



Sri Rāj PADRE-ji (HON'D)  
THE CHAPLAIN GENERAL

On Autobiography

VAL RAJAH Ph.D.

LIFE and TIMES FROM RHODESIA TO  
ZIMBABWE





# The Chaplain General

A Draft Copy of an Autobiography by :-

VAL RAJAH





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**THE CHAPLAIN GENERAL**  
**AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY**  
**VAL RAJAH**

**1st Page – FORWARD PATRICK JOHNSTONE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> page PREFACE**

**16 pages pictures**

**Preface**

**This year of 2007, at 74 years of age, when you have lived half of your entire life preaching the gospel as I have done, you do collect literally a roomful of material. Books, magazines, photographs, newspaper cuttings, music, greeting cards, film, posters, quotations, advertisements, etcetera, etcetera. I always save something that I feel will come in handy when I need material for a sermon, talk, address even a joke – like the one below.**

**A preacher stood up in his pulpit one morning with several ‘band-aids’ on his face. He apologised much to the congregation saying, “as I was shaving this morning I cut my face”. Later, as the offering was being counted, a note in the silver platter addressed to the preacher read “next time, rather than cut your face - cut your sermon”!**

**I am taking the liberty of using some of the material as I bring out some revelations that were and are a blessing to me and have helped me in my ministry over the years. I thank all those who encouraged me in my writing, and given helpful suggestions even my dear wife for ‘finding’ pages I’ve lost in this wretched computer.**

**I always marvel at the old writers, going back to biblical times, who must have so painstakingly written their messages by lamplight, quill, soot ink etc. I think of Martin Luther, the Wesleys, earlier and later and hundreds like them, as they preached thousands of sermons, riding on horseback long distances, some writing while riding, and all in all they could write thousands upon thousands of hymns and sermons. Then came those with the typewriter – I started that way – hundreds of typewritten sheets and then finally this computer thing with a floppy disk that you can write a whole book. Amazing - and you do not have to use an eraser on the screen for a mistake.**

**I have endeavoured to use simple language as to be readable at primary school level as a dedication to my grandchildren. If this book tends to be a narration**

**or of historical persuasion, it is because I constantly have in mind my progeny to understand our posterity.**

**Val Rajah 2007**

## **CHAPTER 1 Origins**

**This is Africa - Zimbabwe the heart of Africa – one of the 53 countries that make up the continent and here we are of East Indian origins – how did our ancestors get here? For the answer we must delve into the history of the British Empire. By the 18th and 19th century when the scramble for Africa was on, India was already over 200 hundred years under British rule and the British were gaining in the race over the other colonialists.**

**The Portuguese ‘took’ Goa since the voyages of Vasco da Gama during the 15th century and the south Indians there took on Portuguese names and became proficient in the language. When the Portuguese needed labourers for their expansionist purposes into new territories, like Mozambique, Angola and Macao they took Indians from Goa and settled them there. They also took slaves from Angola and the west coast of Africa to their conquests in the west, including Brazil, where even today a large flourishing former African population exists.**

**While the Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, French and others depended largely on taking slaves for labour, the British had a people in India that were capable and above all, loyal, and adaptable to any geographical and climatic location of the world they colonised. Indians were signed on for five-year contracts as ‘Indentured Labourers’ to all parts of the expanding Empire, lured with seemingly lucrative contracts bound with promise implying ‘go to our colonies, you’ll pick up gold in the streets’. Our people the Tamils, who responded, were primarily landed in the Port of Beira in Portuguese Mozambique and on to the Port of Durban, Natal, British South Africa.**

**By this time, some Indian nationals had acquired a general working knowledge of the English language, spoken and written. The railway system was being developed and many were employed on the railways. Indians, the Sikhs in particular, were the labourers responsible for the laying of the railway line from Mombasa to inland Nairobi in Kenya, and into Kampala, Uganda. History also tells us that ‘many were eaten by lions’. In fact, 28 Sikhs and Pathans out of a group of 4000 on contract from the Indian Government (not indentured) were killed and eaten by two man-eaters close to the river Tsavo where the railway contractors had to build a bridge. Africans were also a target for the lions, but no evidence exists to show how many of the locals were killed and eaten by lions.**

**In the incredible account of the two man eaters in particular, by J.H. Patterson of the British Foreign Office who was sent to Mombasa in 1898 to take charge of this section of the railway construction which included the building of the bridge. In his book ‘The**

**man eaters of Tsavo', he gives a graphic account of the daily fears and living conditions of the workers. After eluding all kinds of efforts and traps for nine months the lions were finally trapped and shot by Colonel Patterson to the great relief of the workers and locals alike. (The Man-Eaters of Tsavo\* J.H.Patterson)**

**National Geographic, August 2003, carries the account of the two maneaters as follows. In 1898, British Engineer (picture above) shot and killed two huge lions – the pair had stalled railway construction in Kenya's Tsavo area by allegedly killing and devouring 135 workers.**

**Up until the 1980's, Indians, particularly the Sikhs ran and maintained the Kenya Railways and until Idi Amin's time in Uganda. In the light of the above, it is not surprising that Uganda and Kenya have a large population of Sikh and Pathan ancestry. One has only to look at the history of Uganda and the time of Idi Amin to know that primarily Indians made up the mainstay of the economy. During Amin's banishing of Indians from Uganda, approximately 55,000 of them were forced to flee. Britain took them in as ex-patriots, when even India denied entry to her own people during that trying time.**

**Because India was a British 'possession' since the mid-1700s, they could draw from the vast geographical area of India, a people suitable for any climate in the world - from the Himalayas with its ice and snow - to the tropical heat of the island of Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. In 1912, the British settled 4,000 Sikhs in British Columbia, Canada as lumberjacks and general labourers as they were adaptable to that climatic condition. (Sadhu Sundar Singh\* Cyril J. Davey). Today the Sikh population in Canada is into its third generation.**

**Many of the indentured Tamils, from south India, adaptable to tropical conditions, were taken to Natal, South Africa, to work in the sugar-cane plantations. Today, a second, third and fourth generation exist in their thousands in Natal. Through his autobiography, M.K. Gandhi (later Mahatma) who was an up and coming young barrister in the 1890s in Natal, we learn that he championed the cause of the 'indentured Indians' who were suffering injustices and heavy taxation under the British masters.**

**In 1914, negotiations between Smuts and Gandhi led to the abolishment of the 3 pound sterling tax on indentured Indians. Gandhi himself suffered much injustice and persecution and even imprisonment passively resisting the strong 'colour-bar' that was the official policy at that time. It could be said that Gandhi was one of the earliest opponents of apartheid and the greatest exponent of passive resistance. The birth of Gandhi's passive resistance movement and policies in later years against the British in India probably had its roots in this South African theatre.**



By the time Nelson Mandela walked out a free man from his prison cell in Robben Island in 1994, after 27 years of incarceration, there were an estimated 700,000 descendents of the indentured Indian residing in the Natal and Kwazulu provinces of South Africa. The resistance movement was strengthened by the Indian descendents who opposed the legislation system that was in place then. Nelson Mandela received much support in terms of votes from this segment of the population, which were a boost for his presidency. At least three that were incarcerated with Mandela were upon his release and ascendancy to the presidency they were included in his cabinet. (Anatomy of a Miracle\*Patti Waldmeir)

## Chapter 2

In this year of 2007, it is appropriate for me to write about the arrival of my people in the BSAP Charter colony one century ago. In 1907 my father and my maternal grandfather, barely in their 20s, together with about 50 other Tamils, signed on 'to pick up gold in the streets of the latest acquisition for the British Crown, north of the Limpopo and south of the Zambezi. Their contingent left from Chidambaram (as my father named his fourth son) just south of Madras on the "SS Karanja" and one contingent dropped off in Beira, while others continued and settled in Natal, South Africa.

The railway line from Beira had by then reached what is now Umtali in 1898 and the next year it reached Salisbury. Four years later in 1902 the Salisbury to Bulawayo line was completed to connect with the line from Mafeking, South Africa which had reached Bulawayo in 1897. The man responsible for the laying of the north-east railway line from Beira to Bulawayo was George Pauling, a giant of a man, whose showman feat was to lift a full grown horse on his shoulders.

So the contingent that dropped off at Beira travelled by rail from Beira to Umtali (now Mutare) and then on to Salisbury where some settled, and the majority continued to Bulawayo as my people did. They were all now in the colony of the acquired British South Africa Protectorate under the Charter Company. It did not take them long to realize that they were virtually 'marooned' with very little chance of going back. In the course of years of British rule, others were taken to the islands, Fiji, the Caribbean circle, British Guyana and so on under the same indentured conditions.

Some Indians, earlier and later than my father's time actually walked from Beira into the BSAP colony. It is not clear if they were part of the contingents originally consigned for Natal and were 'hijacked' from ships that called into the port of Beira. There seems to be some accounts of that nature recalled by some old timers.

My father had left a young wife and a baby girl he named Jagadambal with all hopes of returning a rich man one day, only to realize as time passed that was not to be. However he resorted to supporting them from Bulawayo and he would be supporting them from this part of Africa for the rest of his life which he faithfully did. He would have to take a wife here.

Some families of Malay-Indian origin came as servants with the trek with the Pioneer Columns to settle in Salisbury. A few of those filtered to Bulawayo. Malays are generally Muslim by religion and many of them and their descendants were brought by the Dutch East India Company from their far east colonies to settle in the Cape area as labourers.

Today, thousands of their descendants continue to flourish in the Cape province area. Others from the pioneer column filtered northwards and settled in what is now Bindura. My maternal grandmother's family came from those who settled in that area. The Pioneer trek into the colony had a mixture of peoples from Malay, Indian, Bantu and Hottentot stock. Out of this mixture of peoples many of the indentured Tamils took wives.

The colony, later named Southern Rhodesia was granted self Government from Britain in 1923. The country to the north was named Northern Rhodesia and these two were the only countries in the world named after one man, Cecil John Rhodes. His vision was to take Africa from Cape to Cairo for the British Crown. One writer eulogized that when Rhodes stood on the Limpopo his shadow fell right across the land to the Zambezi.

Rhodes' trek, his personal entourage and wagons stopped in Bulawayo. Rhodes had a hand in the planning of the town. He required that his town planners design the streets of Bulawayo to be wide enough to allow a wagon pulled by a span of 16 oxen to be able to make a 'U' turn. This was so done and today the wide streets of Bulawayo are ample proof.

He rewarded his Hottentot ox-wagon drivers with 100-acre plots of land, which to this day bear their names like Charlie Mkiza, Killaloo and others. Unaware of the expanse of the land they owned Mkiza and the others lived out their life on their plots, put up a few huts and developed small patches to grow maize and vegetables. Upon their deaths the Bulawayo, now a Municipality, sub-divided their land into 10 acre plots. Quite a few plots were bought by the Tamils. Ironically my father, and his friend Lingham, bought 10 acre plots adjacent to each other in the Killaloo subdivision. We have it to his day.

After serving their five-year contracts, the Tamils were declared 'freed-Indians' and were allocated small plots along both sides of the Matshemhlope (Amatshe Mhlope, white stones) River for market gardening. The area was named 'Loot Kraal' its history is noteworthy. Situated roughly within a 10 mile radius of the 'Indaba Tree' in King Lobengula's Royal Kraal (today State House and National Monuments) the area was first named Loot Kraal by the colonialists as this was where the king of the Amandabeles, Lobengula, had grazed his livestock. He stashed the loot and spoils that his impis brought in after raiding the Shona and other tribes, including their cattle and goats mainly. The animals would thrive on both sides of the river, which provided

ample water and grazing fields for all his livestock. Perhaps from that did Bulawayo become known as “The City of the Kings”

The first Bantu are believed to have crossed the Zambezi River about AD700 bringing their cattle with them. Among these were the short-horned SANGA, forebears of the NKONE. The migration of man and stock eventually led to Zululand, where the cattle became known as NGUNI.

In Zululand these cattle thrived and certain shipwrecked mariners described Natal as being “full of cattle of a specific type’ – obviously what we now refer to as the INKONE colour pattern. After a quarrel with Zulu King Tshaka in 1822, Mzilikazi, his followers and their NKUNI cattle fled their homeland to wander through the present-day Orange Free State, the Northern Cape, Transvaal and Botswana.

Various tribes were encountered en route and their cattle confiscated. The warriors, who became known as the A'MANDEBELE, finally settled in MATABELELAND in 1838 and continued to raid cattle from the surrounding tribes until 1890.

Off-spring of the original A'MANDEBELE cattle are today called NKONE. The largest concentrations of these animals is found in the GWAAL and neighbouring Communal Lands in the west of Zimbabwe.

Animals bearing the INKONE markings made up the Royal herd of chief Mzilikazi, and passed on in time to his son King Lobengula, their possession by tribesmen being disallowed and leading to confiscation by the KING.

### CHAPTER 3

Around 1915 my grandfather Luxshman Munusami (Moonsammy) located his workshop and did blacksmith work for Lonely Mine and the surrounding locale a small settlement about sixty miles from Bulawayo, building and repairing wagons, his speciality being wagon hubs, spokes, wheels and fitting the half to one inch thick tyres of solid iron around the wheels. He probably came from a family that were artificers of brass and iron, as the biblical Tubalcain was, and he named his second daughter, my mother Nagamal, so I named our second daughter Nahama, Tubalcain's sister (Genesis 4.22).

As a growing young boy in India grandpa was apprenticed to his father, and the communal brass and metal workers. He came to this part of the world with a working knowledge of iron mongering which was soon recognised by the British and this was a skill that was very much in demand in those days.

By then he had a family of 5 children my mother being the second. She is 90 today and one of her earliest recollections of her childhood was a chore that all the kids delighted and enjoyed and that was chasing and trying to catch the wild pigs that raided the family garden patch.



**She was just into her teens and really enjoyed being put on the lookout stand to sound the alarm (still practiced by the rural people today who build a shelter high enough to overlook the fields) when the pigs or any other animals invaded and she would strike the hanging iron bar and make a big noise. She would then jump down and give chase to the squealing pigs. The others, alerted by the clanging signal joined in the melee and there was great sport and fun all round.**

**The other chores were the daily milking of the cows which the boys did while the girls took care of feeding the chickens, collecting the eggs and the usual household chores. Sometimes a pig would be caught or snared much to the joy everyone, especially the African workers they would have special 'sitchebo' (meat and gravy).**

**It happened one day that a middle-aged man, a friend of the blacksmith's came to visit, most likely by horse carriage or stagecoach and the two were soon absorbed in deep discussions. They were both from the same village in south India and had traveled together to Rhodesia. Some consensus must have been arrived at, and subsequently, perhaps through the mother, the fourteen-year-old girl was counseled that she was to be married to that man. Common Law child marriages was an accepted arrangement and she probably had no choice, probably didn't even understand what it all meant.**

**Nagamal, at fourteen was betrothed to this man, at fifteen she was brought to him and at sixteen I was born – the man was my father Ramasammy Narayan Rajah – Rajah not his real name but given by the British to many of the new arrivals to make spelling easier for the records – his real name was Saigapillai according to his British India Passport. Since it stuck, today we still use the name Rajah.**

**They all recall the deadly Spanish flu of 1918 and that many of them were laid under trees with the flu and high fever. Some died. They also recall that a man they called the 'magistrate' fitted a whiskey barrel on the back of his car, probably a Model T Ford and went around giving shots of whiskey or probably brandy to those who could take it. My grandfather who later became a heavy brandy drinker all his life, narrated this account to me and dated his starting to take strong liquor from that time.**

**An old timer in Harare recalled the same situation when they were laid out in the grounds of the Drill Hall, Salisbury. His friend was one of those laid out and the attending physician was none other that Dr. Godfrey Higgins. The afflicted one recalled overhearing the doctor tell the attendant 'prepare for this one to expire by tomorrow'.**

**When his friend came to visit, the sick one instructed him to bring a small flask of Martel brandy and have his wife prepare some strong 'russum', an Indian preparation of herbal spices like soup. The friend obliged and brought the required 'medicine' and began feeding the sick one. The day after, he was able to**

help himself and soon recovered rapidly. He expired only a few years ago in his nineties

My father was nursed to health by Mrs. Barbi Naidoo who fed him chicken broth. Being a non-meat eater it was a bitter pill for him to swallow but he recovered and from then on accepted to eat certain meats except beef and pork for religious reasons. When I received Christ I experienced how difficult it was to get a piece of beef down my throat – it was psychological. We grew up eating meat such as chicken, goat, mutton and I really had to discipline and force myself to eat beef just so that the cow would no longer be ‘sacred’ to me anymore. Today I enjoy a juicy beef steak.

