "I don't have any money." It didn't seem to bother him either, as he gave what he had.

Suddenly, a young woman of the Zulu congregation, who had been converted just three months before, stood up. Tears were streaming down her face as she said, "O Mfundisi, please stop." This young woman interrupted me in the middle of a sentence! Astonished, I asked, "Yes, what's wrong?" She replied, "May I pray?" I didn't know what to do. It was like a bolt out of the blue. A newly converted person suddenly gets up, stops the service, and wants to pray. I didn't know whether to allow it. This young person had no theological training, she was no deacon, no elder in the church. Could she even pray? What if she prayed incorrectly? But then I looked at her and I thought, "Well, she isn't deceiving us, she seems to be serious." Thus I said, "All right, you may pray." This young woman then prayed a simple prayer, "O Lord Jesus, we have heard what the early church was like. Couldn't you come down and be in our midst as you came down two thousand years ago? Couldn't our church be the same as the one in Jerusalem?"

At this moment my heart began to burn within me. I thought of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, when they were joined by a third, unknown man who walked with them and spoke to them. Their eyes were opened after He had broken bread with them and the one said to the other, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He opened to us the Scriptures?" I thought, "Is this what they felt? O Lord, grant that your children and your church in the world today may be like the early church. Can't you do it once again? Revive your work, O God. Can't the Christians today be like the first Christians again?" With that, I closed the service.

When I got home, I called on my brother, who lived in the village where we held our services, and said to him, "You know, a strange thing happened today. The meeting was suddenly interrupted, not by terrorists, but by a prayer. If that prayer was inspired by the Holy Spirit - and I don't doubt that it was - then I believe that the risen Lord, the living God, will again be in our midst and the church of Christ will experience what the first Christians experienced in Jerusalem." A week and a half later, God rent the heavens and came down!

Conviction of Sin is the Beginning of a Revival

"Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." Isaiah 64:1-4

This is truly a genuine prayer for revival. In 1966, in our spiritually desperate situation, we prayed, "O God, if you would only rend the heavens."

The prophet is saying: "Lord, we agree with whatever you do, even if the price we must pay is high, as long as you come down and remain in our midst." When I speak of revival, I'm not talking about revival meetings. I'm talking about when God Himself rends the heavens and comes down into our midst, and every person there is conscious of the presence of the living God.

We prayed earnestly for revival. We came together twice a day, but after a while we were led so deeply into repentance that our Bible studies began to recede into the background and we just broke down and wept. Until then we had prayed that God would come down and work amongst the heathens. We hadn't realised that God never begins with the heathens and the people outside, the people in the streets. He always begins in the house of God, as we find in the first epistle of Peter chapter 4:17. We can't blame the ungodly for not being converted, if we Christians aren't being revived and living the right kind of life.

We asked ourselves what the life of a person who believes in Jesus should be like. In John 7:38 Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." He doesn't say a little stream or rivulet. Just imagine what a river can do. Even a small stream can become a mighty current when heavy rainfall causes it to overflow its banks. With the water from a river we can transform a desert into a garden, irrigate fields or produce electricity. Here Jesus isn't talking about only one river, but about rivers of living water. When we asked ourselves at Mapumulo, "Are there such rivers of living water flowing out of our lives?" we had to answer, "No!"

What is it like, when rivers flow? It isn't possible to stop such streams of water. One can build a dam, but an immense amount of water pressure will build up and eventually the barrier will crack if the dam wall isn't strong enough and it cannot flow over. When a dam bursts one can witness the violent force of such crushing torrents of water. Spiritually speaking, this means that there is nothing in the world that will stop the rivers of living water which the Spirit of God can work in our lives.

I remember one day, I asked the little congregation, "Who of you believes in Jesus Christ?" Then I did something which I normally avoid. I said, "I would like those of you who believe in Jesus to raise their hands." Of course there wasn't a single person who didn't raise his hand. So I said, "Look, we have to face things squarely. Jesus says if we believe in Him, as the Scriptures say, then rivers of living water will flow out of our lives. Now let me ask you a personal question: Are there rivers of living water flowing out of your lives?"

"No!" they said.

"Does that mean that you don't believe in Jesus?"

"But we are sure that we believe in Jesus. We have accepted Christ, we surrendered our lives to him. We can't doubt that," they replied.

"Well, if that's the way it is, then we are either deceiving ourselves, or the words Jesus said aren't true."

What were we to do now? We had determined that we would no longer justify or excuse ourselves. All discussions were pointless. Now we were at a loss, we had reached a deadlock and could find no solution to our problem. But suddenly it seemed to me as if the Lord were showing me something. I looked at the verse once more, where Jesus says, "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said..." In other words, maybe Scripture has something specific to say about the life of a believer, and not only that rivers of living water will flow out of our lives.

So we got together again and took this into consideration. We said to ourselves, "Let's search the Scriptures and let the Word speak to us. Let us not twist and turn what we read, nor tear it apart, rather let us shed light on it from all sides. We must disregard our ways and customs, our church laws and our personal religious opinions, and hear exactly what the Bible has to say. Do we really believe as the Scripture says?"

Then God began working on the greatest sinner in that congregation. It was the preacher, it was I! I had always criticised and blamed others and had an excuse for everything. When people asked me why I found everything so difficult, I would say, "You've got to understand. It's not easy for a white man to preach the gospel today. The blacks, the Zulus, don't accept it. They say it's the white man's religion and, what's more, a white man who is preaching. People are politically-minded today, influenced by communism and certain theologies. Just look at the young people, what they are busy with and what takes up all their time: alcohol, sex, soccer, discotheques, pornography, television, etc. Then one can understand why people turn away from God more and more, and revival can't break out."

I would always find fault with others, and point a finger at them, but what happens if you point your finger at someone? Don't three fingers point back at you, as if saying that you are three times as bad as the person you are criticising? We always judge according to our own standards. And, psychologically speaking, a person always sees his own mistakes in others. If you want to know a person's weak spot, just listen to what he has to say about other people. These very things are usually found in his own life.

Let me illustrate this with a few examples. An artist may look at a tree, and see a motif for a beautiful picture. A carpenter regards the tree from a different perspective. He thinks of the wonderful planks he can fashion from it. The man who planted it would see yet another benefit.

Let's consider an alcoholic. He is constantly thinking of alcohol. If he sees someone else with a bottle under his arm, he will immediately think, "Oh, he bought some liquor, he's a drunkard like me." But possibly the bottle only contains water. A homosexual might see two men walking down the street together and think, "They are probably just like me."

But then God placed His finger on certain things in my life. I remember one Saturday morning, some of the blacks came and asked me if we couldn't come together at one o'clock that afternoon. They hadn't been home all week, and some of them had a walk of seven kilometres to get home. They wanted to get

back to their families over the weekend, so that they could look after the children and attend to the laundry and the housekeeping. So I agreed that we would meet at noon.

