

The Challenge



WILLIAM J. DUPLEY

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Kingdom Heart
— PUBLISHING —

“Inspiring nations to listen to God”

THE CHALLENGE

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, businesses, companies, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Cover and illustrations by William Dupley



Dedication

I dedicate this book to my father, William W. Dupley,
a man committed to kindness.

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Introduction

Society is transformed by those who are inspired to change it. In Greenville, a simple challenge from a Pastor inspired a group of men by asking them, “What do you think it would look like if we accomplished what Jesus wanted us to do? How would our world be different if we listened to Him every day and did what He was doing?

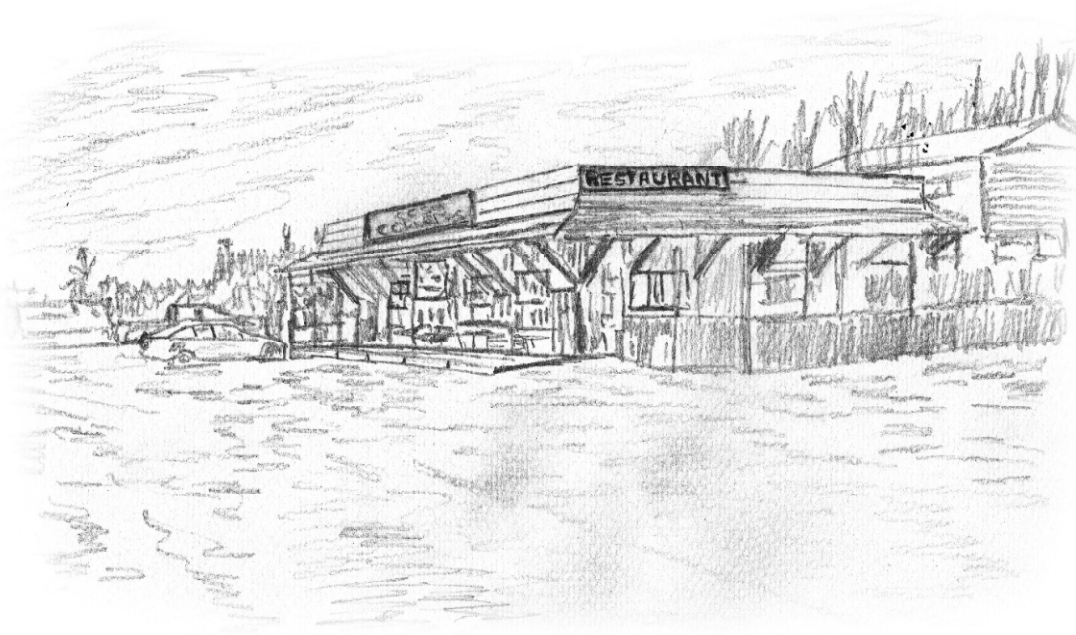
This simple word would change these men, and, in just one year, they transformed their entire community; however, each man faced different issues as they considered how to address their Pastor’s challenge.

The Challenge describes their journey.

Prologue

That Saturday morning was like any other at the Cozy Corners restaurant. A group of local men met for their monthly men's breakfast in the restaurant's far corner. They were kidding each other about their ability to consume massive quantities of eggs, bacon, and sausages. Conversations usually revolved around topics such as sports, cars, and family.

But not this Saturday morning.



CHAPTER ONE

The Challenge

"I think I'll have the Farmer's breakfast—three eggs, three slices of bacon, sausage, home fries, and pancakes." Jim Michaels always had the Farmer's breakfast. Jim was in his early sixties, slightly balding, with a perpetual grin. Jim was also pushing forty-eight size pants, and although he was not short, he was starting to look like a Roly-poly toy.

Mike exclaimed, "I think I'll have the Healthy Choice today." The rest of the guys began to rib him. Healthy Choice! What happened? Mike Brown always had the Meat Eater's special.

"My doctor says my cholesterol is through the roof, and if I don't change my eating habits, I could have a stroke. I watched my Dad have one of those, and I never want to have to live through that." Mike's words were a reality check on the whole group. We were not getting any younger, and perhaps we had all better look closer at what we ate.