Father took his religion seriously and was well versed and schooled in Hinduism, a teacher and priest to the Tamil community they would celebrate social events like Divali and other festivals related to the Tamil Hindu religious calendar the ‘Panjangam’, (Almanac) consulted worldwide by Tamils. He used a door as a blackboard for teaching.

My father regularly, once a month, probably coinciding with the phase of the moon, and according to his ‘panjangam’ held a ‘blessing’ service for his children in the home. As I walk in my garden today I come cross the evergreen rubber euphorbia bush with flame colour tips – it looks like its on fire and that brings to mind his mode of blessing. What he did was cut a small branch with several straight twigs. He wrapped each twig with cotton wool and dipped each tip in olive oil.

The family would sit in a group the little ones on my mother’s lap, my father would touch the oil dipped cotton-wool tips to the candle and one by one the wicks caught the aflame and in a circular motion in front of his family he would recite prayers of blessing and all would end singing a song. I was old enough to recall how fascinated and happy the little ones were to see these little flames go round and around, stopping in front of them for a brief moment as he said each name and a prayer. How wonderful my father could do this for his family.

Biblically, blessings are referred to both God and man. When God blesses He bestows that efficacy which renders His blessings effectual. His blessings are either temporal or spiritual, bodily or mental. But in everything they really convey the good which they import. The blessings of men to other men unless they are inspired prophecies, are only good wishes, personal and as it were a peculiar kind of prayer to the Author of all good for the welfare of the subject of the blessings. Blessings on the part of man towards God, is an act of thanksgiving for His mercies or rather, for that special mercy which at the time occasions the act of blessing, as for food for which thanks are rendered to God for it’s provision or for any other good.

Thus he blessed his children and I do believe that God honoured his prayers as all of his children are serving God, four of us in leadership and Christian Ministry. Some may ask – but your father was a Hindu – yes, bearing in mind that there are millions of brands of

Hinduism, he evolved into his own particular brand, depending on the area where he was born and any outside influences he may have encountered along his life's journey. I would say that at that time in his life that is was all the 'light' he had and he faithfully lived by it.

Rhodesia was granted self Government in 1923 and by this time in the twenties many more Indians of the merchant faction began coming to Rhodesia and went into business. Many of the early arrivals were assisted by the Tamils to settle, find accommodation and general friendship. Most of these were of Gujerati stock.

July 31<sup>st</sup>, 1917 the abolition of 'Indentured Indian Immigration Act' was passed by the Indian Government and signed into law by the Viceroy. No more did Britain take Indians to their colonies as indentured labourers.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 1933, into this environment of those days, I was born at Plot 215 Loot Kraal as my birth certificate proudly states. Mrs. Blumears a Coloured lady and registered midwife, attended Nagamal during her pre and ante natal pregnancy period. She rode a bicycle from house to house with her carry bag of instruments and medicines to attend her various patients. I can remember the bag, the kind that one sees in the movies that the general MD carries, the. A leather bag with a metal frame that allows it to open wide and snaps shut with the carry handle for easy mobility. It is recorded she delivered over 430 babies in her lifetime. My mother had nine.

Generally this was the practice in those days. Trained, municipal registered mid-wives attended clients in their communities. My first two children were delivered by this mid-wifery attendance and Donna our last was born in Hospital when better conditions prevailed for non-whites.

My father gave me the name Vilvakannoo, 'vilva' meaning brilliant or sparkling, 'kannoo' meaning eyes. As Indians always are, he must have been very happy that his firstborn was a son and pleased with his young wife who further bore him four sons and four girls. That's my real name and as usual when registering and trying to sound the name for the registrar of births, my father with his Indian accent, it ended up Valvakan on my certificate, my grandfather fondly called me Valoo and in school they cut it short to Val.

By this time the 'freed' Tamils had served their contracts and formed themselves into a co-operative society supporting themselves by market gardening, taking their produce to the general market into the town of Bulawayo by donkey cart or wheelbarrows. Some went house to house selling their produce. Later on the motor car became affordable and my father was one of the first of the Tamils to own a car, a second-hand Hudson Terraplane, then a Fiat 'Bantam' van, on which I learned to drive and finally a '46 Ford V8 vannete on which I passed my driver's licence and so it was in time that my father graduated to own a greengrocer shop in Grey Street. By now he built a house on the plot in Killaloo and we moved there in 1943.



As was his custom he built the temple next to the main house. My mother, now 90 still lives on that family plot. The growing sons were all in school and not much help in the shop but were getting some training. I recall being sent to bank the shop takings and standing in the queue. No one worried that the money would be snatched.

#### CHAPTER 4

In 1916 my father landed a life contract with the Rhodesia Railways to sell fruit on the railway platform, a business he was to operate till his death in 1955. When we were old enough my young brothers and I took turns in helping our Malawian employee vendor Samuel sell fruit to customers in transit. My grandfather had made a special three wheeled canopied cart, the back wheels which were of some small aircraft, all inflatable. The cart had a handle and a turning front wheel, a small aircraft's rear wheel. Samuel or any one of us could push it along the platform with ease close to the train waiting to depart and serve customers. The fruit was displayed in sloping trays, easily identifiable from the train windows as customers pointed out their preferences and made their purchases.

My other recollection was literally to be mesmerized by the huge steam engines hissing away ready to move. Then the bells clanging and loudspeaker announcement that the train will depart in five minutes, peoples said their last goodbyes and moved away from the carriages then the guards' whistle and green flag or lantern if at night and the massive locomotive strains, huffs and puffs moving slowly gaining momentum and speed, finally the last baggage carriage with the guard leaves the platform and disappears from sight. I still get a very nostalgic feeling when I walk any railway platform especially the Bulawayo one.

The engine drivers, conductors and guards were all white at that time but were very friendly. When the Railway system opened up opportunities for non-whites one of my brothers, Palaney eventually ended up being an engine driver and progressed to be an Inspector. Only the chefs on the dining cars were Indian and Coloured.

Often I was called into the kitchen of the dining-saloon and served dessert, probably an arrangement made by my father with the friendly chefs. My father's desire was for his children to excel in school and provided extra lessons. I being the eldest benefited the most because as time went on it was expensive to extra school 4 boys.

The strict programme for any Hindu and Muslim boys and girls of primary school age was that they attend Gujarati School or Madressa respectively in the afternoons after English School. My father enrolled me into Gujarati School as there was no Tamil school still functioning since he had stopped teaching. I learned to read and write Gujarati and lost out on my Tamil.

He also started me off on music on special instruments brought into the country for me by teachers from Durban. I started violin and harmonium lessons with Indian tutors,

Indian music which is hard to shake off even today. One of my tutors I enjoyed was a portly Gujarati gentleman named Choonilal Maharaj who was addressed as 'master' with an Indian accent. He was really jocular and quite a funny man. He would have done well as a circus clown – but he was a good harmonium player, a singer of raghams and a connoisseur of Indian music.

There's a joke my children tell that when I play the violin or flute the snakes come crawling out of their holes and start dancing. At seven I played the harmonium in the school concert in the small City Hall sitting cross-legged, the harmonium on my lap in front of curtain drops and lifting. I recall that I had just had my tonsils taken out and there was some anxiety if I was going to make it for the concert. I imagine that my father was quite proud of me though the main purpose for my learning, especially the harmonium was to accompany the singing in the temple.

According to the Panjangam, a certain season was allocated for special early morning prayers. I recall my father waking me up at four in the morning and I sitting on his bed playing the harmonium while he prayed and sang praises. I never heard my father speak of re-incarnation, of coming back in another life, but of going straight to heaven when he died – that was his brand of Hinduism. That's why I strongly believe that he had been exposed to the Mar Toma Syrian Christians and some of their teachings, and mixed it with his Hinduism before he left India.

At about age 8 I got my first bicycle a 12 inch wheel Hercules and the salesman was to later become my father in law, Mr. Bennie Alfred of Alick Stuart Cycles. I would go to him for all my repairs however minor. I would enjoy riding my bicycle beside my father and on Saturday mornings to the auction market in the city hall grounds I would ride winding in between the lots for auction. I liked to hear the sing song 'flowery' language the different auctioneers used soliciting bids for the lots. I couldn't understand a thing they were saying.

The temple at Loot Kraal was a precious training facility for a little boy. All the time I was growing up I was being trained by my father to be a temple server. I would clean the temple lamps, garland the god-pictures and serve the 'puja' tray on prayer days, pass around with the 'dupa' (incense) tray and accompany the singing with my harmonium. I even planted hardy flowers like zinias and marigolds in front of the temple entrance.

## CHAPTER 5

When we moved to Killalloo, alongside the main house, my father built a more sturdy temple. a brick and mortar structure, with about six large steps up to the doorway and into the temple. Under the temple at ground level was a low ceiling room with a doorway facing the back and that was the banana ripening room. It exuded a constant humid temperature and green bananas imported from Mozambique were covered with sacking in crates to ripen faster.

The roof of the temple structure was of corrugated iron whereas the former structure at Loot Kraal was a huge water tank fitted with a door and most of the congregants sat outside while the priest and a few were accommodated inside. I continued to be the care taker in the same way as with the old temple. Some members of the Tamil community were regular and some Gujarati folk attended on some occasions. I occasionally visited another temple not too far away from our home, the Rana family temple. I enjoyed and loved to attend temple worship there.

Grandpa had now relocated from Lonely mine to a farm at Bembesi some 30 miles closer to Bulawayo and his once a month sojourn when they had to come into town to buy household supplies, including his 'cough mixture', (sarai in tamil) and to order the iron strip lengths half inch and one inch thick for wagon wheel tyres and timber for the wagon repairing and building. These heavy supplies would come by goods train and dropped off at Bembesi railway siding.

On these monthly sojourns into town, Grandpa and Grandma would arrive at our home at about sundown after having done the shopping. As he neared our gate he could be heard singing 'raghams' at the top of his voice – grandma probably driving the cart by this time – we learned how to outspan and release the donkeys to watering and grazing for the night. In the evening grandpa would go into his singing sprees and also loved me to accompany him on the harmonium – whether I was in tune or not didn't matter. Finally he'd be exhausted and doze off.

Next morning bright and early he'd be ready to inspan the donkeys and was ready for the return trip. Inspanning the donkeys was an education in itself for anybody – he'd use anything from fists to boots to get them into position beside the 'dasselboom' as we knew it, even at seven or eight, I'd learned how to fit the 'headgear' (blinkers and bits in the mouths) and how to run the reins through the rings on the straps fastened to the bodies of the donkeys and loop it on the cart seat ready for the driver.

It was an adventure for me especially if it was school holidays and I was to accompany them to the plaas (farm). The donkey cart harnessed with 4 donkeys, two in front of two others and two 'sparewheels' that followed the cart tethered behind trotting at the same pace. The cart would be loaded with household supplies and once along the way at the Koce River near Heany Junction, about half way to Bembesi, under the railway bridge, all stopped for a break, the donkeys would be outspanned and given time for a short rest, water and graze.

The grass was usually lush near the river and the vegetation to Bembesi though stunted due to over-grazing by goats was nevertheless green. I could tell where we were by the two landmarks along the way, the Ntabazinduna Hills, King Mzilikazi's first kraal and the other the Fingo settlement. Mzilikazi had chosen well the three sided hills, 'the hills of the Indunas, (kings), it was a natural fortress.

After watering and grazing, the donkeys were then inspanned again, sometimes a change of one donkey or both to continue the rest of the journey home. During that break we would be having some refreshments too, this was school holidays for me, and of course they had the best for me, 'Smiths (not Ian's) Bakery' buns, doughnuts and cakes and flasks of tea. Most of the time when I was awake I would be sitting between my grandparents and when asleep then on something soft at the back of the cart like mealie meal or rice bags.

We would arrive at the living place by sunset, having begun the journey at dawn. The younger children would run out, barefeet on the white sand, having spied the returning parents' homecoming as there was always some goodies like doughnuts and sweets. Home was a number of roundavels arranged in a circle with the main kitchen in the centre. Granpa was a 'jack of all' trades. He burnt bricks and built rooms in a circular shape (roundavels) a window opposite each other and one door facing the inner circle. The roofs were all thatched. The floor was smeared with cow dung, a common practice for floors in those days, also, mixed with a little 'cattle dip' it kept insects away.

The roundavels were built in a circle around a main square building which served as the main kitchen. A good wood stove always kept the place warm especially in winter and it was a good conveneing place for everybody. This was grandma's domain and venue for grandpa's stern warnings and instructions to his children together with orders for the morrow.

Unfortunately, schooling was a rarity for the children unless they went into town and stayed with the older sister, my mother, as some did in teen years. Some went to boarding school but all so irregular. By this time there were about 10 children. The boys and girls slept in separate roundavels. The blacksmith shop called the 'chaap', African for 'shop' was widely known with all it's equipment, huge bellows, furnace, anvils and huge vices, several weights of hammers, tongs, chisels and other tools leather reins and ox-hide-aprons, blinkers, horse shoes of various sizes. Sometimes I was allowed to hang on the long arm of the bellows and go up and down keeping the fire going. I enjoyed that.

The cattle coral (kraal) was a short distance away and every evening the livestock were secured in the kraal which really was thorn bushes piled up against poles placed in a circle. I remember my granma giving me hot tea made with pure freshly milked milk. It tasted so good and I was quite spoiled.

## CHAPTER 6

Granpa was a strong man as blacksmiths usually are. At his height of power he'd challenge anyone to match his feats of strength. One was to lift a 14 lb sledgehammer from the far top end of the handle about a metre from the head. It is easy to left it when you'e holding the handle about half way down. Later on his eldest son Thumbie who was being inducted into the trade was able to match his feat.

Grandpa wore a 'Lord Kitchner' handlebar moustache. Mothers would frighten their children when they needed a 'boogeyman' figure and threatened them with calling 'bembe tha-tha' (bembe, short for Bembesi, and tha-tha is grandfather). That's the nickname he earned from mothers and children.

Around Bembesi there were many farms, many wagons to repair and the workshop was always busy. He had two workers, Cigarette and Aaron and they wielded the huge hammers that came down in rhythm and sliced the red hot iron as measured for the size of the tyres. When the iron was brought out of the furnace red hot the tyre was placed on the anvil and grandpa would hold the chisel with long tongs, place it carefully on the marked spot and the hammer boys would rhythmically come down on the chisel before the iron lost its heat and in a few strokes it was sliced.

I have a painful memory of one time when watching them, they sliced a small piece about 2 inches and it fell to the dirt floor I ran and clutched it. Though it was black when it was cut and hit the floor it was still furnace hot. As I grabbed it the whole palm of my hand just fell away. Instead of getting sympathy from grandpa he gave me a good few whacks and sent me off to grandma who patched me up with much sympathy. Needless to say I never tried that again.