At that time we came together in a small building, which had been a cow shed before. On the other side of the road were the tennis courts, and as we assembled there at the time we had arranged, the magistrate, the assistant magistrate, the postmaster, the police sergeant and other people from Mapumulo had just gathered for a game of tennis. I thought to myself, "Oh my, what will those people think of me, if I go down on my knees and pray with these blacks?" I knew these dignitaries, knew where they stood spiritually, and was ashamed to pray as we had been doing. What was I supposed to do now? The whites would think I was cracked, but at that moment I didn't realise that that's exactly the point, that we must be cracked, so that the light of God can shine through. The sooner we are broken, the better. I was in a dilemma. Should I say to the blacks, "Go home and come back after the others have finished playing their game; come back at five." But what reason would I give? After all, I couldn't tell them that I was ashamed to pray with them. Again and again I heard a voice inside: What will those people out there think of me, a white man, praying on my knees with these blacks?

Suddenly I had a brain wave. I decided to get up and close the windows, so that the people out there couldn't hear what was going on inside. These were old-fashioned windows, which you had to push up. As I had closed them, I heard a voice say to me, "Okay then, close the window. Then you will be inside, and I will remain outside!"

I didn't need any special translation for that kind of language! I understood it immediately. I knew it wasn't the window which kept God outside, it was my pride! For the first time in my life, I realised that God's Spirit is a Holy Spirit. I had never seen it that way before. I had spoken about the Holy Spirit hundreds, maybe thousands of times, but I had never realised what the Holy in the Holy Spirit really meant. In all that time the holiness of God's Spirit had never been revealed to me.

Before the revival broke out, I didn't particularly like the Pentecostals, indeed, I had often challenged them openly. We must be very careful with what we say and what we do as it is so easy to declare, "I am baptised with the Holy Spirit, I am Spirit-filled," and have people look up to us. For instance, I knew two men who spoke in tongues and claimed that they were Spirit-filled, but one of them used words no Christian should ever use; He could swear and curse most severely. The second man fooled around with women. That was a weapon I used, and I would say, "Come up here onto the platform with me, and I will test what you have said, since you are allegedly filled with the Holy Spirit," - although I myself had no clue as to what the Holy Spirit really was. I emphasise this, because we tend to profess so much with words, but live so little by them. In doing so, we bring much dishonour to God's name.

When God blessed Andrew Murray and the Dutch Reformed church in the Cape province with a revival and worked mightily in that area, Murray had much opposition. I am of the opinion that the depth of God's work can be measured by the amount of opposition encountered. If there's not much opposition, God hasn't done much. Regarding Dr. Murray, some people claimed, "Andrew Murray teaches false doctrines, he is too extreme and eccentric. We are all sinners, nobody can live the way he preaches." They then chose two people to go and visit Murray and stay with him for two weeks. After those two weeks they came back and reported the following: "Friends, he doesn't preach half of what he lives. If you had been there with him and the people around him, and had seen how they live and behave, then you could only say: they don't only preach, they live accordingly." It is as with the Queen of Sheba, who, when she arrived at Solomon's palace, had to say that she hadn't been told half of what she saw.

Therefore we must be careful with our words. Usually we say more than we do, and claim more than we are actually worth. Great harm has already been done in this world, and the people who have done the greatest damage to God's work are not the communists, but the Christians. Not the ungodly, but the ones who call themselves Christians, although in reality they are lukewarm. That is why Jesus says in Revelation 3:15-16, "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." Rather ungodly or a raw heathen than a lukewarm Christian, for Jesus can put up with the heathens, the cold ones, more easily than those who are lukewarm. Therefore the Lord warns the Christians of the church in Laodicea that He will spew a lukewarm Christian out of His mouth, and his end will be worse than that of a heathen.

Let's return to the point where God revealed my pride to me. Pride is a dreadful thing, a terrible sin. Again and again I saw the words of the apostle before my inner eye, "For God resisteth the proud" (1 Peter 5:5). I had never given it much thought. I had always been of the opinion that it was the devil who was making things so difficult for me. Now I realised that it wasn't the devil, but God Himself who was resisting me. God's Word doesn't say that the devil resists the proud - God resists the proud.

What is our greatest danger? There are numerous possibilities. Some say the terrorists. Such people can only sleep at night with their doors and windows locked. Some say the blacks are our greatest danger, others say the greatest danger is communism. But in reality it is God Himself, the very One who saved us, Who is our gravest peril!

The children of Israel were saved by the blood which they put on the posts of their doors. They drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, which was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). In the next verse we read that the same hand which saved them slew them in the wilderness, for God was not well pleased with His people. The result was that most of them weren't permitted to set foot in Canaan. God, in His wrath, had turned against them.

There is nothing in this world that we need fear more than God. Even if the whole world were for us, but God against us, we would be fighting a lost battle. But one man with God means victory and superiority over the whole world. The Bible says, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" How nice it would be, if that little word "if" were not there. Things would be so much simpler if the Bible said, "God is for us, so who can be against us?" But there is a question mark - "If" God be for us - and we must ask ourselves: Is He for us? Undoubtedly, we can't avoid that question if we think about it seriously.

When we look at some Christians, we must doubt whether God is with them. I have experienced one thing: If there is pride in a Christian's life, God will resist him. That's what my life was like. When I realised that, I cried out and prayed, "O Lord, I always thought that the devil was against me, but now I see that it is You who are resisting me. There is no hope for me! If it were only the devil, by your grace I could overcome him. But if You are against me, then I am lost!"

It seemed to me that God was grinding me through the mill, and He didn't begin with my feet, either. He threw me in head first and put His finger on my sore spot: my pride! Let's never forget that! Where pride is found, God is in opposition to that work, that place and that person! He has made it unmistakably clear that He resists the proud.

That, however, was just the beginning. The Holy Spirit showed me one sin after another. He did exactly what we read in John 16:7, where the Lord Jesus says, "It is expedient (to your advantage) that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." It seems to us as if God's Word portrays things in an incorrect manner. We read that the Comforter will guide us into all truth. "He will

convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgement." If Jesus speaks of a Comforter that will come, then we expect that Comforter to comfort us! Is there any comfort in His convicting us of sin? On the contrary, things become quite uncomfortable!

Years ago, a preacher asked, "Tell me, when you preach, do you ever touch on sin?" I replied, "I'm sorry, but my experience is such that I can't speak about anything else." He said, "Well, I can't preach about sin, because every time I touch on the subject, I see the people getting uncomfortable and moving around on the benches."

For what purpose did Jesus come to this earth? What does the name Jesus mean? He came for the purpose of saving us from our sins, and that is what His name means, "He shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). Why did He die on the cross? What did He shed His blood for? Wasn't it to carry our sins up to the cross, to deal with them? He was made to be sin for us. He died for us, to save us from our sins.

It was heartbreaking for the disciples when the Lord Jesus told them that He was going to leave, because it was heaven on earth for them to have fellowship with Him. Can you imagine anything better than having Jesus in your midst, to see Him, to hear Him and to discuss all your problems with Him? But Jesus says: There is something better! I must go, or the Comforter will not come. But when He comes, He will convict the world of sin. "Of course He'll convict the world of sin," we agree quickly. "Yes, the world, but not us Christians." We often criticise the politicians and their double-faced statements, but maybe we are worse than they are. When the Bible says, "For God so loved the world," we say it was meant for us. He loves me! But when He convicts the world, He convicts other people, not me. There must be something wrong here somewhere. Remember Peter's statement, that judgement must begin at the house of God? That's exactly where it begins! That's where He convicts people of sin. Whenever the Spirit of God moves, then undoubtedly it will be the way Jesus said He would.