"I still have to keep up my strength," laughed Jim, while the whole crew chuckled. Jim was about 280 pounds, and although at one time he was a star linebacker for our high school football team, well, that was forty years ago, and the 280 pounds of muscle had fallen a little lower in his body.

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Every fourth Saturday, we met at Cozy Corners restaurant to chat about cars, catch up on our families, and hear some words of inspiration from Pastor Dave Williams. Our men's group consisted of about a dozen guys. Some of us had known each other since high school. My name is Chris Martin, and I have been attending these breakfasts for years.

Greenville is a small village founded over 200 years ago. It was built by the river, and several mills took advantage of the water-power. Many of the families in our church are descendants of those original Greenville founding families. Their ancestors' graves are in our local cemetery. The cemetery brings awareness that we will eventually pass; however, something is comforting about knowing our heritage. Many of our friends who live in the suburbs don't have this experience. I consider it a precious treasure.

Many of our men's group had moved into our community during a housing boom thirty years ago, and we raised our families here. We are currently experiencing a transformation of our community. The original owners are retiring and choosing to downsize and sell their homes to new younger families. It has been a pleasant change for us; the parks are filled with small kids playing minor-league baseball, and street hockey is in full swing. It is part of life, I guess; the older gives way to the younger. We now have several young men around thirty years old, with young families coming to our monthly breakfast meetings.

We all looked forward to these breakfast meetings. Even the young guys seemed to enjoy the camaraderie of the group. Listening to these younger men brings back memories for us older guys of the challenges most of us had forgotten. Children's problems, the sleepless nights with young babies, the never-ending shortness of money, and the ever-increasing demands on paychecks are all distant memories. I am over sixty, I don't owe anyone anything, and I make more money than I ever did. Listening to the struggles of these young men reminds me of how hard it was just getting started. However, hearing these younger men also reminds me of the dreams and hopes that I had forgotten.

"A Ford 428 Cubic inch will not fit a 57 Chev," erupted Mike. Mike was a mechanic at Greenville Auto, and he was the town expert on everything to do with cars.

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“Road & Track magazine said a guy in Ohio did it,” declared Jason.

“There is a lot more to engine swaps than just squeezing the engine under the hood, Jason. This guy must have got some special engine swap kit, or he would only have about an inch for the radiator.” Mike, of course, was right, and Jason listened.

Jason Anderson is a young man who is a member of one of the founding families of Greenville. His family goes further back than that. I noticed that in our church’s graveyard, a gravestone states that one of his ancestors came over on the Mayflower, so he is a member of a founding family of North America. He is about twenty-eight, and he is full of life and fire. He recently told me how he is looking forward to buying a cottage and a Shelby Cobra. Jason hasn’t got two cents to rub together. He has student loans, and he has only started to work as a teacher at one of our local schools, but he has dreams. I remember when I had dreams. It seems as you get older, you forget those dreams. Sometimes, because of the reality of life and the shortness of money, those hopes are cut short. Sometimes we just stop dreaming.

Listening to these younger men re-ignites old dreams and passions, which have gone dormant in many of us. At some point, we just settled and decided that this is as good as it is going to get.

Pastor Dave always finishes our breakfast meetings with a word of challenge or encouragement. He’s about fifty-five years old and younger than many of us. Dave has curly brown hair and always wears casual dress pants, a T-shirt, and an unbuttoned casual shirt. He likes Hawaiian shirts, although he did not have one on that day. Dave never followed the usual dress code for a Pastor. Dave was a good Pastor, and he did not always stick to the denominational line. He often brought in speakers from other churches and groups that were not affiliated with our denomination. We benefited from those decisions, and we have become much richer spiritually as a result. He looks for people he feels God is moving through, people in whom he senses God’s presence is evident. He often says, “Perhaps some of it might rub off on us.”

That Saturday, Dave was a lot more somber than usual. He often greets everyone and gives them a slap on the back or at least a big

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smile. Dave had a way of looking at you, eye-to-eye, face-to-face, that made you feel like you were the only person in the world. You had his full attention. I loved it when he looked at me that way. I met him spirit-to-spirit, and I always felt much better, even though he did not say much. I just felt like my heart was strengthened.