At sundown the boys enjoyed helping the herdsman kraal the cattle and some goats that had been out grazing all day. Together they totalled about 50. As the exercise went on there was much shouting, whistling and swearing going on. I recall whenever I was at the farm that I would join in the exercise, standing at quite a distance throwing stones, and swearing too. I imagine that I contributed quite a lot in getting animals rounded up and kraalled also adding to my swearing vocabulary for I recall times when granma would threaten to put chillies in my mouth.

The kraal was constructed of poles dug in at close intervals and then filled in with thorn bushes all round tightly packed to keep out any marauding wild animals and keep the livestock in. One entrance, well poled across with thorn bushes filled in, and that was the kraal (corral). A kind of stockade type fence extended from the kraal going around, enclosing the roundavels allowing lots of room for a large yard.

Some years later still, grandpa was to relocate again to the banks of the Koce River on Rogers' farm and practice his trade from there. Heany Junction was then the nearest point where the heavy supplies would be dropped off. By then I was a teenager and had my driving licence and could drive the family to the farm, now some 15 miles from the city, in our Ford V8 some weekends.

Another recreation I enjoyed was helping Joey my friend tend his father's goats, that's back in Loot Kraal. When I could get away from my other chores I hastened to where Joey had the goats grazing and Joey and I practiced our slingshots. Goats were the easiest to rear on the small plots and many of the ploholders reared goats and

chickens. Joey's father was a silver haired small man who had a high pitched singing voice and loved to visit the temple. Joey himself stuttered badly and was very conscious of it.

There was a rocky outcrop not too far away from where we all lived and that's where two or three hearders would graze their goats. At sundown they would be hearded towards a waterhole, watered before being hearded back to their various kraals for the night.

Weekly, Saturday afternoon was social get together and recreation time, for the families, and they usually all converged on Vernu Naidoo's home as it was more central for all. When I got my drivers' licence I would drive the family to the venue. Others walked or cycled. While big pots of food were being cooked usually by a couple of men, usually on feast days, the rest of the men sat around on the floor in the cool of the verandah on blankets and played cards for hours on end. Lots of noisy exchanges, but never fights, and usually brandy, whiskey and snacks was passed around liberally.

A bunch of children, boys and girls, we all played games in the yard and I imagine the women folk just enjoyed chattering away making pickles and other condiments that went with the food. Towards evening everyone got something to eat, usually on doubled banana leaves, and left for home by sundown.

Entering into teen years I was doing well at school. I joined the Boy Scouts, the 13<sup>th</sup> Bulawayo Scout Troop starting at cub level. We enjoyed many outings and campfires. We went camping at Rowallan Park in the Matopo Hills. Mr.S. Ragadoo was the Scoutmaster and Mr. Anthony Tommy the cubmaster (Akela the wolf of the Mowgli Series). Once we even did a trip to Victoria Falls by train and I remember leaning out of the window and my scout hat blew away at Jabula Siding.

Once in my time we went to the special International Scout Camp at Rowallan Park in the Matopo Hills when the Southern Africa regional Scout Jamboree was held there. Normally we met in our school grounds and I especially enjoyed it when we had campfires and the sing-songs with hot chocolate served from buckets by the Rover Scouts. Rovers were the senior boys who had graduated and had done all their Scouting tests.

One incident comes to mind. All Boy Scouts must pass a cooking test, very basic. Fry an egg, make a cup of tea were the easiest so I chose to fry an egg. I had seen my mother do it and there was nothing to it. Just break an egg into a hot pan with a bit of oil. I did so and the egg was frying well when I heard a wail next to me. It was my friend, Balwant, and I happened to be using his pan. He and his family were strict Hindu vegetarians – did not even eat eggs, not even cakes baked with eggs. How was I to know this. He was petrified to take his pan home – the scoutmaster had to come and resolve the situation, how he did it I don't know. But that's what Boy Scouts are for – to 'Be Prepared' to solve problems.

**Incidentally, this year of 2007 is also the centenary of the scouting movement and many international activities and jamborees are planned worldwide. It is interesting that Baden-Powell started the scouting movement when he was a British Trooper in the new colony in the famous Matopo Hills where Cecil John Rhodes lies buried. He was later peerred, becoming Lord Baden-Powell.**

**Other school activities included playing soccer, cricket, tennis, and some boxing. There was no interschools sports the way the system evolved due to the strong segregation policy. There were schools for each race of people, Whites, Indians Coloureds and African. Off school games were 'keneki' and marbles, kicking the tin and of course football.**

**I had some Coloured friends that went to McKeurtan School, (Mr. LeGrange's School) and I went to Bulawayo Indian School (Mr. Ramphal's school) we called them, these were the headmasters – we did not have any African or White friends. A mixed group of friends, we would walk to school together get to our respective schools which were adjacent to each other – between third and sixth avenues. Some turned left and some turned right and we were in school. After school the same, we'd collect together and walk home.**

**Eventually we had government bicycles and rode to school.**

**Children who lived a certain distance from school could apply for Government bicycles that were maintained by the public works department and turned in at school holidays. In school, during interval, for a number of years the junior classes received a little bottle of milk, a gill by measurement, to supplement any lunch brought to school. Our schools went up to Standard 7, three standards short of South Africa's matriculation level.**

**Our teachers in general were graduates recruited from South Africa and I believe that some lacked serious teacher training as I look back in retrospect. Part of the problem I blame the bigoted leaders of the Indian community who wanted 'everything Indian' the trustees and leaders stank with pride about being 'pure' Indian. Had it not been for the tenacity of my father who fought them on this issue, most of the Tamil children would have been classified 'Coloured' and denied entry to the 'pure' Bulawayo Indian School (not that it would have mattered to me). Ironically most all the teachers were of South African Tamil or Telegu background.**

**The majority of them were under-trained and under-qualified to teach higher standards. This was the deliberate design of both British colonial systems, South Africa and the Rhodesias. The Ministry of Education had various levels and standards of education for the races, that of whites being supreme. In retrospect, gauging by what we were taught in comparison with White schools, leaves a big margin of difference. This was also the policy of the South African and Rhodesian governments working in collusion to keep non white standards of education lower than that of the Whites.**



## **CHAPTER 7**

Because of all the market gardening flourishing on both sides of the river the area gradually became known as 'the Gardens', the name Loot Kraal was dropped, but nothing else changed. When someone asked you where you lived it sounded better to say 'gardens' than Loot Kraal (kraal had a stigma, an African connotation). Between the back fence of the plots was a road, then the beginning of Kumalo airfield, and as kids during the Empire Training for British airmen, we could see the pilots coming in to land in their Harvards and other training aircraft. Once in a while they were so low we could even get a wave back from them.

One day a Dakota DC3 had to make an emergency landing in our yard. The pilot chose one corner of the mealie field to come down. I was very popular with my schoolmates as the boy who had an aeroplane in his yard and they came to see the downed aircraft. I was allowed by the guards to lead them through on a tour. In a few days it all was dismantled and taken away.

As kids we used to trespass into the airfield, nearer towards the security fence where it was bushy and we played there. Unfortunately one day, one of us, Francis, unknowingly picked up a grenade detonator and began smashing it with a stone when there was an explosion and we saw his hand was blown off. He had to have his right hand amputated as only bone and sinew was hanging. We never went to play there again.

When I think of the emergency landing of the Dakota plane a tune floats into my mind and that is the famous 'skokiaan'. Its composer was saxophonist August Muzarurwa. He was in the British South Africa Police Band and then left to form and lead his own band. He played with the great trumpet player and bandmaster Louis Armstrong who came especially to meet Arthur, played here in the country, and invited and made provision for Arthur to play his music in the United States. Arthur went but did not last long and returned to his home country. (History of Indigenious Township Music\*)

The Bhikas of Harare, father and son Ismail, were involved in the townships music promotions and were known by their African given names of Karimapondo. In those days they were instrumental in assisting many up and coming African groups and individuals to make it into the music circuit and with Bob Bardolia another businessman and benefactor, also played host to Louis Armstrong on his visit to Rhodesia.

In the gardens area each plot had about six African labourers, multiplied by a dozen or so plots that would make quite a number of them with their families. Throughout colonial days a curfew was in effect and Africans were not allowed in the city after 7 p.m. and Africans were not allowed to buy clear beer. So they came up with their own kind of potent brew and it was named 'Skokiaan' after the song or the song named

after the brew. Police frequently raided these illegal 'shebeens' as they were called and tipped over this illicit brew and arrested many. The signal that the police were approaching was the tune 'skokiaan' played over a loudspeaker or gramophone, whistled or called, and the customers would scatter and disappear into the bush till the heat was off.

Though they would arrest some and throw them into a vehicle they called the 'Black Maria' took them to the police station and charged them. Next day they would all be back to work with headaches, bruises and scratches. Some of the brew was buried in huge drums and covered with underbrush. Today's equivalent is the 'Kachasu' brew almost the same as 'skokiaan'. Imbibers have been known to have died of overdoses.

**News Item- SKOKIAAN CASE - African Home News Paper-  
6<sup>th</sup> June 1959 by the Editor Charlton Ncebetsha**

Another African man and his family is under notice to vacate his house in 'D' square, Mzilikazi, for violating the Skokiaan law. The Superintendent of Mzilikazi – Nguboyenja – Barbourfields, Mr. Bales seems to deal with such deliberate offenders with commendable severity so that the punishment given may produce a deterrent effect on the rest of the Africans who are defying the law in this way. We would once again appeal to the African community of Bulawayo to stop once and for all from brewing skokiaan and related brews which have the effect of changing the face-colour of those who drink such concoctions, thereby causing their death in an untimely manner.

It is said that those who brew and sell skokiaan are forced to do so as a result of their economic plight. The breadwinners, generally speaking, earn very little wages and without resorting to making skokiaan they would probably be compelled to live below the breadline. That many Africans earn starvation wages, is true. AHNews.

Almost 60 years later this practice is beginning to surface again. Today in Zimbabwe with inflation at over 8500%, this type of illicit brew is being consumed in substitute of the ordinary clear beer and other legal spirits because of the unaffordable price. Women are vending kachasu and other concoctions in coca-cola bottles and other respectable looking containers. Clear beer today is 330,000 Z\$ a litre in the supermarkets.

Most every home had a gramophone in those days. We had one and I bought many records, the very breakable 78 singles, popular those days. Apart from Indian music, Tamil and Hindustani for the older folk, we enjoyed the country western music of those times and that's when I took up playing the guitar.

During our school years we followed carefully the developments of World War II during our 'general knowledge' sessions. In the height of the war years every school had to construct 'air raid shelters or bunkers' and every once in a while there was 'air raid'

**drill. A siren would screech off somewhere in the city with it's unmistakeable wailing sound and everybody just dropped everything and ran outside to the shelters.**

**The bunkers were huge caverns dug into the ground shored up on the sides and roofed with old railway sleepers supported by bricked pillars. Outside, on top of the sleepers, soil was thrown and grass encouraged to grow. Once inside it was dank and smelly but the whole school seemed to fit in.**

**Teachers supervised the drill as the children were ushered in until all were 'safe'. I recall we practiced this many times. Fortunately for us in this part of the world it never came to the real thing of bombs raining down upon us but it gave us all an awareness and a good historical background of the Great Wars. I was just into my teen years when the war was on and we read newspapers and heard much of the progress of the war.**

**Each year, May 24th was Empire Day and a public holiday. Schools were closed but there was a parade in the park to recognise the day. Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Brownies dressed in uniform, other school children in just their plain school uniform were on parade. Every school had to take part and then some important person made a speech about the Empire. Patriotic songs were sung, like 'Land of hope and Glory' – 'Rule Britannia' – and some others ending with 'God Save the King'.**

**In 1947 King George VI and his Queen Elizabeth undertook a round the world tour of thier British Empire as an expression of gratitude to the countries that contributed to Allied victory over the enemy. Southern Rhodesia had made a big contribution, especially the training of the Royal Air Force pilots under the Empire Training Scheme.**

**Southern Rhodesia Troops saw action in the North Africa campaigns through to Egypt. A mixture Coloured and Indian troops particularly fought in the Egypt theatre. I recall the Southern Rhodesia contingent marched through the streets of Bulawayo led by a military band prior to embarkation and the same when the troops returned and disembarked at the Bulawayo railway station. From there a march through the city bands playing, flags flying. The people were ecstatic, relatives friends and the general public gave them a great euphoric welcome home reception.**

**In Bulawayo the Royal visit coincided with Jacaranda time, probably about September. The main parade was held in the city Park. I was about teenage then, but Valerie recalled that she was kindergarten and selected by her school to present a bouquet to some member of the Royal Family she was not quite sure who.**

**The organisers in conjunction with the municipality had workers climb up the jacaranda trees early that morning and shake the leaves to form a purple carpet on the ground. It was so beautiful. The streets were lined with flag waving school children exclaiming greetings of welcome. The public gatherings were from the top of Selbourne Avenue to the City Park. As their Majesties and the Royal party drove from**

**Government House, instead of having the 'red carpet' rolled out they had nature's own purple carpet for the entourage to travel on.**

**In Canada, at many venues, the biggest in Calgary, their Majesties were entertained by many, including Native Indians. After Canada was the USA and in Washington DC their Royal Highnesses were hosted by the President of the USA, F.D. Roosevelt and his wife who entertained them at the White House. An interesting presentation that night was a solo by a Native American Indian, Chief White Feather, who was an opera singer. He sang two arias and then, when the audience wanted more he said, 'May I sing something from my heart' and he then sang, 'I'd rather have Jesus' the words written by Rhea Miller and put to music by George Beverly Shea the Billy Graham bass singer. The second verse and chorus goes;**

**I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause,  
I'd rather be faithful to His dear cause;  
I'd rather have Jesus than world-wide fame,  
I'd rather be true to His Holy name -**

**Than to be the king of a vast domain,  
Or be held in sin's dread sway;  
I'd rather have Jesus than anything  
This world affords today".**

**After he had sung that song, the Queen looked at him and said, 'That song bespeaks the sentiment of my heart and that of my husband. It is beautiful, and thank you for singing it to us.'**

**This was no affront to the King of the British Empire but of uplifting of the King of Glory and a reminder to an earthly king that we are all mortal and will one day lay down our crowns at His feet. King George the VI and his Queen applauded the message as they were a deeply religious Christian couple.**

**A few months later, Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup> 1947 also saw another momentous event burst into world center stage. The sound barrier was broken. Flying a Bell X-1 at Muroc Dry Lake Bed, California, Air Force pilot Chuck Yeager, broke the sound barrier, ushering in the era of supersonic flight.**

**Many years later I had the privilege of meeting Chuck through my association with ACCTS and still later, in London at Heathrow Airport I was privileged again to be in a group that were given a tour in a concord supersonic aircraft. The concord plied between London and New York for many years and was only discontinued recently.**

**Yet another momentous development, for the biblically minded, was working it's way towards prophetic fulfilment before the decade was to run out, and that was the returning of the Jews to their homeland Palestine, and for a Christian this has**

**enormous prophetic significance. The Nation of Israel was born on the 14th May 1948. Prime Minister then, Ben Gourion made the historical announcement in Jerusalem.**

**General Allenby's eagles.....**

**In 1953, the centenary of Cecil Rhodes' birth, the Rhodes Centenary Exhibition was held in the local City Park. The Queen Mother came to open the celebrations. It was a great exhibition and had the Theatre Royal programme patronised by the Queen Mother with the Halle orchestra conducted by maestro John Barbiroli, later knighted, in attendance every performance. Many famous entertainers and groups came from all over the world and their performances excelled and thrilled the audiences. Today the park is still officially known as the Rhodes Centenary Park of Bulawayo.**

**When I left school I played league soccer for my team 'Rangers'. There were four Indian teams that made the league, Rangers, and Uniteds were mixed team, Brigadiers were Gujerati Hindu and Empires a Moslem team. The only time we mixed is when we played inter city games between Salisbury and Bulawayo but only with Indians teams.**

**There were no Secondary schools for non whites in Rhodesia then. One either went to South Africa or overseas for further education. Many from the Coloured schools went to Cape Town's Zonnebloom College. To stick rigidly to the racial undertones Indians would have to go to Sastri College, Durban, to India or other overseas countries for further education as many did.**

**Africans went mainly to Fort Hare University, South Africa, where most of our present day politicians went, if not to the nominal Church Mission Colleges in the country. What an indictment against Missionaries and Church Mission High Schools and Colleges of Rhodesia that most of our politicians turned out as they are - Godless. There were no Evangelical Colleges in the country at that time and very few even now.**

**My father was getting on in years, and he needed help for the business. He did not cherish the thought of me leaving for another country to attain higher education so I missed out on any secondary or further education outside the country.**

**Immediately I left school I enrolled and began correspondence courses for higher education through Union College, of Johannesburg, South Africa, a reputed institution and went up to attaining Junior Certificate. After that, interest in further education waned as other teenage pursuits took precedence.**

**At 16 years of age school was done for me at Standard 7. With my father's Ford V8 Vanette, I got my drivers' licence. I still have it today, issued 23<sup>rd</sup> of April, 1949. When I get stopped by the police or at a roadblock, which is a common feature in Zimbabwe, the younger policemen have never seen such a licence and are puzzled. They all have a good laugh when I show them the date and a recent newspaper cutting confirming**

the old colonial licence is still valid and they are happy to let me pass.