It is not true that the Spirit initially enables people to praise and worship Him. That is nonsense! That's putting the cart before the horse, turning things upside-down. People will be full of joy! No, by saying that, we are twisting the Word of God. The first thing that happens when the Holy Spirit comes into a person's life is that He convicts that person of sin. There is broken-heartedness, and people weep because of their sin. Their faces are sour, not happy. There are tears and not smiles, because the Spirit of God is at work.

Many conversions are not genuine; the "converts" are not born again of the Holy Spirit. There are Christians who don't know what it means to be convicted of sin. One might ask if those people have ever come into contact with the Holy Spirit. Let's pay attention to what Jesus said. When the Comforter comes, He will open our eyes to our sin - and that will be anything but joy - until we have no other alternative but to flee to the cross, where our sins can be washed away. Then joy will enter our hearts. In actual fact, we can't love Jesus if we don't know what forgiveness of sin means. The deeper the conviction, the greater our love to Jesus, because: "He who is forgiven much, loves much." The people who love Jesus most are the people whose godly sorrow has gone deepest. Such people don't just say they love Him, they love Him with their entire way of living. They keep His Word, they believe in Him as the Scriptures say, and they live a life of holiness and righteousness.

There is another experience which I remember quite well. One day I arrived at the building after the singing had already begun, so I didn't have time to change my clothes. I thought to myself, "What would

the people say if I got up before the congregation without a proper suit and tie, my shirt open, and the Bible in my hand? What would they think of me?"

Suddenly I remembered the time when the prophet Elijah stood before a godless King Ahab and his ungodly wife, who apparently ruled the king's life. She was a woman who led an immoral life, who surely dressed attractively, maybe with her face made up: an impressive figure for her surroundings. But in the end she was eaten by the dogs. God showed all the world once and for all how such a woman ends. When the prophet stood before this king, he said, "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand!" Try to imagine that. Have we ever stood in the presence of a king, a president or a prime minister? What would we feel? Elijah had to appear before a king who considered him to be his enemy. Elijah stood before a dictator, a man who feared nothing, who killed whom he wished, and cursed whom he wished. And yet Elijah could say, "King, it is the God of Israel before whom I stand!" Even before a mighty, worldly king, Elijah was conscious of the presence of God.

I couldn't claim that of myself. I was subject to the opinions of men. I wasn't concerned with what God would say, but with what those people thought of me. When I stood before the congregation, I stood before men and not before God. I danced to their tune! When I realised that, I felt it would break my heart!

I love the prophet Elijah, and I wish there were more people like him, who pray with their face between their knees, and then things happen! Elijah prayed that it wouldn't rain - and it didn't rain for three and a half years. This was a man who saved an entire nation, a man whom God used to close the heavens. Then Elijah bowed down with his face between his knees and prayed again. After the seventh time, his servant said, "Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." And the rain came for which the prophet had prayed. Elijah was a man who could pray the fire of God down from heaven. I loved this man, and in my heart I cried, "I wish to be like that!" In James we read, "Elijah was a man like us." But what kind of man was this? He was a man with godly authority, not like a soap bubble, which glistens in the light of the sun and then bursts. No, Elijah was a man who could pray! The early church prayed, and the place was shaken. Has there ever been a time in the Christian world in which there has been more prayer than today? Everywhere there are prayer meetings! But in spite of the many prayers, the place is not shaken, the place shakes us. It shakes and moves Christianity, and we say, "What will become of us Christians?" Let us regard this precisely in the Light of God for once, so that we may know where we stand.

When I thought of Elijah, it was as if I had been struck by lightning. I prayed, "O God, forgive me, have mercy upon me!" Then God reminded me of the words of the apostle Paul, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ!" (Galatians 1:10). What had I been telling the Zulus for twelve years? "I come to you as a servant of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel." Now I was being tested and tried by the Word of God. I knew the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 9:27, where Paul says of himself, "lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away." I knew all too well that this was possible. I had been a preacher of the gospel all these years, but was rejected and cast away in God's eyes. All this led me to inner brokenness.

Then I suddenly saw a picture, like a vision. I'm not a person who believes in visions or dreams, but I'll never forget this picture. If I were an artist, I could still draw it today. There was a Hindu temple with all sorts of gods and idols. I saw myself entering the heathen shrine and bowing down to the ground before the first of these idols and worshipping it. Then I stood up, went to the next idol, touched my forehead to the floor and worshipped that image. Again I rose and did the same with the third idol. I finally awoke with a shout and cried, "Lord, for twelve years I have been preaching to the Zulus, 'I am the Lord thy

God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness...' and here I am, the preacher, bowing down to the idols and worshipping them!"

Yes, God showed me that I had committed idolatry. Weeping, I went into the assembly room in which I was supposed to hold the service, but I couldn't preach. With much effort I could only stutter, "Let's get down on our knees and pray." I wept incessantly and cried, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." That was the beginning of the revival. God was putting me through His mill, which grinds slowly and minutely. Anybody that hasn't experienced it for himself doesn't know what it means when one speaks of God's mill. At that time I forgot that I had been a preacher of the gospel for twelve years. I forgot that I had studied and that I had called myself a child of God. I prayed like the sinner in the temple, who beat his own breast.

It was Christmas time when the revival broke out. We were five brothers and one sister in my family, and Christmas time was a wonderful time of the year for us. Long before the nativity we would be singing those beautiful Christmas carols. But that year things were different. I forgot all about Christmas. There was no decorated tree, no joyful Christmas feeling, no Christmas songs. A member of the congregation came up to me and said, "Brother, don't you know that today is Christmas?" after I had preached on a completely different subject in the service. God was busy dealing with me.

I was so blind, so dull and so deaf, that the Lord had to seize me by my collar and shove everything under my nose so that I could see. One day, as I was walking to the service, I suddenly realised that I hadn't even shaved. Nowadays such a thing is not quite so bad. Many people walk around unshaved. But we had been raised in such a way, that it was a disgrace for a man to appear unshaved in public. That's what I was thinking as I was about to appear before the congregation unshaved. What will the people think of me? Again I was smitten by the Word of God: "By Jesus Christ the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14). "Lord Jesus," I prayed, "You said, 'He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said,' But I don't do that. I am not crucified unto the world like Paul. According to Your Word, I should be dead unto the world and unto sin!" In times of revival the Word of God comes alive. It smites us and pierces our hearts. It is not like a duck, which doesn't get wet in the water, or a rock, which stays dry inside, although it lies at the bottom of the river. The Word of God is like a hammer, that breaks a rock into pieces. It now became clear to me that it wasn't the heathens who were standing in the way of revival. I could only cry out, "Lord, there is only one person hindering your work, and that is me! Please forgive me!"