That Saturday was different; Dave seemed much quieter; I could see something was bothering him. My wife says I am oblivious to how other people feel most of the time and that I live in my own little world. I guess that is true. I prefer solitude to being with other people, but I felt empathy each time I looked at Dave. I knew that something was bothering him.

"Dave, are you okay? You seem to be preoccupied this morning."

"Sorry about that, Chris. I just got some heartbreaking news this morning. Cindy has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. It has metastasized, and she has tumours in her liver. She needs to have chemo and surgery. Unfortunately, this type of cancer is very invasive and spreads quickly, and if unchecked, she will likely die within two years."

Dave's words hit me like a sledgehammer. His beloved wife, Cindy, was one of the most generous, kind people I had ever met. She seemed to notice every person who came into the church. She could sense the brokenhearted, the poor, and the downcast within minutes. Unlike some who would say, "Have a nice day," and walk away not wanting to get involved, she would immediately ask the person questions looking for ways to help. Nothing was too small or too big for Cindy. She would rally people in the church and outside the church to come to a person's aid. She was always very respectful of the person and never made a spectacle of them or their needs. She was committed to protecting their dignity.

Now Cindy had cancer. I silently cried out, "Why? Why Lord? Why would someone so kind and generous get this awful disease?" Dave asked me to keep this quiet for the time being. I was not surprised; she once told me she would rather have one person say, "Cancer, leave in the name of Jesus Christ" than listen to hours of prayer that droned on and on and said nothing.

Cindy was not your ordinary Pastors' wife. She was not quiet, submissive, always hiding in her husband's shadow. Cindy was a

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direct cause-centric person who was passionate about the kingdom and for the oppressed. Although she was born in the early 60s like Dave, she did not act like someone who grew up in the 70s. She always seemed to be a person who would have been more comfortable at Woodstock than on some disco floor.

Joan Baez and Simon Garfunkel, and other musicians of the 60s were always playing in their house. I thought it unusual that she seemed to know all the music I loved yet did not grow up when I did. One day I mentioned this to Dave, and he said Cindy worshipped her brother Andy who was about ten years older than she was. Andy was a star athlete, a real person of action, highly active in civil rights even as a teenager, and very patriotic. In college, he became very concerned about communist expansion. Unlike many of his friends who were happy to be in college to avoid the draft, he wanted to go to Vietnam, and after graduation, he enlisted in the Marines.

Cindy loved him for it. She listened to his music, followed his bands, and watched the evening news every night to find out what was happening in Vietnam. Then in 1968, on a hill at Khe Sanh he died. On February 4, a telegram arrived, notifying the family that Andy had been killed in action. Cindy collapsed on the front porch sobbing and wailing. Nothing could console her. Ever since that time, she seems to keep her brother alive in her heart by listening to his music. Cindy also followed in his footsteps and became an avid activist and protested any perceived injustice. Like Dave, Cindy became a Christian at university, but she never lost her activist heart.

Dave called everyone to attention and said, "I was challenged by the words of Jesus when He said, 'Go into all the world and make disciples, teaching them all that I have commanded you to do.'ⁱ Although I have read these verses a hundred times, I chose to do a word study on the word 'commanded,' and I discovered something I did not know. The term 'commanded' comes from the Greek verb 'to accomplish.' As I thought about these words of Jesus, they took on an entirely new meaning. Let me read this to you again, 'Go therefore into the whole world and make disciples and teach them all I want them to accomplish.' Adding the words 'to accomplish' changed the whole feel of the verse for me.

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"I started to think about how I could accomplish all that He wants me to do instead of thinking about how I should follow all the commandments of Jesus. I did an in-depth Bible study, and I found that there were about eighty-three things Jesus wanted us to accomplish while we are on the earth. However, a vital element of this activity is to look at the result He wanted us to achieve, and then use our minds to think about ways to accomplish this outcome in the sphere of influence where we live. I found this revelation to be refreshing and much different than mindlessly trying to obey a rule. We are not animals that need to be told what to do. We are men and women that God wants to partner with to accomplish what He wants to be done.