## **CHAPTER 8**

My first job after school was in the printing trade with S. Carver and Son, wages at three pounds six shilling a week. I started from the ground floor, getting to work earlier and sweeping the whole workshop. Then practice on the letterpress machines feeding paper and doing dummy runs. Again we were second class. We could not be apprentices but were simply 'machine minders'. Feeding in the paper, offloading and stand watching the machine. Young whites would start, and in 3 three years of apprenticeship become journeymen. Such was the system yet we all belonged to and paid subs to the same Union affiliated to the South African Typographical Union.

Alick Carver the owner gave me some leeway into compositing, setting and chasing which strictly speaking, was unlawful according Union rules. Once in a while an inspector from the Typographical union arrived and I had to scurry doing something else that I was allowed to. In the early stages of my working life I gave all my pay to my father but later on only part. I bought myself a new Hercules fullsize bike.

By age eighteen all males were required to register with the Registrar of Manpower for what was classified as Peace Time Training after World War II. It consisted of attending 2 hour sessions of training every Saturday afternoon at the Drill Hall and this for a period of 4 consecutive years. After attaining 4 efficient years one was put on 'B' reserve and liable to be called up as and when deemed necessary by the powers that be.

Ritchie, who lived on the adjacent plot, and I became good friends as we still are today. We went hunting rabbits, doves and just wandering around in the African bush. We generally bagged nothing but just walking the bush trails, feeling important with an air gun, 'caties' and pocket knives. There is something aluring about the African veld and if one has grown up playing and wandering in the bush there seems to be a call even in grown up years. Having this background lends one to 'get lost' from the heavy cares of the day walking the African bush.

We were anxious to do our duty, so held a mini discussion and decided we wanted to join the Air Force and be pilots. That settled, we made our way to the Drill Hall where all registration was done. We entered, looked around in awe by all the busy hustle and bustle inside. We've never been in there before and got the feeling of we must be of some importance to make inroads into this august chamber.

We see a sign 'Air Force', 'ah, that's it' we say and make towards that entrance. We hardly had put our foot in and were met at the door by a burly, probably Sergeant Major who in no polite terms asked us what the hell we wanted. We stated our good intention to register for the Air Force to be pilots. He turned almost beetroot red as he swore and cursed, literally "kicked' us out of the place .

He stood at the door and he said 'you black bastards go over there, do you see at the end where it says toilets, it's the office next door- now 'f' off and don't put your foot here again. I remember all that so vividly and I was to recall this incident when nearly 40 years later when in the full uniform of the Chaplain General of the Army and Air Force of Zimbabwe, I sat in discussions in the office of the Air Marshal of Rhodesia and three later succeeding Air Marshals.

Air Marshal Azim Doudputa who succeeded AM Norman Walshe, required me as Chaplain General, to wear the Air Force Uniform with equivalent rank of Wing Commander when I visited Air Force personnel or his office. He came into the Zimbabwe Airforce scheme of events when the Government suspended or incarcerated many former Rhodesia airforce officers, (discussed in later chapters), formed an alliance with the Pakistani Government, brought an initial batch of about 100 Pakistani expatriots, Royal Airforce Trained, including a full Air Marshal. They faithfully served Zimbabwe for three or more years, in the interim grooming Zimbabweans, as they served when eventually the first Pakistani trained Air Marshal emerged, Air Marshall Josiah Tungamirai.

Back to the Drill Hall, Ritchie and I, our tails between our legs made our way to the directed office. The notice above the door read SRTC – Southern Rhodesia Transport Corps. That was the only unit that the Coloureds and Asians could attest into, the rest were Whites only. Africans had their own Battalion the RAR, totally separate.

In those days of segregation Coloureds and Indians were not admitted into the Police force, the Prison service, or the regular armed forces. Only whites and blacks were in those services, the Blacks in far inferior ranks, probably the highest at RSM, regimental sergeant-major, but always with white commanding officers.

Soon our intake was on Parade, our first, and we're politely informed by the White CO, Major Garriock in his introductory address that he's allowed two accidental deaths so of this intake don't more than 2 of us die. One can imagine how assuring that was to a new recruit. Once a year, around September we drove in convoy from Bulawayo to Inkomo Barracks which is 40 miles from Salisbury (Harare) being joined by other troop vehicles into the convoy as we went through the various towns, Gwelo, Que Que, Gatooma and Hartley through to Inkomo. Still to this day it beats me how the Whites could trust Indian and Coloured drivers to drive the White troops and they were allowed to do nothing else. Fortunately there were no major accidents that could be blamed on their 'inferior' intelligence and driving capabilities.

Most inter-city roads in those days were two strips of tar and both sides had to get off on to one strip to give way to oncoming traffic.

Some stock phrases of drill sergeants. On parade inspection, one stood in front of me one day and shouted, "am I hurting you, I shouted back 'no sir', and repeated twice or thrice he moved closer to me almost spitting in my face and said, "I should be, I'm



standing on your hair” – just a simple polite way to say ‘you need a haircut’. Another is, poking ones chest with his pacer, “your underpants is showing through your neck” – I always did and do wear a vest and probably sometimes it ‘showed’.

Every parade had roll call in alphabetical order. My name commencing with ‘R’ came right after the ‘P’ and Patels. I used to say that I could fall off to sleep on my feet and wake up when the “Patels” were being called, to be ready to shout ‘sir’ against my name.

The convoys usually had two dispatch riders on the old wide handlebar Harley Davidson motor cycles and they would ply between the lead truck and the rear workshop trucks with their messages. Retired Major Rogers was the CO and Captain Langmead brought up the rear Maintenance Unit. Dennis, later my brother in law, was one of the despatch riders.

On the Lomagundi Road to the convoy’s destination of Inkomo Barracks, there is the Allied African Distillery where gin and other alcoholic spirits are distilled. The whole convoy had permission to stop there as various ones ran across the road with 4 gallon containers to buy gin and other spirits that would last them the whole three weeks it seemed to me.

Once we were doing an exercise of night driving in the Zvimba reserve and I was driving a Bedford troop carrier, just myself and a co-driver. We were practicing driving with no lights but each truck had a white spot painted on it’s differential with a small spotlight focused on it. The driver behind is supposed to follow the white spot and nothing else. If everyone did that correctly there should be no mishaps - supposedly.

I was merrily following the truck in front of me when all of a sudden I hit a huge stump that ripped out the side tool box of the truck and at the same time the driver’s side front wheel set off an explosion. I thought I was dead. My co-driver and I recovered enough to realise that it was a dummy land mine and on checking after the exercise we discovered that several other drivers had also hit dummy land mines.

## **CHAPTER 9**

1953 was a historical year for the British Empire. The young Princess was to ascend to the throne of her father and be crowned Queen of the Empire in the style of her great, great grand-mother Queen Victoria. The whole Empire re-vibrated with the prospect of paying homage and loyalty to the new ruler and Queen, Her Britannic Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

For us of non-White origins there was much expectation for the betterment of our races throughout the Empire and so for the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1953, three SRTC Sergeants, Babu Vanmali Parbhoo, Ismail Bhika, Zachling Davies and Corporal Frank Johnson were selected to be part of the contingent to represent the SRTC. Sgt. Thomas Delmane Fransch was selected as standby to the

group. Sgt. Fransch was one of our instructors of the advanced courses and I recall he was smart and efficient in his deportment. He rose up to the top available rank of RSM, as far as NENA's could go in those days.

There were also four Africans from the RAR in the Coronation contingent and the rest were Whites drawn from all sections of the armed services.

According to Ismail Bhika, presently the only survivor of the four SRTC details to the Coronation, they spent the first month in Barracks in Salisbury doing advance training. They then arrived three months prior to the coronation and went into training camp in Pershure, Sussex, a Guard's training camp, where all the Commonwealth contingents came together to train for the final march and presentation on Coronation Day.

When the momentous day arrived the parade marched along the determined route, bands playing, flags flying, people cheering announcement after announcement and the SRTC's own Sergeant Zachling Davids proudly leading the Southern Rhodesia contingent bearing the colours – the flag bearer, as the ariel photograph depicts.

Sergeant Bhika recalls the announcement being made over the public address system along the route to the parade square, of the world breaking news of the conquest of Everest, the euphoria and public celebration that greeted the news adding further excitement and impetus to the Coronation fervour.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May 1953 a British expedition under the overall leadership of Brigadier John Hunt conquered Mount Everest. Edmund Hillary and Nepalese Sherpa Tenzing Norgay reached the summit. The news was received by the base camp some miles below and triggered off celebrations. The Indian Government was notified who assigned their air force to fly over and photograph the summit.

Before 1865, Mount Everest was initially known by mountaineers and cartographers simply as Peak XV of the Himalayas. A Welshman, George Everest who was the first surveyor general of India from 1830 to 1843 did surveys of the Himalayan range, including Peak XV, and upon his retirement and subsequent knighthood, Peak XV was renamed after him, simply Mount Everest.

Many famous photos taken by themselves raising the flags of their countries on the summit exist. The organisers and leaders decided that the news would be suppressed from the world media but would be first relayed to the Coronation Committee who would break the news in the new Queen's installation address that this conquest has been made and presented to her Majesty as a Coronation gift by the Everest team. On the coronation day, June the second, the new Queen was greatly honoured, elated and reciprocated sending messages of congratulations to the Conquering Team.

**John Hunt, leader of the expedition, relates in his book 'The Ascent of Everest' "the wonderful news broke in London on Coronation day that Everest has been climbed by the British Expedition – the news had been announced over loudspeakers along the Coronation route; the crowds had cheered incessantly.**

**We in the base camp were dumbfounded - it sounded like a fairy tale. Although we were still far from grasping the full significance of the event, we already knew quite as much as was good for one evening. Another jar of rum was called for and a second celebration took place. The Sherpas naturally shared in the revelry. We drank a loyal toast to Her Majesty the Queen"**

**His book ends with these words; "There is no height, no depth, that the spirit of man, guided by a Higher Spirit, cannot attain".**

**(The Ascent of Everest\* John Hunt)**

**Two weeks after the Coronation proceedings, the whole parade formed in Buckingham Palace grounds on the 16th of July for the presentation of medals. A special Queen's Coronation Medal was struck and presented to the Empire Parade participants by orderlies in the presence of the new Queen.**

**The same Coronation Medal that was struck for the Coronation Parade was engraved with "Mount Everest Expedition" with the name of each member on the rim was presented to the whole Everest team.**

**When this world famous episode burst into world headlines it knocked the props from under the Ramayana Dharmic laws. On the 29th of May 1953, Mount Everest was conquered by New Zealander Edmond Hillary and Nepalese Sherpa Tenzing Norgay. According to the Ramayana, Hinduism and Buddhism the Himalayas, Mount Everest in particular is the abode of the gods and will never be conquered.**

**It is interesting to note in any documentary of the conquest episode that the last post to begin the ascent was a Buddhist Temple and all the sherpas, porters and Nepalese requested time to pray and make offerings to the temple and the priests. Buddhism and Hinduism are inter-related religions.**

**A myth is shattered. Now it has happened. The Indian Air Force were assigned to fly over and photograph the summit where the flags of the countries represented by the expedition were strongly fixed. The two climbers took their own photos too, one of the other, as they held up the flags standing on the summit.**

**My father and I'm sure many of like faith was deeply moved by this event and probably shaken in their belief of the Ramayana. The monkey god Hanuman was the custodian of the Mount, so where was he to let this happen? Did he degenerate to the now famous elusive Yeti, the abominable snowman that Everest mountaineers are trying to capture?**

**Hanuman, is held as the Dharmic power behind King Rama. When the King's wife Sita was abducted by the evil demon Ravana to his demonic kingdom of Lanka (Sri Lanka now) Hanuman came to the assistance of Rama and his armies. The Ramayana says that Hanuman and his monkey clan made a bridge from the tip end of southern most India to the northernmost of Lanka. Hanuman could fly, was all powerful and intelligent, a god.**

**One variation says that he wrenched a piece of the Himalaya mountain, carried it over to the southernmost tip of India and threw it into the sea thereby creating a land bridge between the two pieces of land. His monkey legions crossed with Rama's armies, a mighty battle ensued, Ravana was defeated, Sita was rescued and the conquering heroes returned safely to Ayodhya, Rama's palace and kingdom.**

**Today the atlas shows the isthmus between the two land ends referred to as "Adam's Bridge" which legend says is the land mass was sunk after the victorious armies re-crossed into India's soil. On clear days it is said that the join can be seen from the air.**

**To this day the fight goes on concerning Ayodhya. When Islam was birthed in the 600s, Muslims came into the Ayodhya scene in the 700s under the Mughal Emperors, overcame the Hindu clans and laid claim to the holy site. They built Mosque after mosque that were torn down and the Hindus built temples one after the other and they were torn down the latest being as recent as 2005, till to this day there is a dispute going on about whose territory Ayodhya is.**

**Hindus claim it was Rama's Palace and kingdom and Muslims claim the Mughal Emperors conquered the Kingdom and converted everyone to Islam. Those who resisted were put to the sword. The conquerors tore down the famous temple palace of Rama and built a fabulous mosque in the site - in time to be torn down by the Hindus - and so the fight goes on. Even the Indian Government is involved in the embroiling saga.**

**Isn't it interesting that in this year of 2007, while all this is going on, the President of India is a Muslim, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the Prime Minister is a Hindu Sikh Dr. Manmohan Singh. Indians, Hindus and Muslims have lived for centuries since the coming of Islam to India, in this manner.**

**Another issue has now emerged in 2006. The Kingdom of Nepal claims to be the birthplace of Sita. The Nepalese Government in seeking to introduce a move to embrace secular religions including Christianity is opposed by its fiercely Hindu aristocracy. Hindus have taken to the streets in protest making the central issue the fact that Sita's birthplace and Rama's ascendancy to the throne are god given heritages to the people of Nepal. Hinduism is the official and the State religion of Nepal.**

With the conquest of Everest the leaders of the Indian community of Bulawayo hired the Palace Cinema, Bulawayo, for a special screening of this documentary. I recall my father taking me to see the film even though one more prop was knocked out from under Hinduism and Buddhism. I thank God for my father who did not shield me from this episode as he could have. I shared this many years later when a military group of us attended an IMX showing of the film "Everest" in Cape Town that so captivated me, that I had to call my group aside and share this whole episode and my testimony with them.