One thing after the other was revealed to me. One day, I was standing under a wild fig tree, and some Africans were standing nearby, watching me. "One can see that he is a drunkard," they remarked, "but he doesn't seem to be of the worst kind." I can't remember what I looked like, but the very people I had looked down upon, now held me in disdain, because God humbles the proud. The Lord reminded me of what the Prime Minister, Dr. Verwoerd, told us whites one day, when he spoke of the Bantus, "We must love our neighbours as ourselves." I said to myself then, "Yes, that is easier said than done." Now, after so many years, God used those words spoken by the late Prime Minister and said to me, "Erlo, it's not Dr. Verwoerd, but the King of Kings who is asking you: Do you love your neighbour as yourself?" I looked at those Zulus and said to the Lord, "Yes, I do love them. After all, I've sacrificed myself for these people. But if I'm honest with myself, I must admit that I don't love them as I love myself." Then God replied in my heart, "If you want revival, it's going to happen according to My Word, and you must believe as Scripture says. You must love your neighbour as yourself. Do you love the Zulus as yourself?" All I could say was, "No, Lord, I can't, I am sorry. I feel I can't do that, it is going too far." But the Lord didn't stop at that. He said, "The greatest shall be the lowliest. The first, the last. And the greatest, the servant of all." I said, "O God, no! Forgive me, but I can't go this way with you any longer, Lord. I picture in my mind a

black man, walking along with a suitcase, and me having to go and say to him: 'Let me carry your suitcase for you.' That is impossible, I can't do such a thing. O God, please forgive me, but I can't do it." I started sweating. Things got so bad, that I'd wake up at night, and my bed would be soaked with perspiration because of this struggle within me. I tried to bargain with God and cried, "Lord, send me somewhere else, to a lonely island, or another country, but I can't do what you are asking of me here in South Africa. What will my family say, my parents, my brothers? Lord, I am prepared to do anything, but you can't expect me to be the servant of the 'least'. To my own people, the whites, yes, but to the Zulus, no, I can't do that!"

Then it seemed as if the Lord was saying, "Well, I won't force you. You are the one who asked for a revival. You wanted to have me in your midst. But when I come, I come as King, and I will have the last word." I twisted and turned in order to escape, to resist the Lord, but He wouldn't let go. He just put on more pressure, tightened the belt, and said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

On Judgement Day, He will put the lowliest person before us and measure our relationship to Him according to how we treated that person. That is how we can test our love for the Lord. Just take the lowliest person we know, the very lowliest, and then measure the love that we have for that person. We can't be a fraction closer to Jesus than we are to that person. That's how Jesus will judge us one day. What a shocking day that Judgement Day will be! May God grant that we are shocked now. Sometimes it is good for a person to receive a shock to make him see clearly again. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren," says Jesus, not how we treat the greatest or most influential - but the lowliest and most despised of those who believe in Him. Can you understand now that I was shaken to the core of my soul and felt as if God was putting me through the mill? It was a terrible battle, and I cried to God, "O Lord, I can't live such a life. It goes against the grain, I just can't do it! I will lose my life!" But then His answer spoke clearly to my heart, "He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

We fight for our lives, we fight for our existence. But there is a God in heaven who makes things so difficult for us. It sometimes seems as if we'd get along much better without Him than with Him. But there is an almighty God who says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It is true that, what we sow, we reap a hundredfold. That which we do unto others, will be done unto us, only a hundred times worse, or a hundred times better, because there is a God in heaven. It would be so much easier without Him, but He makes things so difficult for us. Unless, of course, we bow to His Will and let Him be Lord of our life. But what does that mean? It doesn't mean to make Him our Lord by saying with our lips: Lord Jesus, you are Lord! To let Him be our Lord means that our way of living corresponds with His Word, that we believe as the Scripture says, and that we are obedient to Him.

One day things had gone so far that I prayed, "Lord, I can't go on like this any longer!" And the Lord answered, "Erlo, didn't you pray for revival? And now you're saying, 'I can't go on like this.' Okay, then leave it. I won't come. You asked me to come down, and now I am coming down, and want to start, but I begin at the House of God and not with the outsiders!"

Maybe you can understand now why so many people pray for revival, but so few experience it. Why is that so? The reason is that many Christians are only playing with words when they pray for revival. And when revival comes, they turn against it and become enemies of that which they prayed for. As to the reason for this, experience has taught us the following: if someone resists the working of God's Spirit, then it is only because there is sin in that person's life - and often it is fornication! There is so much filth,

even in the lives of so-called children of God. That is why the Holy Scriptures teach us that judgement must begin in the House of God, in other words, in His church.

There were so many things which God had to clean up in my life, I can't recount them all. Again and again I tried to bargain with Him, to dictate how He should work among us, according to our ideas and concepts. And God answered thus: "Am I a schoolboy? I am God, and I move as I will. You cannot fit me into some pattern of yours, and unless you are prepared to accept that, don't expect me to come, for 'I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour!' I don't need an advisor to tell me what to do."

That was quite a hurdle for me, and I put up a fierce struggle until I finally got to the point where I could say, "All right God, Your will be done. Work as You like!" The next problem was that I was afraid things would get out of hand. But God is a God of order and as long as He is in charge, nothing gets out of hand.

Although I had no knowledge of it, God was also busy working on the congregation while He was working on me. He began to convict them of their sins. One would go to the other and ask for forgiveness. Husbands would reconcile themselves with their wives, and wives with their husbands. Children would say to their parents, and friends to friends, "I said evil things about you, please forgive me. - Forgive me, there was bitterness in my heart towards you. - I gossiped about you behind your back. I'm sorry, I should have come to you first." For Jesus teaches us, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone" (Matthew 18:15). If we gossip behind our brother's back, we are in danger of hell fire, just as he is because of his sin.

The Zulus, who had been calling me 'Mfundisi' until now, began calling me 'Baba' (father). A Zulu usually doesn't do that. Nobody but their own people are called 'Baba'. I marvelled that they should do that, because they couldn't know what had taken place between me and God. They suddenly treated me with greater respect than ever before and were willing to give their lives for me. Surely this was because, spiritually speaking, I had lost my life when I surrendered to the Lord. I am a witness to the fact that God's word is true: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." That is also applicable in regard to the possibility that our very lives might be demanded of us. Some people have advised me, "You must flee. We don't want you to be killed by communists or spies." It could be that I will be the first whose life will be taken. But, even so, I will testify to the fact that "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." To me it would mean the Crown of Life to die in such a way. The greatest thing that I could do for my Lord and Master is to have my blood shed, as a small token of thanks to Him Who gave His last drop of blood for me.

Chapter 6

The Working of the Holy Spirit

The day came when God rent the heavens, as it were, and came down while we were gathered together. Suddenly we heard a noise like a great wind. I can only faintly suggest what happened and attempt to make it clear with a small example. It was similar to pressurised air escaping from an air pump, and as if that wind were blowing right through every one of us. The Spirit of God came down and nobody had to explain to anyone else, "Look, God is in our midst." Everybody was conscious of the presence of God without anybody saying a word. All I could do was to bow down and worship the God of heaven.