"I also read another verse that showed how Jesus accomplished the desires of His Father. It read, 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'ⁱⁱ It was clear from these verses that the key to understanding what we are to accomplish is to listen to our Heavenly Father and do the things He is doing," Dave concluded. "This week, I encourage you to try to do this."

After Dave finished, the men were hushed. It was like something struck all of them simultaneously. There was a sense of eternity in Dave's words that seemed to demand a response. The men were always respectful of Dave when he gave us these short messages; however, I felt that his words seemed to go very deep into the men's hearts this time. They were quiet and contemplative; it was as if Dave's words had shaken them to the core. I felt a deep stirring—not conviction, but more a sense of vision, challenge, and possibility.

As I thought about what Dave said, I could not shake the words he had just told me about Cindy. My heart was upset about the news of her illness. My spirit was angry at the sickness. I cried out, "God, why would you allow this? Why would you allow Cindy to get this awful disease?"

I thought of the Bible story of Jesus sending out the seventy-two disciples without money and telling them to go out and heal the sick and say to them, "The kingdom of God is near you."ⁱⁱⁱ I remembered how the seventy-two returned so excited, declaring the great things

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they had seen done in Jesus' name as they prayed for people. I thought about this, and I felt I had a revelation about what Jesus wanted me to accomplish. I felt like I could be a vessel to impart God's power into Cindy. I thought we should pray for Cindy to be healed of this cancer. I had never felt like this before.

About the Author

William and Susan Dupley have been ministering for over thirty-five years, preaching and leading worship on five continents. Together they minister renewal and teach adults and children how to hear the voice of God. Bill and Sue believe that the supernatural should be natural for all believers and that every believer can impact their world for the kingdom of God as they hear God's will and follow His leading.

Bill and Sue's home church is the Freedom Centre in Oakville, Ontario, Canada. Together they have co-authored several books, including *Kids in Renewal*, a dynamic Sunday school program published by Strang Publishing that teaches children their Heavenly Father's heart for them, how to hear His voice, and how to receive and impart spiritual gifts. *The Secret Place* is a personal devotional that explains how to hear the voice of God and how to be fathered by your Heavenly Father. *The Goal: Be Light in the World* describes how to be light of the world in daily practical ways and how to make disciples.

Bill and Sue are certified facilitators for Communion with God Ministries and are affiliated with the Harvest Alliance. They have conducted seminars at Catch the Fire, Mission Fest, Releasers of Life,

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Iris Ministries, and many other churches in North America, Africa, Australia, Europe, and Asia. Their passion is for God's family to know their Heavenly Father and to hear His voice so that they may live in the fullness of the gifts and the freedom that Jesus bought for them.

Susan is a graduate of the University of Toronto in Nursing Science, and Bill is a graduate of Ryerson University in Electronics Technology.

Bill and Sue came to the Lord in 1976. The Lord has guided them through business careers. They delight in their family that the Lord has blessed them with and enjoy having the time to follow what the Lord is showing them.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

These are additional books and resources by William and Susan Dupley that you may find helpful in your journey.

The Secret Place: The place to encounter revelations about your identity and your role in the kingdom of God and society.
Author: William J. Dupley ISBN: 978-1-936860-01-2

The Goal: Be Light in the World. Authors William and Susan Dupley ISBN: 978-1-4600-0652-8

If you would like a complete list of the eighty-three things Jesus wants us to accomplish, download "Biblical references of what Jesus wants us to accomplish" from www.thesecretplace.ca/resources

If you would like to learn how to hear the voice of God and start journaling, download "How to Hear the Voice of God" from www.thesecretplace.ca/resources

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ENDORSEMENTS

“Bill’s books are always a joy to read: easy to read but a deep message. That isn’t different for this book. Although it’s written as a fiction book, it touched my heart. It encourages to go the extra mile, to become a world changer. I would encourage every Christian (new or Christian for many years) to get inspired by this book.”

—**Ilse Desaeger, Senior Pastor of Gloriepoort, a Catch The Fire Partner Church in Belgium**

“Ever since the A-bomb, novelists and movies have offered us a variety of apocalyptic stories.