### Chapter 10

Ismail Bhika, the SRTC colour-sergeant then, was in the same contingent for the queen's Coronation with Sergeant .....McLean who in time went on to be Lt.General and Commander of the UDI Rhodesia Forces. This is a further anomaly in the separationist policy of the White supremacy in the Armed Forces. Bhika could see no useful future for him and forthwith resigned upon returning from the Coronation. In his own words, he was released when he threatened to make lots of trouble for the Army authorities if they forced him to stay on. In the normal course of events, if it were not for the White segregationist policy, he could well have ended up a General too.

At Inkomo it was 3 weeks of training and the trip reversed upon returning to Bulawayo. 4 consecutive efficient years and one attained this category and put on B reserve. Being on 'B' Reserve we were called out twice – once when there was civil unrest in Wankie Colliery and once to Nyasaland during times of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland.

My father was arranging for a wife for me with his contacts and family in Madras. According to custom and culture it was about time I was married. By letter and photographs both ways, a selection was finally made and I was to accompany my father to Madras to get married. He had saved separately for this 'project' and dates were set.

He had always sent funds for the welfare of his first wife that he had left with a baby girl when he went off to Rhodesia and they were both still living. They were able to acquire a small rice-field and supplement their income. Sadly the girl had had a difficult life, having got married, then her husband sold their small rice field which had been their sustenance and absconded to Singapore. To cap it all she contracted the dreaded disease of leprosy but still managed to live with her mother. Nevertheless, we looked forward to seeing them and for my father this would be his prayers answered .

In between, I had one more stint to do at Inkomo Barracks to earn my 4 efficient years and after that we would make the trip to India, but a major twist of affairs took place that annulled the whole project. My father had in his employ a young African as a

gardener. This man, whose name was Trust ironically, gained entry into the main house, found and stole all the savings, together with my mother's dowry jewels, gold bangles and our passports and buried them all in a hole in the large vegetable garden somewhere in the ten acre plot. The money he squandered and not a penny was recovered.

My father reported the matter and while I was at Inkomo Barracks the Criminal Investigation Department requested my presence in their Salisbury offices. I was also a suspect and under investigation that I had possibly taken all the money, jewels and documents. I was sent onto Salisbury with the army fuel run vehicle and dropped off at CID headquarters. After thorough questioning they concluded that I was off the suspect list and investigations reverted back to the gardener who finally confessed. He had spent all the money and sold all the valuables.

My Father's British India Passport was recovered, intact but thoroughly soiled as a result of hiding it in a muddy hole. Why mine was not that soiled I don't know. So there ended that saga for me to go to India to get married. I still have the picture of the pretty girl that I was going to marry but I believe that God had a different design for my life. It was not God's divine appointment for me, I know that my father was thoroughly disillusioned and disappointed. In his seventies now his health too was deteriorating fast.

As it transpired that we would never see his family in Tamil Nadu he continued to send support for them. My father passed on before they did but we were able to notify them in Kanchipuram and continue sending support. Not many years later his wife in India died and Jagadambal, the daughter with leprosy, was taken in by a Seventh Day Adventist Leprosy Sanatorium. We, her step family were now able to send her some funds to support herself. The last we did through the General Secretary of Scripture Union, Mr. Gnanaraja, whom my late wife and I hosted here in Harare where the Scripture Union International Conference was held in 1985. On his return to India he kindly visited her for us, took to her some presents and money we sent and wrote back to inform us with some photographs of her in her condition of leprosy. It is only a few years ago that she too succumbed to her malady and passed on.

Meanwhile, back to life as usual, we were now independent teenagers, had our own bicycles so once a week on Saturday nights we would all, a group of us, boys and girls ride about seven miles into town to bioscope or the 'flicks' as we called it. There was only one that we were allowed into and that was the Princes Cinema. Invariably a Western, Tarzan or some adventure movie was screened on Saturday nights. Two other cinemas existed, the Palace and the Empire.

We were not allowed into these two except on special days when the Empire Theatre was hired by the Indian community for the showing of Indian Films and every seat had to be paid for, occupied or not. These were usually on Sunday afternoons. I recall

going to many Indian movies with my father and once in a while he'd take the whole family.

The Princes Cinema, the only cinema that catered for Coloureds and Indians had about 100 seats reserved on the third tier near the noisy projection room. There were two tiers for whites with probably 3 to 500 seats. The most common films were in black and white while technicolour films were just emerging. Africans were not allowed in any of the city cinemas but had their own halls in their townships where films were shown.

An enterprising young Indian named Kishu, would by arrangement with the cinema managers for a small cut, at times when a popular movie would be screened, buy a good proportion of the 100 seats. He would then be selling the tickets privately outside the venue for double the price. He was very much disliked but prevailed anyway.

During the intermission of about 15 minutes a group of us made our way to the Grand Hotel Central bar, directly opposite the cinema, where a popular dance band played music we liked. We had to stand outside and listen as we were not allowed in. With just a minute to go we made it back to the cinema and after the show we all cycled back home the seven miles sometimes passing the 'Hot Dog' stalls in Grey Street where we bought a hot dog or hamburger with a drink.

These 'Hot Dog' stalls, several of them, were towed into position in front of the market in Grey Street in the early evening and began cooking to be in time to serve the cinema going public from about nine p.m. onwards. It was a kind of drive in restaurant. Cars would drive up, park opposite the stalls and attendants would run to serve. It was quite a feature of those days. That was one way for us to treat our friends and 'crushes' and girl-friends to hamburgers, hot dogs mixed grills and beverages. Liquor was not served. The stalls continued to exist and function for many years more.

I changed jobs and was now working for the Chronicle, the same machine minding. I also at times was assigned by the foreman to work night shift on the Rotary, the massive newspaper printing machine, to load the huge rolls of newsprint onto the machine. In this a bigger works with more up to date machines I thought that the non-white situation might be better.

I thought that there could be promotions as the years were passing maybe changes will be made but alas that didn't happen till two decades later in the 1980s. In our days there was about twenty of us non-whites working at the Chronicle. We had our own separate canteen, toilets, everything segregated. Today there are many non-whites, full journeymen in the printing industry, some even owning their own printing works and businesses.

**I left the Chronicle**



**Southern Rhodesia had by now become a part of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland in 1953. One year into my service we were given options to join The Federal service or remain in Rhodesia service. I opted to join Federal Service and remained so till the Federation was dissolved in 1963, and the country dropped the 'Southern' and reverted to plain Rhodesia under the Crown. Northern Rhodesia gained its independence, together with Nyasaland becoming Zambia and Malawi respectively. Since then I receive a small Federal Pension from the British Government.**

**Two years later in 1965 the Rhodesian Government under Prime Minister Ian Smith declared UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence) from the British Crown and became ostracized by the International community. Through the Security Council, sanctions were imposed against the country. We were stuck with our Rhodesian passports as only South Africa, Portugal and one or two other countries recognised us, the rest of the world was closed.**

**In the Rhodesia context, the Anglican Church or Church of England was always the 'State' Church. Parliament Buildings is built on Church grounds, adjacent to the Cathedral and for all intents and purposes it was designed to offer a climate of prayer for members before they applied themselves to the weighty business of State affairs.**

**There is a separate side entrance from the Cathedral into the Parliament Building. When parliament was in session it was the Bishop or the Dean of the Cathedral who would enter from the side door in time to pray for the session and then retreat the same way back into the Cathedral, a practice discontinued since Independence.**

**The first Anglican Bishop of Rhodesia after it gained self government from Britain in 1923 was Bishop Paget, who was also the first Chaplain General of the Defence Forces, with the rank of full Colonel, recorded in his church diary. I am told by the present incumbent, Dean Caxton that Parliament still stands on church property and pays a yearly rent according to the terms of State Church law.**

**Just after UDI in 1965 the relations between Church and State took an interesting turn when the Anglican Church then under Bishop C.W. Alderson and the Dean of the Cathedral S.M. Wood, with church council approval, amended the order of the service in the Common Book of Prayer to end the practice of praying for the Queen. Instead "Rulers of this Land" was substituted to be prayed for and continues to this day.**

## **Chapter 11**

### **THE EMPIRE TRAINING SCHEME**

**During the Second World War Allied pilots were trained in countries away from the war zones within the British Empire and Southern Rhodesia was one of the more advanced ones. We learned that these were Royal Air Force trainees here in Southern Rhodesia under the First Phase of the Empire Training Scheme to churn out pilots in safety and ideal weather conditions, night and day, for the war effort.**

**One Sunday morning I was preaching in the Cranborne Boys High School hall and I noticed a number of old photographs pertaining to the Empire Training Scheme. Obviously the school grounds was one of the airfields in the training days.**

**In the centre of all the photos is the following information. "This country made an outstanding contribution to the EMPIRE TRAINING SCHEME during World War II. The object of the scheme was to provide training facilities for the Royal Air Force under ideal flying conditions.**

**Many stations were established at Belvedere, Cranborne, Mt. Hampden, Norton, Guinea Fowl, Moffat, Thornhill, Heany, Hillside, Induna and Kumalo. Over 9,900 aircrew were trained, including 7,600 pilots.**

**IN 1975 Group Capt Douglas Bader, CBE,DSO,DFC visited his old training school and unveiled a plaque on the playing field named after him "The Bader Field" Cranborne Boys High School – October 27<sup>th</sup> 1965**

**Rhodesia was chosen as weather conditions were so consistent and they could do day and night flying. The second phase was done in Canada and other cold countries to get acclimatised to Europe's weather and operational conditions. More accidents and deaths happened in the second phase than the first. The pilot who wrote the now famous poem 'Highflight' died in an accident in Canada. Below is the poem;**

**Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter silvered wings  
Sunward I've climbed and joined the tumbling mirth  
Of sunsplit clouds and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of, wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence; hovering there  
I've chased the shouting wind along and flung  
My eager craft through the footless halls of air;  
Up, up the long delirius burning blue  
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark or eagle flew  
And while with silent lifting wind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.**

**John G. Magee, RAF, 1941**

**A plaque commemorating the life of John Magee is erected at the crash site at the Niagara District Airfield, Niagara Falls. It has a special significance for me as I was to use this poem many years later to raise funds for airmen and families in need. I recently visited the spot and photographed the memorial plinth and plaque.**

One day in '94 I was honoured to receive a surprise visit in Harare from one of the ex-pilots who actually trained here, Charles Pocock of Hove, East Sussex, UK. Someone had referred him to me and I was happy to receive and drive him around as we explored his old haunts together, it was an education for me – even the old tin billet rooms at the present Cranbourne barracks, though converted for other uses now were the same old tin buildings they lived in. I took him around to as many places that still exist, even the Commonwealth war cemetery. He remembered many friends as he read the epitaphs. I took him to Cranbourne School where in the assembly hall many old photographs were still hanging. He was so thrilled.

A marble tablet stands in the Centre of the Commonwealth war graves and reads thus:  
**ZIMBABWE IN THE TWO WORLD WARS**

In the first world war, local units took part in the campaign in German East Africa and detachments served on the Western Front in France and Flanders.

Many thousands from both the African, European and mixed race communities joined the armed forces of the commonwealth during the Second World War. They served not only in local units but also in the Royal West African Frontier Force, the East African Forces and the Royal Air Force. Both in their own units and serving in others, they saw action in many theatres of war.

A valuable contribution to the Commonwealth war effort was the country's participation in the Empire Air Training Scheme, by which in southern Africa, 25,000 Air Crew were trained including 7,600 pilots. Those who fell in battle are buried in war cemeteries or commemorated on memorials, in the campaign areas.

There are 694 graves of the Second World War in Zimbabwe of which 429 are those of airmen, many of whom were killed in training accidents.

**HARARE PIONEER CEMETERY** – This plot was constructed and is maintained by the **COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES COMMISSION**.

## **Chapter 12**

A few years later I changed jobs again and thought I'd go into something else since we non-whites were getting nowhere with the printing industry. I joined OK Bazaars as a storeman and that I believe was divine guidance as it wasn't long before I met a girl and got serious about her. For me it was love at first sight 'I wasn't pushed, I didn't slip, I just fell' - for her it took a little time. Later on I was to joke that I bought her at OK Bazaars.

This was not just another 'crush' and with perseverance she eventually became my girlfriend. That was serious enough in those days when you called someone your girlfriend or boyfriend. I went to meet her along the way as she walked to work from the other end of the city, the Brickfields, where a mixture of the Coloured and Indian folk lived. Later I got a little Morris Minor and picked her up along the way and we

**drove to work together. Courting days.....Her mother was very strict but eventually I won her over too.**

**I was still working at OK Bazaars in 1955 when my father passed away at the age of 81. My mother was 35. This was devastating for me. I did all he taught me for his burial. Soon after his passing I seemed to lose my bearings, left OK Bazaars and for a whole year I just loafed, but just like the Prodigal son, finally by God's grace I came to my senses, thank God, and commenced a job with Government Printing and Stationery in 1956. I was to remain a civil servant there for 22 years till I moved over to the Ministry of Defence, as Soldier Chaplain.**

**During my first years at Printing and Stationery it developed that I had been underpaid for my grading as a printer and one payday I received a big windfall of nearly a thousand pounds in back-pay. That was a lot of money those days.**

**I did turn up for work the next day but I remember my boss Roy Dickerson saying to me that he thought that I would be in bed smoking cigars and forget about working anymore. What I did do with the money was to first have my mother's house wired up and connected with electricity as up to then we used candles, lamps, woodstoves and buckets of water fetched from the well quite a distance away in the middle of the vegetable garden. I had a pump fitted to the well and water pumped up to the house.**

**Later, when municipal water came to our area I had water connected to the house. I bought some extra furniture, and did some alterations to the old house to make it comfortable for all. I also invested in a radiogram and now we could pension off the old 'His Master's Voice' gramophone and enjoy the stereophonic sound of a radiogram.**

**Valerie, whom I lovingly called Lali, her family pet name and I were preparing to get married and I started building a house on the end corner of the family plot. I had to subdivide two acres off the ten acre plot. I drew my own plans and got them passed and two Italians builders, left overs from Kariba who decided to stay in the country, began building part-time for me.**

**By this time my grandma had passed away and grandpa now in his eighties came to live with us on the family plot. For my building he handled the concrete mixing machine, still as strong as ever – the wheelbarrow boys could hardly keep up with him. The builders worked weekends only but the semi double story house was duly completed in 28 weekends by the two Italians and casual labourers.**

**Lali and I were married in St. John's Cathedral, Bulawayo, July 1960. Life was bliss and our son came along a year later giving us greater joy. Four years later we were blessed with Ruth and still four years on we were blessed with Donna. My wife took loving care of our family. I will deal with my marriage and conversion to Christ in Part III of this book.**

### **Chapter 13**

**Meanwhile the sounds of revolution began to seriously surface after UDI was declared with random explosions and incidents in various parts of the country which was now escalating and getting more intense.**

**Once a week, as an outreach and ministry to the sick in our hospital, the Richard Morris, I began a radio ministry. I would make reel to reel tapes, with an introduction and invitation to listen to the 'Happy Moments Radio Gospel Programme' for half an hour. My wife and a team from the church would cover the hospital, that is, briefly visit every patient, with a little gift booklet and a pamphlet invitation 'to plug in your ear phone at eight'.**

**In the radio room where the big transmitter was, my little son and I would be waiting for eight o'clock. I had my tape recorder plugged in and on the stroke when the announcer said 'this is Radio Matopos' the time is eight o'clock, I would unplug the radio and switch on to tape. The transmission went to every earphone and most patients listened. I earned the distinction from patients and people even after they left hospital of being the 'Radio Matopos' announcer, because that's the station that came on at eight every night those days, and people not knowing the mechanics of it, thought I worked for the radio station.**

**BMA, Bible Memory Association was also a ministry that was introduced into Rhodesia by Bob Beaty. It ran successfully for many years until disrupted by the war situation. We, my wife and I then took it over and continued to run it from our home. Many young people took up the courses and graduated into the higher phases of memorising bible verses. Our own children were the examples and literally the 'guinea pigs' for this ministry. Today it is known as Scripture Memory Association with head offices in St. Louis, Missouri, Dr. N.A. Woychuck, the founder and directing it for nearly fifty years.**

**Valerie also ran a once a week Good News Club' for primary schoolers. They enjoyed converging at our home and having a lot of fun and games interspersed with bible lessons and flannelgraph presentations which she was good at. Our two daughters assisted and learned a lot from their mother which stood them in good stead when they took on ministry to children.**

**On March 2, 1970 The Rhodesian Ian Smith Government declared Rhodesia a Republic further alienating itself from the international world. Nothing much changed in the country except that in two years time conscription would be introduced for school leavers and university entrants.**

**We woke up one morning in 1972 to hear that the UDI Rhodesian Government had made conscription or the draft compulsory with immediate effect and that we are fighting a guerrilla war. All young males, White, Coloured and Asian, 18 years and above were required to do military service before proceeding with any further studies**

or seek employment said the announcements over radio and the newspapers.