What happened then? The Spirit of God came over that place, over the whole area, and brought the people. The first person to come was a witch who lived seven kilometres away and was in charge of a training school for witches. God began at the very strongholds of Satan. To use the prophet Isaiah's words: "The mountains flowed down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth." The fire burned as if everything were made of dry brush-wood. When I asked this witch, "What is it you want?" she answered, "I need Jesus. Can He save me? I am bound with chains of hell. Can He break these chains?"

I couldn't believe my eyes and ears! For twelve years I had tried in vain to convert witches, sometimes for weeks at a time, and they had always claimed that their powers were a gift from God. And now, suddenly, right out of the blue, a witch stood in front of me and told me that she was sick and tired of her life, and was bound with chains of hell.

"Who spoke to you?" I asked her.

"Nobody," she answered.

"Who preached to you?"

"Nobody!"

"Who invited you?"

"Nobody!"

"But I can't understand this. Where do you come from? What happened?"

"Why do you ask me all these questions? Don't waste my time! If Jesus doesn't save me right now, I will die today and go to hell!"

"I had never seen the likes. I continued by asking, "Are you prepared to open your heart to the Lord Jesus and let Him come into your life?"

"I am prepared to do anything."

"Are you prepared to confess your sins?"

"Yes!"

After she had done all that, she said, "Pray for me, that Jesus rids me of these evil spirits." And she called the spirits by name: Izizwe, Indawo, Indiki - these aren't just imaginary concepts. If a person is possessed by the spirit of Izizwe, he can speak in foreign languages which he has never heard or learnt.

I didn't know how to pray for a witch. I had tried it once before, when a possessed person came to me, and I had commanded those forces in the name of Jesus to be gone. The result was that I became the laughing stock of the devils! I couldn't understand it then. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that they even took Paul's handkerchiefs, to lay them on the possessed, and the evil spirits left. But I came to nothing and became the laughing stock of the demons. Now here I stood and was supposed to pray for a witch. I called five or six co-workers together and we sat in a circle with this woman in the middle. She was illiterate, a woman from the heart of the country, who had never worked for Europeans or English-speaking people. We sat on chairs around her and began by singing an Easter hymn with the cry of victory: He arose - He is the mighty victor - He overcame the devil - He conquered sin and death - we need not fear - He's paid the price with His own blood!

As we repeatedly sang that hymn, the woman suddenly jumped off her chair, threw herself down on her hands and knees, and began to move around like a wild animal. She looked like a tiger preparing to pounce on its victim. Her eyes had such an inconceivably terrifying expression that one of the co-workers bolted and ran out of the room in panic. We had to call him back, calm him down and tell him that we have no need to fear, since Jesus has broken all the powers of the devil. The woman then began to speak to us in English, a language she had never learnt at school. Suddenly many dogs began to bark from within her. Even people outside the door could hear it. My brother owned a large dog which came

running from quite a distance to jump up against the window in search of the other dogs. Now it might be possible to imitate just one dog, but by no means an entire pack. When that was over, a herd of pigs began grunting and squealing from inside her. We then commanded the powers of darkness in the name of Jesus, whose Name is above all names, to leave. "We are three hundred strong warriors, and we won't leave this person," they cried out. That was no woman speaking! Other forces were using the voice of a human being. We prayed, "O Lord, set this person free!" Suddenly these demons made a remarkable statement. They said, "We knew of God the Father, and even of God the Son, but since the Holy Spirit has come, we are burning. His fire is too hot for us."

That reminded me of the Scripture: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). In Ephesians 6:12 it says, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." For years this Scripture had been a mystery to me. How can one wrestle against spiritual forces? Now I realised that it wasn't a battle of flesh against spirit, but of God's Spirit against these spirits of darkness.

Then the first hundred demons left with much shouting and screaming, then the second hundred, and then the third hundred. Up to that moment the face of that old 'sangoma' (witch) had retained a dark and horrifying expression, but the instant the evil spirits left her, the expression on her face changed abruptly. She looked like a saint who had been living in the presence of our Lord and Master for many years. With the glory of heaven shining on her face and in her eyes, she cried, "Oh how marvellous, Jesus has set me free! Jesus has broken these chains of hell!"

After that witch came the witch doctors, then the possessed, one after the other, day after day. For two or three months we hardly had any sleep at all. Day and night we were so busy that we sometimes didn't even have time to eat or change our clothes. The Spirit of God would literally go into the peoples' homes and bring them to us. We asked every one of them, "Who brought you here?"

"Nobody!"

"How did you know that we were here? Who invited you?"

"Nobody!"

"Over and over again we received the same answers, heard the same story.

"We can't explain it, but it must have been God! A power within us has driven us to come here. We can't sleep anymore, can't recover our peace of mind, all we can see are our sins!"

It was as if the walls of Jericho were bursting asunder. The possessed came and identified the spirits that were in them by name and number. Many of the things that occurred at that time we do not even talk about, because people wouldn't understand them, they would seem like fairy tales. But there is more between heaven and earth than our human mind can grasp. Such things must be experienced before we are able to comprehend what they are all about.

Hundreds of people flocked to where we were in Mapumulo. We could go out the front door of the building at any time of the day, any day of the week and there would be a hundred, maybe two hundred people standing outside. Hardened sinners would be weeping like little children. "What's the matter?" we would ask. "We are sinners!" was the answer. God's Spirit had convicted them of sin, of God's righteousness and their own unrighteousness. It was as if the Day of Judgement had dawned.

I remember one raw, heathen Zulu, a man from Msinga, who sat weeping in a room as if he had been beaten with a club. Because he was making such a noise, I went into the room to see what was going

on. "What's wrong?" I asked him. "There is just one inch between me and hell - just one more inch, and I'll be in that place," he cried. Again and again we had to reassure those people and say to them, "The blood of Jesus can wash away all your sins." "You can only say that," they would answer, "because you don't know how grievously we have sinned." The conviction went so deep, that some of them couldn't believe that Jesus could forgive them. A general confession didn't suffice either. Every one of them had the urge to confess their sins individually and to call a spade a spade. Then the light broke through and they received the assurance that Jesus had forgiven their sins. Their faces shone like those of angels. They had come with tears, and they left with joy in their hearts. Their lives had been changed, and all things became new. The women returned home and their husbands declared in amazement, "What happened to you? You have become a new person! You used to wear the trousers around here, you always had the last word, and now, suddenly, you are submissive."

There was one man who ruled his house with a rod. He didn't act like a human being, but more like a wild animal. The change in his wife's life was so remarkable that he asked her in astonishment, "But what's happened to you? When I used to come home drunk, there would be a quarrel. Now you remain quiet." Instead of harshly calling her husband to account as usual, she was now friendly, brought him warm water to wash his feet and would fold back the blankets of his bed. He couldn't understand such a transformation and said to her, "But what has happened to make such a thing possible? You used to get angry, and now you don't say a word. I feel like a king. Have you been to see the Christians at Mapumulo and become a Christian? Have you accepted the white man's God?" Then he added, "If the white man's God has managed to tame you, although I couldn't accomplish that with a rod, then it must be worth something." Many years ago, a famous circus-director and lion-tamer here in South Africa declared, "Bring me any lion and I'll tame it, but my wife I cannot tame." So you can imagine how surprised a man is, when he suddenly finds his wife completely transformed. It was such a mighty testimony for the Lord Jesus that this man, whose wife had become a Christian, also came to us and got saved.