The Challenge takes us into almost unknown territory, exploring some of the possibilities for the common good that can spring from imaginative idealism. This is a ‘What if?’ story that prompts you to think, ‘This could really happen!’”

—**Rev. Al Reimers, Belleville, Ontario, Canada**

“This book takes the Journey to greater faith and dependence on God in an insightful story of ever-increasing trust in God, and how the supernatural life of a Christ-follower is lived out. It is an interesting journey that leads us into that deeper relationship.”

—**Rev. Ken Raymer, Interim Lead Pastor, Listowel Pentecostal Church**

“Life is a journey, and this journey is enriched as we walk it with others. It is enriched still more when we can truly make a difference in the lives of those around us. The longing of God’s heart is that His people can bring His love and grace in all its beauty into the communities they live in, creating new stories and breakthroughs along the way. Bill’s writing demonstrates his heart for this transformation, and paints a picture of what could happen as faith is stirred up in the Church.”

—**David Wuyts, former Pastor, Lifehouse Colchester, UK**

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“Jesus told stories to stab people awake to life-changing truth. This modern-day story packs a punch that has the power to wake up ordinary people to the fact that they can live extraordinary lives. Take up ‘The Challenge!’”

—**Fred Fulford, Professor Emeritus, Summit Pacific College**

“I was first introduced to *The Challenge* by Bill over lunch one day when I mentioned our Men’s Group at Singing Waters. We had been meeting for five years, and I knew that God was preparing a plan and a new purpose for us to come into. Reading this book has encouraged all of us to allow our Father to use our unique gifts and fellowship with each other, to not only impact our Ministry but also the Community. A wonderful read, full of great characters that bring real purpose and insights that challenge and encourage you to grow your faith!”

—**Peter Leishman, Ministry Team, Singing Waters Ministries**

“Everyone loves a story. To hear of other people’s life experiences is an encouragement to us all. In *The Challenge*, Bill brings to life the simplicity of Evangelism as he breaks it down to a simple, ‘What can I do?’ Bill’s books are enjoyable and easy to read, and *The Challenge* is no exception. He takes the reader on a journey of faith and anticipation, as all the characters in the book explore their individual gifts to bring light and life to their community. It is an inspiring book and a great encouragement to us all to ask ourselves, ‘What can I accomplish?’”

—**John and Pauline Arnott, Founding Pastors of
Catch The Fire, Melbourne**

“*The Challenge* makes you believe the ‘impossible’ is ‘possible,’ and that it can happen through everyday ordinary people like you and I. Personally, I found it to be really practical and down to earth at its heart. It was both encouraging and instructional throughout. Within its pages, there are little ‘manna-bites’ that feed and satisfy the soul’s desire to be more like Jesus and to see Him made real in your own personal world.

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An enjoyable weekend read that makes you hunger for the more that is available in God's Kingdom."

—Kevin Cormier

"A challenge happens when we arrive at the crossroads of decision. A wise person once said, 'It is in your moment of decision that your destiny is formed.' This book, *The Challenge*, is one of those crossroads. I believe God is speaking through His people to raise world changers for such a time as this. Who are these world changers? In days past, it was the Billy Grahams, Kathryn Kulmans, and Reinhard Bonnkes of the world. Today I believe it can be you and I. My entire life was transformed by a challenge. I challenge you to read and seriously consider the simplicity of *The Challenge* and ask yourself these five simple words as you read—"What can I do today?"

—Jason Shawera, Founder of The Joshua 1:9 Academy

"I very much enjoyed reading *The Challenge*, and I found it very helpful. I appreciated the easy-to-read structure of the book, the relatable characters, and the realistic situations presented. The theme of how to accomplish living as Jesus commanded, offers practical lessons through how the novel's characters managed the situations they were faced with. Their stories of how they managed, taught me how to have a closer personal relationship with God the Father, and how to take practical steps to practice what Jesus taught.

I really did enjoy the book, Bill. I found myself wishing that I could be a part of the Greenville Community, and I could relate to the situational challenges they experienced. Good work, Bill."

—Dan Davis, MSW (retired)