Currently, Whites and NENA's (Non-European Non-African) – Coloureds, Indians and any that don't qualify to be White or African were 'called up' – at first from school leavers of 18 years then up to 24 years and then as more manpower was required so the call-up age group increased till up to the 35 to 45s were called up in different categories, i.e. Territorials and Reserves would do a 'stint' for 3 or 4 weeks yearly.

Certain professions were or could apply for exemption, among them those classified as essential services including the medical and ministers of religion. Men of my age then and us on 'B' reserve were receiving Ministry of Manpower requests by mail to update or confirm our present status which prompted all sorts of reactions. Some recipients went as far as leaving the country but most had no choice. I and some friends began exercises and jogging to get fit.

As sanctions were tightened, petrol rationing had to be introduced. The coupon system was used and each motorist had to register and account for mileage to and from one's place of work and that was the limit allowed. For any extra trips or mileage, special application over and above the limit had to be made, as I had to do for the extra trips that I did to Llewellyn Barracks.

Sanctions went further and the 'Beira Patrol' was enforced. British ships under the UN flag patrolled the Mozambique coastline to prevent sanctions breaking tankers slipping through the cordon and delivering oil to the pipeline in Beira which then was pumped through to Rhodesia's Feruka refinery in Umtali.

Many years later in my ministry with ACCTS I met the commander of one of the ships that did the 'Beira Patrol' and we had good exchanges of what went on during that time. He is now retired Royal Navy Commander Mike Nalder, a keen Christian and supporter of Military Ministry.

Fuel nevertheless did make it's way to Rhodesia via South Africa who became a strong ally and did not enforce the sanctions imposed by the UN, and Rhodesia was able to keep the wheels turning. Some countries like Japan and France circumvented sanctions and exported their motor vehicles to Rhodesia minus all the makers' names and embellishments.

I answered Manpower's request in detail and added a note generalising that 'I am now engaged in a lot of religious activity and when I am called up can I be placed where I can be useful' – I had medics in mind. I got a reply informing me that since I am a Jehovah's Witness, an appointment has been made for me to meet the Board of Conscientious objectors – date, time and place given.

I was horrified that I had been placed in that category. I wrote back and with centimetre high capitol letters I stated that I was not a Jehovah's Witness, I was not a

conscientious objector, I was not refusing to do my military commitment and in big capital letters again, underlined in red wrote, "someone please re-read my original letter"

To my utter amazement I got a letter post-haste signed by the Registrar of Manpower himself, J.D.McAusland, apologising for the error and informing me that I am now classified as a 'bona-fide Minister of Religion and will not be required to do military service - thank you for your offer'. After recovering from my initial shock I almost started celebrating - 'hey, I'm out of the army'. Many would give their right hand to be 'let off' like that - but I could not accept this 'accident'. I believed that God must have a hand in it. At this point in time after my conversion suffice to say that I am enthusiastic about my new found faith and nothing was too much for me to do.

After some soul searching, I could not accept that I was 'off the hook'. I felt that there was some divine intervention and that I could use the mix-up to my advantage for the Lord's work. I was as yet not an ordained minister though it was in the plans for later in the year when a number of us Nationals and understudies of the Apostolic Church of Pentecost would be ordained.

Llewellyn Barracks, formally Heany Airfield (now Imbizo Barracks) is about 20 miles distance from the city of Bulawayo, and the initial nationwide call-ups reported there for basic training (boot camp) of 3 months. After discussion and prayer with my pastor then, Albert Roberts I made an appointment to see the camp Commandant. On the day we travelled with my Morris 1100 which had probably not made such a 'long distance' trip of 20 miles for many years and so 'boiled' on the way. I had not checked the water so we had to visit a farmer's house and get water. We finally arrived at Llewellyn Barracks none the worse.

Colonel then, later Major General, John Thompson received us cordially, listened to my narration seeking permission to have church services with the Asian and Coloured National Servicemen. He perused the letter from Manpower and put a call to his RSM, who upon arrival was briefed about my mission and instructed to issue me with a pass for entry into the Barracks at any time.

We thanked the CO and the very next Sunday I was there with my then eleven year old son Gary, found a convenient corner near the NS quarters and thus I began my church services. My son played the trumpet and I the guitar we played hymns, modern church music and attracted a good number of National Servicemen - thus I found God's plan for the manpower mix-up.

I went faithfully every Sunday and was delighted to notice that the National Servicemen were swelling in numbers but unbeknown to me at the same time someone else's numbers were dwindling. I went on for several weeks till one morning in the middle of my service I noticed a Renault R4 kicking up dust and coming in my direction. A man in uniform and a clerical collar alighted and confronted me, he was



livid and barked out some questions to me, “who are you – where do you come from – by what authority do come and hold this type of church here, etcetera”.

I was shocked and at a loss for words but finally blurted out “please excuse my ignorance but I was not made aware that you are the Chaplain here and that I should have informed you. The Colonel interviewed me, saw my credentials from Manpower and had me issued with this pass, here it is” ... and I truly was ignorant I didn’t know there was a chaplain corps. Pointing his finger at me he barked “you come and see me tomorrow morning” and with that he turned around and drove off. ‘Phew’.

#### **CHAPTER 14**

On Monday morning I went to Major the Rev. Ken Edgar’s office in St. Andrews Chapel at HQ Brady Barracks. I noticed his countenance was changed. I suspected that he had had a chat with the Colonel and was now more amenable. We chatted some at first about my background then he told me that he had been a chaplain to the Royal Air Force in India during the Second World War. I estimated that he was in his fifties.

He told me to write a letter to him explaining how I got to this position of having access to visit the NS and officially apply to practice my office as minister of religion in the Barracks. Meanwhile I may continue till he hears officially from Chaplain General’s HQ in Salisbury. I was relieved and felt more comfortable knowing I had overcome a big hurdle. I thanked the Lord and continued more enthusiastically.

“If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him keep step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away” says Henry Thoreau – and in a preacher’s life the different drummer is Jesus Christ the Divine drummer, never changing, yesterday, today and forever the same.

A name badge identifying me as ‘Padre Val Rajah’ and my son Gary as chapel organist were made. Whereas before this I stayed at the barracks only till my service was over now I took the liberty and stayed all day. My son and I had lunch at the Officer’s Mess and in the afternoon I did visitation among the NS and their visitors but spent more time with those that had no visitors and more there was those who had no visitors for the simple fact it was not practical for families living in other centres to make visits every weekend. I had my son place himself by a window in the chapel and play his trumpet out towards the square where the NS converged with their visitors. At eleven years old he could play quite advanced music.

The system was that there was an Intake of NS every three months and they did their first phase of training at Llewellyn Barracks. The Asians and Coloureds came in batches of about 100 each intake for an initial 3 months of basic training. A typical intake scenario is about three weeks apart for Whites and NENA. They would all report at the square in Llewellyn Barracks and at the appointed time the RSM would come and address them. Then a team of NCOs would ‘try’ to form them up, they would

then be walked to the quartermaster stores. Situated there was the barber shop. About 6 'barbers' would just about shave the hair to the skin. The young men would be lamenting their flowing locks or special hairstyles but surprisingly there was much joviality and laughing.

Next was a walk through the QM stores to receive kit. They would be formed into single file and like a sausage machine would go through receiving items of uniform from hat or beret to boots. They continue to walk through with kit heaped up in front of them then come to the legal people who request or rather suggest they make a simple will – and next is the Gideons, they were always there, who offer a New Testament and then they're 'formed' outside again and walked to their billets

It would take them a day or two before they would be marching in ranks and their training began in earnest. I made my services very simple. I told them to come as they were, vests, bare feet but I soon found out that was against military church parade rules and that they had to dress as for Church Parade. That is why in the early stages of my meetings my numbers swelled. It was the easy way out for them when I had said 'come as you are'.

Nevertheless no one was forced to come to my outdoor service but they generally came anyway, Hindus and Muslims included. I spent a lot of time too with those held in detention barracks.

With this system I had a new congregation every three months, first phase over, they would then go on to Inkomo Barracks for their second phase of training before becoming operational. The Whites went on to 1 Rhodesia Light Infantry, Commando Barracks. After my service at Llewellyn I went to the main Detention Barracks at Brady and ministered there. I found those in DB (Durban Beach as it was nicknamed) most responsive and their needs were great. Today nearly 30 years later I will still now and then meet someone who will tell me we met in DB.

I was doing all this voluntarily as I worked for Government Printing and Stationery. I soon found out that going on a Sunday only did not meet all the needs, so I made trips after work during the week to meet with those who were referred to me with some problem or other.

There was a lot of youngsters who suffered psychologically, some even suicidal, and sadly there were. The first 'talk' I ever gave every new intake was based on "there is nothing whatsoever in this world, no matter how difficult things become, that is worth you taking your own life for". Matt 11:28 and Life abundant in Jesus, John 10:10.

As parents and girls came to know of my access to their sons and boyfriends I was soon inundated with letters or parcels to deliver. I got a special dispensation and this privilege was allowed me. This gained me favour with the NS and a more receptive and attentive attitude.

On the other front Padre Edgar and I became good friends. By now he had received approval from the Chaplain General Norman Wood, DMM, who cleared my ministry activities with Army Headquarters. There were times when Padre Edgar would ask me to take the whole NS, whites and the rest, the free church them when he had else to do.

The military churches were divided into two main groups, the Free Church meaning all the rest except the Roman Catholics. Padre Wally Beale a Catholic priest took all the Roman Catholics for service every Sunday at St. Christopher's Chapel, also in Llewellyn Barracks.

When I took the Free Church service, St George's, the WWII chapel at Llewellyn was too small and we had to use the cinema which was an old WWII hanger, refurbished and converted to use as cinema, theatre and general meeting venue. When I had that sort of opportunity I would arrange for a full music team from city churches to lead the singing and music, my son young as he was, directing. Sometimes I had guest preachers but most always I did the preaching.

Living Sound, a musical group from Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, visited the country after performing in South Africa and Zimbabwe had them for four days. They did concerts and in particular in Zimbabwe, we were able to take them to two 'safe' camps to play in concert and minister the Word.

My son Gary played trumpet with them and they were impressed with his standard of music and offered him a kind of scholarship to continue his music at their university which he finally did. I went to meet Terry Law the music leader and Gordon Calmeyer the manager at Mabelreign Chapel and we discussed briefly the possibility of Gary attending ORU.

He graduated Bachelor of Music, and there also met his future wife to be, also a music graduate. They married after graduation and Gary is today music minister of a large church in the Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Around that time a delegation from the United States Congress were in Rhodesia making an assessment visit. They included two Senators and the group were led by Rev. Jerry Falwell of Liberty Baptist Church and University, Lynchburg, Virginia. They toured the country making assessments, accompanied by various army officers and chaplains. Senator Jesse Helms made a presentation of the team's findings and observations to the US senate and President Reagan personally.

I was assigned to accompany them to the Victoria Falls. We were flown by Dakota and I had arranged an itinerary, visiting a military camp at Vic Falls and gave them a further general idea of the war situation. They enjoyed viewing the magnificent Victoria Falls in the process of being in the area. They were grateful and it was also

my duty to deliver them safely to the airport for their departure. A few minutes before departure Rev. Jerry Falwell put a 100 US dollar bill in my hand. That was the first 100 dollars that I was to give to my son Gary who was on his way to Oral Roberts University in a few month's time.

## **CHAPTER 15**

The war was escalating and by the mid seventies most foreign missionaries received directives from their embassies and missions that they should remove from the country or remain at their own risk. Most foreign missionaries, who held resident permits opted to leave as they had sons who could be called up for NS. The missionary that was with us then, Albert Heinsig was one such. By this time, Albert Roberts and his wife Verna had long left and re-located in Brazil planting a church in Sao Paulo.

By our particular mission organisation it was decided that every National understudy to the missionary would be ordained and the churches handed over to and it was so that the Canadian Presbytery ordained us. I was the only non ethnic African National in that category in the country at that time. We then took over the churches and the missionaries left. By this time since my conversion, I had been nine years as an understudy to the missionaries and I went on to be the Pastor of Bethany Apostolic Church of Pentecost for another nine years before I moved to the Chaplaincy.

Now I was doing three different activities, working at a full time job, running a church and getting more and more involved with the military situation. I also got a printing machine and at home I printed a weekly "The African Home News" for Mr. Charlton Ncebetsha. Copies of this newspaper can be seen in the National Archives today.

During those days most ministers were doubling up on extra efforts to help the war situation. The general public responded magnificently to the war effort. Churches were full, prayer meetings sprung up everywhere, people supported all causes such as the Border Patrol Fund, restaurants and canteens sprung up along the main routes and in the towns where troops could stop and refresh themselves. I noticed at every camp I went the special tinned orange juice from Israel I can't tell if these were imported or gifts from Israel, there was so much of it. The desert shall bloom and produce much fruit. I looked forward to having these fruit juice cans whenever I visited the camps.

By this time my ministry was officially recognized and I applied for a transfer from Ministry of Finance which I came under in my Government job to the Ministry of Defence, into the Corps of Chaplains. I had the support of the Chaplain General Lt. Col. Rev. Norman Wood who accepted fully and took a keen interest in my work. The official message that came down from Army HQ was that they could not take me in the regular service because as an ordained minister I would have to come in with the commissioned rank of Captain and there was no provision as yet in the Armed Services for that or entry into the regular forces for non-whites.

If I was prepared to accept Warrant Officer Class 1, I could come in as a territorial. I

calculated that since I had not rose up in the ranks as a career soldier and just wanted to serve a useful purpose in this war, I should consider the offer. I had to come to terms with myself. Did I really want this – to join Smith's army.

I received very little encouragement from friends and family. Even my wife was apprehensive – it was like stepping into the unknown – nothing was sure about the direction the country was going. I had a secure job, with 22 years of service and perhaps I should stick to it for safety. My boss then, Colin Ray, made a big joke and often threw it at me – “Rajah, they'll have you for desert – you had better move to South Africa”.

I prayed much wrestling with the pros and cons but finally the call to serve my fellow man in the capacity of minister of the gospel outweighed any other argument. I decided to give it my all.