Children were also converted, and when they returned home, their parents would ask them, "Children, what has suddenly happened to you? You used to argue all the time. You grumbled at your homework and your chores, and constantly back chatted. Now you are obedient and so eager to do everything. What has changed you so much? Have you become Christians?" Then parents would come and give their lives to Jesus.

God had kindled His fire, and it spread through the valleys and the mountains, so that thousands were saved in one week, yes, even in one day. That happened among the Zulus and the Xhosas in South Africa. There is no limit to what God can do. The Lord Jesus once stood up in the midst of a crowd during the Jews' feast of tabernacles, and cried with a loud voice, in spite of the fact that the people wanted to kill Him: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." May God grant that everyone who calls himself a Christian is a real Christian, as the Scripture says. I don't believe that it is necessary to pray for revival. Revival is the result of a life according to the Scriptures, which we should be living daily. This means constantly progressing in intimate fellowship with Him, the living God. He wants His church to be a pure bride who radiates His glory.

Chapter 7

Accompanying Signs and Miracles

When God began working on spirit, soul and body of the crowds which arrived in Mapumulo, that which is reported in the Acts of the Apostles was repeated: signs and miracles occurred. We had never explicitly prayed for such things. Our prayer had merely been, "Lord, rule amongst us, for you are the Almighty God of old." Because we have experienced this ourselves, we can't understand religious people who say, "God worked such things in the first century, but not today." We testify to the fact that God is still the same today, and that He rules on His throne!

We experienced that the sick were healed, many of them without even being prayed for, simply by being there. Some of them were healed suddenly, even before the service had begun, and others the Lord touched during the service. There were people who cried out in their enthusiasm, "We'll never take medicine again! We don't need that anymore." We earnestly had to warn them against saying such a thing. How easy it is to make a vow, only to break it later. When a person is well, he might say that he's never going to take medicine again, but the devil is close by and hears it. He will then come down upon this person with all his hordes from hell and cause him to get such a headache that he finally reaches for the aspirin. In that moment he has broken his vow, and it will be held as sin against him. If God doesn't impose such a law upon us, we shouldn't either. We advised those people, "Rather say, 'If things stay the way they are, then, by God's grace, we can do without medicine.' But don't make any promises which you won't keep afterwards." The trouble is that we often make promises, and, before the sun goes down, we've forgotten about them. But God doesn't forget. On the Day of Judgement He will ask us to give account. That is why the Holy Scripture says, "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee: and it would be sin in thee" (Deuteronomy 23:21). I am mentioning this to show how the Lord was working.

From that time on, the Zulus no longer said that Christianity was the white man's religion. That was the end of that saying. They had experienced that Jesus Christ was their God too.

I remember a blind man, whose eyes had suddenly been opened, walking up and down, shaking his head and crying again and again, "Jesus is my God! He is truly my God!" Sick people would be brought in on stretchers and put on the ground. Sometimes, even before the service started, they would rise and walk around.

Often these people shake their heads and say, "We can't understand it. We heathens become Christians, but we see the Christians becoming heathens again. We heathens get dressed, and the Christians get undressed." Years ago it was difficult to differentiate among the whites between Christian and non-Christian women. Today it isn't difficult anymore, because we can even tell by the way they dress. Some of them are only half-dressed. Thus we can understand why the heathens say this.

Once a man with a huge tumour, which affected him in such a manner that he was lame from the hips down, came to one of the services. Hundreds of people were sitting on the grass around him. All of a sudden the people stood up and went to the other side without saying a word. I asked, "What's the matter?" When I got there I understood their reaction. This man's tumour had burst open and released such a terrible smell, that it was impossible to sit there any longer. The co-workers came and cleaned the wound, washed the man, and, when they had finished, he got up and walked around.

I can only give you a few examples of all the things that happened. I feel as John, who said at the end of his gospel, "And there are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Although several books have already been written about the revival, it seems as if they have just barely touched on all that God has done, because God has done so much more than can be written down.

As God was thus working amongst the sick, we were reminded of the girl who, in spite of our prayers and struggles, had not been healed those six years before. We prayed to God again and said, "O Lord, if that girl and her mother are still alive, couldn't you work in such a way that we meet them again?" We were therefore thrilled when we saw the mother coming into the tent with her daughter while we were holding a service in the New Hanover district. That evening, God, in His mercy, touched that girl, and she was completely healed.

It often happened that a person who was healed or converted would be a blessing for his entire surrounding area. After a few weeks we would usually be asked to come to that area to preach the gospel, and every time we would encounter many people who were like fruit ripe for the harvest. All this happened because of one person who had been converted and then many others had been touched through him.

Once we were invited to hold a meeting out in the open. We accepted, and promised to hold a service on Tuesday at one o'clock. The Zulus aren't so particular regarding punctuality. If you fix the time for one o'clock, then you can just as well come at two. We were accustomed to things like that. But on that day we arrived at the arranged meeting place at 12:30 and already found three to four hundred people gathered there. Astonished we asked, "Are you here already? When did you arrive?" They answered, "Some of us have been here since six o'clock this morning." Of course that wasn't the time they had left their homes. Most of them had been en route for many hours. But, so great was their hunger for the gospel, that they were prepared to cover a great distance, and even wait six to seven hours before the service began. We therefore decided to begin immediately.

At that time we made the services as short as possible, because very often there was no need to hold a long sermon. They would tell us what they had to do as they had been mightily convicted of their sins and had a great desire to confess them. I therefore went into an old farmhouse to prepare a short message and said to the co-workers, "Before we pray for them, we will give them a chance to settle their affairs with God."

At this point I would like to say a few words about healing. As a rule we don't pray for healing before the persons involved have settled their spiritual lives. Divine healing always begins in the heart. The Bible teaches us in James 5:16, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." Healing of the soul is put first. So if one person says, "I suffer terribly from arthritis," and another complains, "I get dreadful headaches," then we say to these people, "Very well, thank you for telling us about your physical needs, but let us begin with your spiritual illnesses. How do things stand in that respect?" There are people who have anger in their lives. Anger is a terrible thing. Actually, God doesn't allow us to pray if there is anger in our lives. For this reason Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:8 that men should pray, "lifting up holy hands without wrath," without anger. So it is contrary to God's Word and Will for any man to pray if there is wrath or anger in his life. The Word of God has quite a lot to say about that. It even says that a man's prayers will be hindered if he nurses bitterness against his wife, so he might just as well spare his prayers. We are living in evil times in which everyone prays, whether his life is in order with God or not. The Lord Jesus goes so far as to say, "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy

gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). We must ask ourselves whether we are lawbreakers, or whether we obey what Jesus tells us.