Later, in post-war reflections I was asked by an ex-combabant who attended one of my services, “who did you pray for when the war was on – for Smith to win?

I replied that my primary ‘job’ as a military chaplain was to teach a soldier how to die, as many of these whom I ministered to were in that position as they go operational. ‘A man must first learn to die before he knows how to live’ said a wise man.

The lateral transfers were effected by the relevant Government Departments concerned so I came over to Defence as a Territorial with my 22 years of Service with Government Printing, to the rank of Warrant Officer Class 1, Ministry of Defence.

General Peter Walls confirmed this when he visited the Chapel office and spoke to Ken Edgar and I telling us that legislation was going through for granting of commissions to non-whites and for entry into the regular services. He stated that the first two that will come into the army will be the two RSMs in the RAR who had been with that rank since coming back from Malaya. He was a young subaltern and they were sergeants and they were together, slept in the same tents ate the same foods and here he was a General and they still WO1s.

A few months after the legislation was passed they came in as full Lieutenants and Lt. Nkatozo Martin Tumbare, DMM was awarded the Sword of Honour of 1 RAR. The Chronicle headline announced “Old Sword for first African officer. An old sword will be put to historic use today when it will be presented to the first African officer to be commissioned into the Rhodesian Army”. At a ceremony at army headquarters in Salisbury, Regimental Sergeant-Major Nkatozo Martin Tumbare, of 1 RAR will become Lieutenant Tumbare. The Sword of honour was a legacy left by a far sighted officer of the RAR who saw the day when Africans will be commissioned into the Rhodesian Army.

**“Lt. Tumbare has fulfilled that legacy. He was presented with the Ceremonial Sword on a historic and significant day 9th June 1977 by Mrs. Rule the widow of the late Lt Col. Rule at the parade when the Queen presented the regimental Colours to the Battalion”.**

**RSM Tumbare served a period of 30 years, served in Egypt, Malaya and the Federal Territories. He was on parade when the queen presented the colours to the battalion. The other RSM commissioned was WOI Mutero of 2 RAR. The next day at the School of Infantry in Gweru eleven more Africans received their commissions as second Lieutenants. RSM Tumbare was a personal friend of Lt. Peter Walls later to become General Walls. Rhod Herald**

**True to the General’s word a few weeks later I was brought in as a Captain, enlisted into the Regular Army, the first NENA to be accorded this honour and it happened to be a chaplain, and the first to be attested into the regular force. The acronym NENA was now an obsolete term no more officially to be used in military documents.**

**In Bulawayo I had a welfare department that was assigned to me with Mrs. Blanchet of the Womens Services heading it. We worked closely together on many projects both personal and community. We unveiled the Founders’ High School Roll of Honour in her time. 18 former students had by then given their lives for the cause.**

**Mr Solomons the principal of Founders High School had the whole school on assembly and addressed them under the heading “Founders answered the call” – and truly they did. In his book ‘Rhodesians Never Die’, Peter Godwin lists all the White schools that gave of their students for the cause but non-White schools are omitted – perhaps an oversight.**

**As Chaplain I then read scripture, had a short message and prayed. Col. Mickelsfield CO 1 Brigade then unveiled the Scroll of Honour board. I asked for a minute of silence to allow the assembled to reflect. It was a sobering time for all students and staff as they paused to consider the ultimate price paid by their fellow students. I believe that I saw a tear here and there.**

**Welfare of the family was a very much needed service as later on in Harare the same was instituted under my direction with Major Mrs. Joy Whittaker heading the department. Along with all the day to day attendance to needs as they arose the Harare department we were able to get milk powder and two tons of sugar to Rushinga Refugee Camp.**

**An interesting reversal was taking place especially in the Coloured community as a result of the menfolk being constantly on call-up. Vacancies were being filled by the womenfolk as I found out in dealing with welfare cases that many Coloured women rose to executive positions and the men were being left behind.**

**Women were becoming independent and capable of caring for their children without the help of the menfolk who in many cases were squandering their lives and bringing home no pay. Somehow it seems that those serving in the army were forming the opinion that this was going to last forever – almost like a permanent job and they might as well make the best of it, to the neglect of family. With the advent of Independence it began to dawn on them that this was coming to an end they became quarrelsome with their wives and this was the cause of many family break-ups as the wives were now in good positions and earning good salaries. I had to arbitrate in many cases of this nature.**

**Many cases of a domestic nature were referred to me as a minister to visit and counsel. One such case was a rebuke, amusing, and an eye opener to me. I went to a home in Cranborne invited by the wife of a RDR soldier who was squandering the family income and all his army pay on gambling. He was a compulsive gambler and also an E 'cat' healthwise.**

**The wife was in the category previously mentioned – if it had not been for her executive position earning executive pay the family of two little boys and themselves would be in dire straights. So I turned up at the home in uniform, Captain at that time, and after all the greetings began to counsel and admonish the soldier in question.**

**He was already under the influence and we were standing in the living room, his little son by his side holding his hand. He correctly deduced that I was 'scolding' his father and as I proceeded with my harangue I felt a sting on my right shin and looked down to see young Ryan fixing to give me another kick. He pulled away from his father's hand and ran out of the room crying.**

**I never forgot the lesson that I learned from a small boy that day. Never scold a parent in the presence of their offspring – I knew that as a pastor but I think I got carried away by the three pips on my shoulder.**

**I finally arranged with Army Pay and Records as I did in similar cases, that the soldier will collect his pay in I my presence, hand it over to me and I would deliver the pay to his wife. Fortunately there were not too many such situations and so the burden was not great on me.**

**On a more pleasant errand, I was going to Bulawayo on duty and whenever I did so I took my wife and family along to visit both sides of the family who all resided in that city. This one time I got an appeal from a couple in Harare to take their little baby Johanna to her grandparents in Bulawayo to release the mother to take up employment.**

**So, armed with all that a baby needs for travel, bottles and nappies we set off for Bulawayo. We called in at the main Forces Canteen in Que Que and got the baby all freshened up and fed and had a pleasant continuation of the trip to Bulawayo, duly**

delivering little Johanna to her grandparents. Just for the record I had grand-dad sign a receipt in my diary acknowledging the safe delivery of our charge. Another Chaplain chore accomplished.

## Chapter 16

One day as I was driving in Bulawayo I came up behind an Army truck with a number of African soldiers at the back. To my amazement I saw they were wearing commissioned ranks the highest being Major. As soon as I could I confronted the Adjutant at Brady, Major Tony Pugh-Roberts, requesting an explanation. He was a good friend and put his finger to his mouth and told me in a whisper 'this is all hush hush' nobody is supposed to recognize them.

It transpired that they were officers of the Trankian High command being trained in Rhodesia. The officer who was with the rank of Major turned out to be Bantu Holomisa, later Major General who headed the Military Junta of Transkei, one of the South African designated 'homelands'. With the coming of the new order and abolition of apartheid, the 'homelands' were integrated into the new South Africa under the new President Nelson Mandela. Bantu Holomisa was appointed a minister under the new government.

I nevertheless made contact with them as they were quartered in Llewellyn Barracks and so I had another group to minister to on Sundays. They appreciated my church services and one sermon that Bantu Holomisa was to remind me when I visited him and his Military Junta in Transkei a few years later, was a sermon I preached to them titled "When God looked for a soldier and found none" - the story of David, Saul and Goliath. A civilian, David the shepherd boy stepped forward and God used him to kill Goliath, when really the King, tall Saul should have been the valiant one.

Next it transpired that a coup had taken place in Portugal and the change of government was capitulating, handing over their overseas colonies including Mozambique, to a Marxist regime. Many peoples of Portuguese origin, residents of Mozambique were fleeing into neighbouring South Africa, Rhodesia and other places.

Many of the younger men who were in the military fighting Frelimo were opting to come to Rhodesia and join the military here. As a result of the coup Portugal the new Government was granting Independence to all it's overseas colonies.

This was probably a welcome move for the Rhodesians as many of these were soldiers in the Portuguese military and already were seasoned fighters. They just needed some orientation and background knowledge of English and the modus operandi of the Rhodesian Forces so they were encamped for about three weeks before becoming operational. There were Whites and Coloureds among them and most of them retained their ranks. I searched for a plan to minister to them since I spoke no Portuguese and they very little English. I hit upon an idea that became workable and popular.



**A Baptist missionary had given me a long playing record of a sermon that Billy Graham preached at a crusade in Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium in 1960. He spoke his usual clear simple English and had his words interpreted by the then Director of the Baptist Convention of Brazil whose English to Portuguese translation was very good. Joao Filson Soren, the interpreter, had also served as Chaplain to the Brazilian Forces in WWII. The two made a good team.**

**So I made audio tapes of the LP and played it for our service, pausing randomly to discuss or clarify a point. The army had supplied the chaplains with sturdy custom-made tape recorders and these served the purpose. I could leave them with the new arrivals who used them profitably. I got good response from the soldiers who generally were spiritually uplifted.**

**Many years later, thirty to be exact, when I was in Brazil and visited the late Dr. Joao Filson Soren's First Baptist Church in Rio de Janeiro. I was prompted to write a letter to Dr. Billy Graham with the following testimony.**

**March 2003**

**Dear Dr. Billy Graham,**

**Your crusade in Brazil, at the Maracana Stadium, Rio de Janeiro in 1960 is having a profound renewal effect on me after 30 years. I am from Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia.**

**No, I was not in the stadium then – but today, these first three months of 2003, I am temporarily in Rio, receiving radiation treatment for prostate cancer – living in an apartment provided by Christian friends, across the street, within sight and sound of this popular venue. Of all the spaces in this vast city and country, I marvel at the Lord's choice of residence for me.**

**It was all revived a few weeks ago when I attended a service at the First Baptist Church of Rio and to my great surprise I saw advertised for sale on the church's notice board, the LP of that particular crusade now made into CDs. The cover picture caught my immediate attention as I recognised it as being the same as on the LP record I possess.**

**At that time 1960, the First Baptist Church of Rio de Janeiro was pastored by the interpreter of your crusade Dr. Joao Filson Soren, now with the Lord, whose picture is on the cover with you. Needless to say I was very excited and bought a CD immediately.**

**History also records that Dr. Filson Soren was the first second World War Evangelical chaplain to the Brazilian Forces and the subsequent architect of the Chaplain's structure of the Brazilian Armed Forces, thereby remaining a patron till his death.**

**My story goes, that during the Rhodesia conflict in the 70s, I recorded on cassette tape hundreds of that message and passed them on to Portuguese speaking military**

and civilian ex-Mozambicans fleeing into Rhodesia. Many were in initial refugee holding camps awaiting screening and clearance to join the Rhodesian Security forces.

I was then Chaplain to the Rhodesia Forces. In 1974 Portugal capitulated and granted independence to their colony of Mozambique and a new Marxist Regime came into power. Practically all white and mixed race nationals fled the country. Many young Portuguese chose to cross the border into Rhodesia opting to fight with the Rhodesian Forces.

The war against Rhodesia was intensified and fiercely being launched from Mozambique, assisted by the new Marxist regime. Many of these refugees had already been fighting the insurgents in Mozambique when Portugal capitulated. Their experience and language skills to infiltrate back into Mozambique as fighters was welcomed by the Rhodesian Security Forces. Of course it also constituted extra manpower and some of them were to pay the supreme sacrifice for Rhodesia.

Initially, there had to be strict screening and a basic training process, about three weeks for each batch, a kind of 'boot camp' in the city of Bulawayo. During this time they were confined to barracks particularly those who opted to join the Rhodesia Forces. I had the privilege, as chaplain, to have worship services with them.

I spoke no Portuguese and they very little English, I soon realized that I was getting nowhere – when providentially I came into possession of this particular LP, given to me by a Baptist friend, who, like many foreign missionaries had to leave the country because of the escalating war. He gave me much of his books, LPs and other material.

Your clear English and the translation into just as clear Portuguese by Dr. Filson Soren was the answer. Thanks to the Gideons of Rhodesia, New Testaments in both Languages were amply distributed and became the useful tool and means to follow your message.

Making audio copies and passing them to each one became an exciting medium to witness. The church service was held in an old WWII vintage hanger that was now serving as a cinema, theatre and general meeting place.

I commenced my services with some lively choruses and a modern hymn, with music accompaniment by my then teenage son Gary, today an alumni of Oral Roberts University and minister of Music in a large church in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

I would then put on the audio tape and serialize the message into several parts. We would listen to sections, pause and compare the English to the Portuguese and many a lively discussion ensued. They were also happy to have this two way conversation to improve their English.

**It went down extremely well that I began to receive requests for personal copies to keep or give to friends or family. I do know that many made confessions of faith in Jesus through these taped messages of yours.**

**Thirty years later today, the year 2003, at the age of seventy, I am humbled at the marvelous engineering of our God, to place me within earshot of this great Maracana stadium that I can see from my window. I can close my eyes and almost hear your voice and that of your interpreter reverberating through the somewhat archaic loud speaker system of that time.**

**I had heard the message probably a hundred times and know it by heart almost word for word and it now comes back to pleasantly haunt me as I enjoy immensely re-listening to this message on CD through my laptop computer within sight and sound of Maracana Stadium.**

**Surely the Words of Jesus that 'the very stones would cry out' is possible if we could make these walls and trees talk to emit the sounds of that day. I am one that often preaches about the bonuses and fringe benefits of the Lord and I am certainly grateful to Him for this extra bonus.**

**Having benefited tremendously over the years by your faithful ministry, I felt strongly impressed to share this testimony with you as a benediction to your now senior years, that you can reminisce with me, that great day of your crusade in Maracana when many people I believe, came to a saving knowledge of Jesus.**

**The above has now become a topic in my recent preaching here in Brazil and for my own curiosity and information, in every church that I have preached, I ask if there is anyone in the congregation that can remember that day and am pleasantly uplifted as invariably many hands would go up, people of middle to old age who were in the stadium that day.**

**I have now made contact with Dr. Soren's son Joao Marcos Soren, here in Rio, who is responsible for reproducing the original and making it available on CD. After hearing my account and use of the message he enthusiastically arranged a meeting with the incumbent Pastor of the First Baptist of Rio, Dr. Fausto de Vasconcelos who allowed me to share this episode with the congregation.**

**I rehearsed the above for both, my wife interpreting, and we had a wonderful time of fellowship and awe at how God has brought us all together to enjoy His blessings through your crusade that affected this city and believe this country, forty years ago and still making an impact for Jesus today.**

**Every blessing and prayers for your continued health and strength,**

**Val Rajah, Rev, Lt Col. Chaplain General Retired**

**Staff: Military Ministries Int. for Southern Africa  
Chaplain of the year Centurion Award 2002**

## **CHAPTER 17**

**I was accommodated in an office next to Ken Edgar's in St. Andrew's Chapel, HQ Brady and operated from there. I was issued with a standard staff vehicle for chaplains, a Renault R4, so I could leave the family car a Morris 1100 for my wife and son's use.**

**This new era in my life was exciting and challenging. I passed on the Church to a young newly ordained pastor and concentrated wholly on the Chaplaincy and felt the demand increasing. I could also visit those in operational areas in Matebeleland . There was a big camp of NENA soldiers in the Wankie area and others along the way from Bulawayo to Victoria Falls so with an armed escort I would visit the 'boys'.**

## **HIJACKING OF THE CHURCH**

### **THE MANDATE OF CHAPLAINS**

**Bishop Edward Paget was appointed Chaplain General to the Southern Rhodesia Forces in 1925 in the full rank of colonel as a Territorial Officer, following his consecration as Bishop of the Anglican Church. This was two years after the colony attained self Governing status from Britain. He was to hold that appointment until he retired from his bishopric in March 1957.**