When people come for counselling, we tell them that physical needs are secondary, and that spiritual illnesses must be treated first. A spiritually ill person might be afflicted with irritation, anger, resentment and many other things. To be liberated from them is a thousand times more valuable than to be healed of physical ailments. In times of revival it isn't even necessary to tell people such things. They will come and say, "We are sick, but we won't worry about that! Pray for us that we may be healed spiritually." In such meetings it sometimes happened that not one person left the place without having cleansed his life and made peace with God. Sometimes the sun would go down and we had to tell the people to go home. "No," they would say, "what is the use of going home? For us that would mean gaining the whole world, but losing our souls. We want to get right with God." Very often people had to wait for several days before they could get an opportunity for counselling, but they wouldn't go home. Patiently they waited until they had a chance. "We can't carry on living in sin," we would hear them say. "We must bring them to the light. We need forgiveness of our sins." That's why we wanted to keep the services as short as possible.

As already mentioned, I was busy preparing a short message, when a co-worker suddenly came to me and said, "There's a Hindu woman outside who would like to speak to you." "But that's impossible," I answered. "These people have been waiting for so long, let her tell you what she wants and report back to me." So he went to speak to her, but she was adamant and wouldn't confide in him. The co-worker returned and explained that she would only see me. I sent him away again to let her know that I was too busy. This went on for some time, so eventually I said, "All right, I'll come. It doesn't matter if things don't go the way I like."

I found her together with her sixteen-year-old daughter, and she told me this story: "Do you see my daughter here? She has been mentally handicapped since birth, most probably due to brain damage. I've taken her to see many doctors, and they all said that she was incurable, that she would be like this till the end of her life. So I went to the Hindu temples, but even our gods couldn't help her. Two weeks ago I met a black man, a Zulu, who said to me, 'Why don't you take your daughter to Mapumulo? There are Christians there who serve the Lord Jesus. If you take her there, they'll pray to Him and He will heal your daughter.' When I heard that, I said, 'That is the God I want to serve!' The moment I said that, my daughter was healed and was in her right mind. Here she is, you can speak to her."

I greeted her daughter, I spoke to her, and she really was perfectly normal. "From now on, I want to serve your God," she said. "Our gods failed, but your God has healed me."

We should shout it from the mountain tops and proclaim it to all the world: There is no God like Jesus Christ! When will the nations acknowledge that there is no Lord but Him: the Lord of all Lords, the King of all Kings?

One of the hottest spots in South Africa is the country around Tugela Ferry. For over a hundred years a war had raged there, in which countless people were killed. The revival also soon broke out in that area. We had scheduled services there one weekend, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and the place was packed to capacity. After the services, many people stayed behind for spiritual counselling. Before the revival broke out, I usually asked the people to come forward to accept Jesus, but after the revival broke out, it proved to be unnecessary. The people stayed of their own accord. We read of the apostles that they didn't call anyone forward at Pentecost either. In Acts 2:37 it says regarding Peter's sermon, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles,

'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" And then they were told what to do. I don't want to say that it is wrong to call people forward to accept Jesus. If God leads that way, then one may do it.

After one of the first services at Tugela Ferry, several hundred people stayed behind and declared, "We can't go home without having made peace with God." I was very tired and said to the co-workers, "I absolutely have to lie down and sleep a bit. If there is anything you want, please come to my room." Around midnight, they came and called me, "There are still a couple of hundred people that want prayer for healing." I asked them, "Have these people been counselled and made peace with God? Have they done what James says in his letter, 'Confess your sins one to another, and then pray.'" "Yes," they answered, "we were able to speak with every one of them. But now there are still more than two hundred left who should be prayed for in particular." We knew that we couldn't pray for all those people individually, so we decided to pray for them in groups. When there were so many people, we usually took two or three percent of those seeking help, selected the most difficult cases and prayed for them individually and then for the others collectively. This time there were ten blind people there, and the co-workers asked, "Couldn't we pray for these blind people separately?" I agreed to that. As we were going through the door into their room, most of the blind people began crying, "We can see! We are healed!" So mighty was His presence there, that the Lord Jesus had already touched them before they had come into contact with a single human hand. All ten blind people were healed.

At this point I would like to add an extraordinary event, which is closely related to the healing of the ten blind people. On that Friday afternoon, a white co-worker was on his way to Tugela Ferry with his lorry, which was jam-packed with people who wanted to come to the services. Forty or fifty kilometres away from his destination he discovered a blind woman with a child standing at the edge of the road, her hand raised to try to stop the lorry. The driver pulled over and asked her what she needed.

"I have heard," said the blind lady, "that there are services being held here somewhere, and I would like to go, too. Could you please take me along?"

"I'm sorry," answered the driver, "but I haven't got any more room for you, the lorry is completely full."

Some people can't understand that there should be no more room on a vehicle, as long as there is still a small bit of space free somewhere. They don't understand or care about weight limits, but in this case the lorry was hopelessly overloaded. The brother attempted to explain the situation to this lady. When she began to weep, he thought of a possible solution.

"The only possibility is if one or two people get off voluntarily. Then you can come along."

But nobody was prepared to stay behind in that unfamiliar wilderness. They finally had to leave the old woman behind, weeping.

That was on Friday afternoon. On Saturday evening, late at night, the ten blind people received their sight at Tugela Ferry. And then a further miracle happened. On Sunday afternoon, as the white co-worker with his overloaded lorry again passed the spot where they had left the woman behind the other day, they didn't find a blind lady, but an overjoyed and radiant woman, who also could see again. Rejoicing, she proclaimed that Jesus had healed her.

"When did it happen?"

"Yesterday, Saturday."

"What time?"

"Late at night," answered the woman.

They compared the time, and discovered that it had happened at exactly the same time the Lord had touched the other ten. The Lord had seen into the heart of that woman and healed her in His grace. Can one understand now why these people say, "There is no other God but Jesus!"

Another incident during that weekend in Tugela Ferry will remain unforgettable for all who experienced it. A girl on a stretcher had been brought to the front near the pulpit. I noticed her during the services on Friday and Saturday evening. She lay there like a corpse, immovable, with her eyes closed. Not even her eyelids flickered. She couldn't move her fingers, except for a single finger of her right hand, which could only be moved with an effort. Later I heard her tale of woe:

She had been completely paralysed for eighteen months and had been treated in five different hospitals, but the doctors could do nothing for her. Her relatives brought her back home, and took her from one witch doctor to the other. One of them used dreadful 'medicine'. He caught frogs and fried them in a pan until they were boiling hot, then put them on the girl's head, scalding her skin and hair, but the girl was not cured by this frightful 'therapy'. Finally she was brought to Tugela Ferry by her sister, who was a teacher. The co-workers told me that this eighteen-year-old girl, whose name was Anagreta, had asked that we pray for her.

"But how can we pray for her, if we don't even know her spiritual condition?" I asked them. "Has she straightened things out, made her life right and made peace with God?"

"Yes," said the co-workers.

"But how can she do that, she can't even speak!" I asked in amazement.

"We did it by whispering into her ear, and asking her whether there was sin in her life."

At this point I must emphasise that there is no use calling upon a person to accept the Lord Jesus, if he doesn't know that he is a sinner. What's the use of trying to send a person with cancer to the doctor, if he doesn't know that he has cancer? Show him that he has cancer, and he will go to the doctor of his own accord, without being told. He will even be prepared to go to a hospital and surrender himself to the knife of a surgeon.

I didn't give in and continued to press my co-workers: "Does the girl even know that she is a sinner?"

"Yes!"

"How did you find that out?"

"We mentioned various sins and asked Anagreta whether she had ever been disobedient to her parents, or whether she had been unfriendly, angry, unloving, or whether she had ever lied, etc. By the way she moved her eyelid, we could understand whether she meant yes or no. Finally we asked her, 'Would you like us to pray with you and ask the Lord Jesus to come into your life to take your sins away?' Again we recognised by the way she moved her eyelid that she agreed. We prayed with her, and now she would like us to pray for her physical healing."

Then we experienced how God's power was also revealed in that girl. It happened in the same night, in which hundreds of other people were prayed for. We saw how the bones of her body began to shake like the leaves of a tree when a breeze goes through them. An unseen force took hold of her, lifted her out of bed onto her feet, and she started running! In an instant the Lord Jesus had completely healed this girl.

Within a few minutes, hundreds of people had gathered there. Nobody knew where they had come from. There were no church bells ringing, no telephones. Many people who hadn't been present at the service were suddenly there, among them three ungodly men who worked at the magistrate's court in Tugela Ferry, and they asked, "Where is the girl that has been healed?" We pointed to the girl and they explained, "We wish to speak with her alone, without any Christians. Would you allow us to ask her a few questions?" We agreed, so they took Anagreta to a room and cross-examined her. After a while they brought the girl back and said to her, "The God who has healed you can kill the living and raise the dead. He can do what nobody else can do. Be faithful to Him to the end!" That was the opinion of unbelieving heathens.

The news of this event spread like wildfire throughout the entire area. For a few days it was as if the very air was charged with the presence of God. One must experience such a thing to understand what I am talking about. People would come to that place and be convicted of their sins, just by encountering the presence of the living God.

Next morning, the co-workers asked me if they could take Anagreta to the Pomeroy prison, because her father worked there. They took the Land Rover and drove there with her. When they knocked on the prison door, it was her father who opened up. Astonished, he saw the co-workers and then his daughter, who was walking towards him. At that moment he thought it might be just a ghost, and he cried, "Is it you?" "Yes, father!" He was so filled with joy at what he was seeing, that he forgot to close the prison door, and the co-workers said to him, "You'd better lock the door, or your prisoners will escape!" Then they told the happy father what had happened.

In conclusion, let me bear witness to the fact that there is no greater power than that of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was no lie when He said that all power in heaven and on earth was given unto Him. That is what he called out to His disciples before His ascension into heaven. What happened then? Some worshipped Him, but others doubted! It is difficult to believe that all power is given unto Him, but it says explicitly in Matthew 28:18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." For this reason His disciples are able to carry out His command, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." What a God and what a Saviour! May God grant that our lives do not bring dishonour to His name, but are such that people may recognise that the Word of God is the Truth!

Epilogue

Over 32 years have passed since the beginning of the revival in Mapumulo and yet the rivers of living water are still flowing, indeed, they have constantly risen. The Word of God, from which this mighty revival was born, continues to spread and is going forth in power locally and internationally.

The little Zulu congregation has become a large mission with headquarters at Kwasizabantu (meaning: the place where people find help) - not far from Mapumulo. Countless people continue to seek and find help for spirit, soul and body. Since the revival began, there hasn't been a day on which people haven't been convicted of sin, converted and found a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The mission, though it has buildings to house about 4,500 people, constantly has the problem of too little accommodation because of the constant flood of people seeking the Lord. Hundreds, often thousands, gather for daily services. Not only locals come for help, but people from all over South Africa and from other countries and continents as well. One visiting minister remarked that it is like the first

Pentecost. When asked what he was trying to say he declared, "I went around counting the people's different nationalities and arrived at 14 languages - and that at a single service!"

By God's gracious guidance and miraculous provision an auditorium has been built to seat 10,000. Besides regular Sunday meetings this massive structure is also used for special conferences for youth, ministers, etc.

The revival centre now has about 140 out-stations. Some of these out-stations have become mission centres for their local areas.

Erlo Stegen is assisted by a team of over 130 co-workers and about 150 temporary helpers at Kwasizabantu. Teams are constantly invited to preach at schools, youth groups and to many different denominations.

Although Kwasizabantu mission is not a church-planting ministry, (if people are blessed, they are encouraged to return to their own denominations to shine for the Lord,) there are a number of groups in many countries officially associated with the ministry. Centres have been bought or built in Germany, France, Rumania, Switzerland, the Netherlands and elsewhere and are run in fellowship with Kwasizabantu brethren.

Since 1986 an immensely successful private Christian educational institution, Domino Servite School, has been training children from grade one through to grade 12. Over 500 children attend this school at the mission and most of them are boarders because of the distance which many of them have to travel. Besides DSS there are a number of other educational projects at the mission, including: * Cedar College of Education - a private Christian college with a four-year course to train teachers. It is accredited by Potchefstroom University of Higher Christian Education. * Thabitha Adult School - a centre for training illiterate adults to read and write and for giving further education. * A University of South Africa examination centre - for those students and members of the local community who are studying with this correspondence university.

Over 20 other projects are being run to generate funds. Kwasizabantu mission has a principle not to solicit funds or send out letters appealing for donations. The 340 hectares of land are used for intensive farming for use at the mission and to sell. Some of the projects include:- a green house project of a huge hothouse and plastic tunnels produces vegetables of the highest quality.- Kiwi vineyards produce fruit for local and international markets.- a printing press to print locally produced pamphlets, newsletters and books.- a jam factory which turns out tens of thousands of homemade jams and pickles for mission use and for sale.- a bakery which bakes a minimum of 400 loaves a day and which sells bread and confectionery.- a dairy and yoghurt production plant. Yoghurt is sold to shops, hospitals and airline companies.- a water factory (Ekhamanzi) which produces bottled water and juice for the South African and international market.

All this is to the honour and glory of Jesus Christ, Who is working so mightily in His resurrection power in spite of the fact that there are times of great opposition, negative assessments, misinterpretations, and sometimes defamations (according to Matt 5:11). This should come as no surprise, as wherever God is at work the devil is also there to do his dirty counter-work. He is always upset when his prey is snatched from him and his kingdom interfered with. Erlo Stegen and his fellow co-workers are determined, by the grace of God, to stand on the principles of the Bible alone despite opposition or praise.

Let the godly reader be inspired to intercede for this precious work of God that it might continue to go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The sceptics we challenge with words of Philip to Nathaniel: "Come and see!"(April 1998)

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Note

This newly edited text is based on the four original sermons which were recorded on cassettes in English. A few passages have been taken from German recordings.

This new edition is accompanied by our prayers with the wish that the mighty deeds of the Holy Spirit in the revival at Kwasizabantu may be revealed to the reader. May this publication serve to glorify the One Name which is above all other names!