**The second Chaplain General to the Forces was the Reverend Kennedy-Grant of the Presbyterian Church. The first regular Chaplain was the Reverend Bryce Nesbit who arrived at Llewellyn Barracks in January of 1956. He was subsequently appointed Chaplain General in 1964 and retired in 1971. He then became Chaplain General of the Prisons Department.**

**In the Federal Army days the chaplaincy strength was 4 regular chaplains and a handful of Territorial Army Padres. Chaplain Norman Wood joined the corps in July of 1967 as a chaplain and was appointed Chaplain General in 1973 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The regular establishment increased to 8 full time chaplains with an establishment of 18 Territorial Army Chaplains and 36 TA Chaplain's Assistants.**

**The Chaplain's Parish is the Army at Brigade and Unit level. Their main task is to ensure that the correct values are placed on Christianity within the Armed Forces and make all servicemen and women aware of a spiritual relationship with God. Besides catering for the spiritual well-being of the soldiers they also attend to their physical, material and mental welfare. The Chaplains are on call 24 hours a day often working under tremendous strain, dealing with death notifications, comforting the bereaved and arranging and conducting funerals. They also officiate at weddings, baptisms and other church offices plus attend to the visitation of the sick in hospitals and home.**

**The role of the Chaplain to the forces in a war context is mainly operational and he must spend long hours in the operational areas dealing with the sick and comforting the wounded and bereaved. He functions with the troops on the ground holding church services and Padre's hours, at all times maintaining a Christian presence with the troops.**

**In short – the Chaplain's work is to take the Word of God to men and women of all races in the Forces and to be available to help them through any crisis including those which are a direct or indirect result of the war situation.**

**(History of the Corps of Chaplains\*)**

**One year after the country's Independence Chaplain General Norman Wood retired and took an appointment in the South African Chaplaincy Service. The same with the two others who succeeded him as CG, Bill Dodgen and Bill Blakeway who after ascending to the position of Chaplain General resigned and took chaplaincy appointments in the South African Army dropping down one rank to Majors.**

**Reverend Val Rajah, joined the Corps of Chaplains in 1974 as a territorial, then came in as a commissioned regular in 1977 with the rank of Captain and appointed Unit Chaplain. In 1979 as a serving Major was appointed Brigade Chaplain for 3 Brigade and in 1981 he was appointed Chaplain General after the last white CG resigned. Lt. Col. Rajah remained in that office till forced to retire in 1985 after controversial human rights issues with the Government and Commander of the Armed Forces. He was the first non-white to be commissioned and appointed to this position of Chaplain General to the Defence Forces Army and Air Force.**

**\*Recent History of Chaplain Corps. Independence and after)**

**The criteria for selecting chaplains was fixed since the Regular Force of Rhodesia was established after the country attained self government. I would never have been selected if it were not for the manpower 'mix-up'. At that point in time Pentecostals were not considered a mainline church like the Anglicans, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterians and now Baptists through Norman Wood. Pentecostals were considered a cult.**

**That I got married in the Anglican Church was a point for me and that I had 'accidentally' continued voluntarily and was well received by the troops supported by Norman Wood was another point that all contributed to the Board of Chaplains recommending my credentials to the Army Commander who endorsed my acceptance in the Rhodesia Corps of Chaplains. I have Generals McLean, MacIntyre, Norman Wood and Ken Edgar to thank as instruments that God used to effectualise His 'accident'.**

**Had I applied to the Chaplains Board under normal practice and procedure I am certain I would have been turned down. I don't have one degree or Bible certificate or diploma of recognition by the mainline churches and of course I was NENA.**

There were other chaplains but all white. One African chaplain, Abe Nyazema was taken in after me and there were two other catechists who eventually became Chaplains with commissioned rank. There were also many Territorial Chaplains, that is, Ministers of churches and these were spread out to serve all the various Corps and units. Two other NENA of the Education Corps were later commissioned Captains, Paul Pretorius and Pat Travers.

NENA warrants an explanation. It is the term that was used by the Defence authorities to classify Indians and the mixed races barring pure African and White – Non European Non African. Another term was Protection Companies the role that the NENA soldier played. All NS call ups of NENA were operational as protection companies and that meant they were posted in platoons and out of these platoons 'sticks' (groups of six or eight) were always on patrol duty to guard vital installations such as bridges all over the country, including the Victoria Falls Bridge, Chirundu Bridge, Kariba Dam, Birchenough Bridge and any fixture that could be considered a target for the guerrillas.

Other terminology of the day were terrs, terrorists, gooks and guerrillas. This is all depended on which side of the political fence you sat. These were terms that the Rhodesian Security Forces and Government freely used including communists for what is today called the freedom fighters or ex-combatants.

## CHAPTER 18

As the first commissioned Captain the first NENA in the history of this country I was immediately invited by Army HQ to attend the opening of the first RDR (Rhodesia Defence Regiment made up of territorial NENA call-ups) canteen at Cranborne Barracks. It was a bit of window dressing as it was in the newspapers as I was shown off with much ado that all could see that commissions and entry into the Regular Forces are now opened to everyone.

The two Generals, Mclean and Macintyre were present and introduced me as the proud flag-bearer for my people. The CO of RDR Lt Col. Boyd Sutherland also welcomed me as did WO1s Ron Paizee and Danny Bismark. It was historical and a great step forward for non-whites and I am sure it gave encouragement and inspiration to many Coloured and Indian soldiers.

Back to Bulawayo and I became aware that a contingent of SAP (South African Police) who did border patrols by agreement of the two governments, were stationed at Madlhambudzi not far from Plumtree so I got the necessary approval to visit them. Arriving with my son we were made welcome by the CO. There was a platoon of about 40 comprising of Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Africans. Some were on patrol.

That evening the Chaplain flew in by light plane to meet me and a braai was held in honour of the two chaplains. Next morning before breakfast there was a 'stand to' and the chaplain asked me to speak – but before that someone brought out the sheet

music of the Afrikaner South African National Anthem 'die Stem', and gave it to my son to play. He did justice to it on his trumpet as they all remarked later and congratulated him.

For prayers in Afrikaans by the Chaplain, they did the 'remove headgear' drill – they were at 'order arms' drill with rifle on the right – they reached up to headgear with left hand and came down across chest, head bowed while he prayed and I spoke after that. From then it was a privileged door opened to my son and I, visiting them as often as we could. I try to keep track of the Indians and Coloureds, most all went on to be and are high ranking police officers in the SAP today.

Within 6 months of my commissioning I was assigned to Army HQ and moved with my family to King George VI Barracks, Salisbury and began operations from there. I had the staff Chaplain's quarters in KG VI and my two girls went to School from there, Ruth going to Girls High and Donna walking across to Alexandra Park Primary School. My son by now was going to College and could use the family car. I played tennis with Ruth in the officer's mess courts and Donna learned to ride a bicycle in the sports field. Ruth was a senior at Morgan High school.

In 1982 I had the Honour of hosting Astronaut Charles Duke of Apollo 16 and one highlight was that Ruth arranged with her principal at Morgan High School to have Astronaut Brigadier General Charles Duke address the whole school – ironically it happened to be the 4th of July, America's day of Independence. It was a special treat for the students to see, hear and touch the man who walked on the moon and drove the lunar rover, speak to them about his experience on the trip to the moon and his trip with Jesus Christ.

Charles Duke is to this day a good friend and a supportive of our military ministry. We have visited his home in New Brunsfells, Texas, several times, meeting his wife Dottie and family and having services in their home. He continues to travel worldwide speaking at conventions and Businessmen's Meetings.

Ruth was also my vocalist as I had services with the NS at Inkomo Barracks on Sundays, now that I was this side of the country. She would sing to the troops at services I arranged and I called her my 'Vera Lynn'. I eventually got Ian Smith to autograph Vera Lynn's WWII autobiography and presented it to Ruth. He wrote 'to our very own Vera Lynn'

1979 the Rhodesia Government dropped all segregation policies, the writing was on the wall. We could go anywhere that was formerly restricted, restaurants, cinemas, hospitals, swimming baths, etc., and schools were now integrated. My daughters began attending former all-white schools but life was made miserable by the white students. I had to move them twice till they felt comfortable. They both went on to finally become university graduates.

## **CHAPTER 19**

**Protection Companies were spread out all over the country that was my area of reference, wherever the troops were. I visited operational troops Whites included. Now I concentrated for a while getting to know the Mashonaland area from Salisbury to our border areas of Nyamapanda to Umtali, Cheredzi to Masvingo. We had big camps at Kotwa and Mt. Darwin. I have pleasant memories of visiting the boys and sharing their comforts and discomforts.**

**At Kotwa I spent about a week using it as a base to branch out from to visit the operational 'sticks'. I had an office at RDR HQ in Cranborne Barracks and operated from there. Every time I went to visit the boys I would take whatever mail there was from the Orderly room to the camps I'd be visiting. The boys looked forward to that and one could see them, after receiving mail, retreating to privacy and reading their letters from home sometime smiles, sometimes frowns, sometimes tears.**

**I eventually was inspired to develop a sermon of this experience – that God wrote and sent down His messenger Son Jesus, to deliver through His preaching, God's precious love letter, the Bible, which tells us how much He loves us. As we open His love letter we also love to retreat to a quiet place and read. It also produces smiles, frowns and tears – but it is alive, gives life and never leaves us 'down'.**

**A down incident happened in Kotwa, a young man, a star basketball player, got a 'Dear John' letter and was so 'cut up' that he was threatening suicide. He had his weapon loaded and I had just arrived in the camp that day and was hastened to the CO, Major Ford, who acquainted me with the facts.**

**I knew the young man and was able to relate to him through his parents whom I knew well and were my friends. He had retreated to a corner of the camp and I approached him greeting him talking as I drew nearer, he began to talk back until I got to him.**

**I could tell he held no violence in mind and finally he surrendered his weapon to me which I handed to Major Ford who was beside me. He was really heartbroken and just wanted to sit under the tree all night. I volunteered to sit with him and he accepted. The CO had his staff make us comfortable with blankets to drape over as we sat and talked, the kitchen supplying us with coffee all night. When morning came he was in a much better frame of mind and was sent to the Cranborne, RDR HQ, with one medic.**

**A similar incident happened at Mt Darwin when one detail of the kitchen staff was chasing the chief cook round and round the long trestle dining table with a kitchen knife. He was high on something and really mad. The CO there was a white, Lt Bailey and he dropped it on me to 'see what you can do, Padre'. I had just arrived that morning for a few days at that camp. When I got in the dining tent someone shouted to him "here's the Padre" and he seemed to freeze. He started talking incoherently and finally after much coaxing I was able to get him to put the knife on the table. Unfortunately but deservedly he had to end up in detention.**



That particular camp also did escorts for ESCOM electricity maintenance crews. Escom trucks would converge at the camp early in the morning and several army vehicles and troops would accompany them to their spots of work along the power lines and remain with them all day till knock-off time and return to camp. Three specially adapted land-mine clearing military vehicles led the convoy and followed each other on different tracks covering about a meter of road on both sides for the other vehicles to follow. At times they did detonate landmines and that saved the Escom crew's trucks.

Next morning, Lt Bailey assigned me to ride in the lead mine clearing vehicle, I think he was testing me. So without hesitation I did and when no land mines were detonated and we were back at camp that evening he had a different stance towards me, otherwise he was quite crude with his remarks sometimes.

As the war escalated so did fatalities of all the races. Whites in operational areas were taking a heavy toll, so did the RAR and NENA. The part that 'told' on the chaplains was to have to visit the family of the deceased, killed in action or otherwise, injured or hospitalised.

The personal 'effects' of the deceased was always packed sealed and sent to the Chaplains immediately. The chaplain had to go through the effects and personally retrieve only the necessary items to be returned to the next of kin. Any sensitive or doubtful material was to be omitted and destroyed. Letters had to be read and made sure it was from bona fide family.

Chaplains were on full alert and earned the nickname of 'messengers or angels of death' and we all had our share. People would dread to see a chaplain entering their gates. We had strict orders never to phone or delegate someone else to bear the message of news good or bad – and it was a great relief for next-of-kin to hear about an injury rather than a death of a loved one.

I had my share and when it came to funerals I would try to find the Gideons New Testament or Bible among the deceased's personal effects, which usually was found and I conducted the service using passages that were marked.

One funeral, after hostilities had ceased, was of an Ex-Combatant, his Chimurenga name, Stopper. He must have been very high ranking in the ZANLA hierarchy. At the funeral, sitting next to me was Brigadier Mabenge and he asked for my minister's manual and on the back cover he wrote "I love the Lord with all my heart". We had travelled by Dakota with the coffin to the burial place in Sanyati and Prime Minister Mugabe arrived by chopper. So, war injuries, deaths, funerals were ongoing till the cease fire.

On a more pleasant note that same time in Mt. Darwin South African Pilots and

helicopters were in service delivering supplies to 'sticks'. One stick of Coloured troops was stationed on the very top of Mt. Darwin itself. This day they were taking a fresh group and supplies to the relay station at the top of the gomo, (hill or mountain) Mt. Darwin. I hitched a ride with the supply gunship and had an exciting ride to one of the main relay stations of the war on top of the gomo. It amazed me how we could fly with no doors and nothing fell out, even though the chopper banked every which way.

We got to the top and while the exchanges and documentation was taking place I scouted around for a suitable spot to hold a short service. The scenery was magnificent from the top as we could view God's creation. When the crew were ready to take off, the whole group, old stick and new and the SAAF crew joined in singing a hymn and I brought a short message on God's beautiful creation.

The regulation formalities between the two 'sticks' completed, one member was really touched and wanted to know if he could be baptized. Pity there was no puddle of water on top of the gomo or I would have. Sometime later arrangements were made in my old church in Bulawayo and I baptized Aubrey Stall and his whole family of mom, dad and brothers.

Mt Darwin had quite a big hospital and several troops were hospitalised there. I always visited patients with a medic and one joke was when I visited a sick one and I usually ask "do you know who I am" to check if the sick person is compos mentis. This particular one I asked said rather drowsily "yes I know you, you are the undertaker" I assured him that I was not the undertaker and that he was far from dying.

In the same hospital rather ironically were two young 'Mujibhas' that were caught in some crossfire. I went to them too, and had the medic interpret into Shona what I said and I prayed for them. I noticed they were well looked after and mentioned it so in my report. 'Mujibhas' were the equivalent of the signal corps for the guerrillas. They kept in touch with the guerrilla groups that were operating in their area sometimes by choice and sometimes by force. They relayed messages back and forth, were the intelligence network, they delivered food, medicines and in general were an important unit of the guerrilla system of operations. I believe that without them the guerrillas would not have been successful.

Unfortunately for some, they got caught in crossfire or captured by the security forces and 'made' to talk. Most of them were just young boys or girls. MUJIBHA in one of the Shona terms means 'termites' and true to the description of termites, these mujibhas were everywhere doing their bit for the 'struggle' as they called it. If you have seen how the big African white termites scurry all over the big anthills you'll get some idea of the operations of the mujibhas.

That night in the RDR Mt. Darwin base canteen, the music from the jukebox first was Virginia Lee's LP, "In the misty moonlight" followed by many 'won't you play another somebody done somebody wrong song' - type of songs and music. With a couple of

beers all this kind of music could make one very lonely and homesick. It was an education to study the reactions of those who had retreated to some quiet spot to reminisce. Others were boisterous as they talked, joked and told stories at the service counter.

An almost comical trio in the Darwin Camp were a cat they named Ecat, a rooster and a young goat. The three were good friends and stuck together. At night they all settled on any empty camp cot. It was such a good story that I had to write a letter 'Forces Mail' to my daughter Donna and tell her all about these three friends. Some years later I preached a sermon about a donkey, a goat and a rooster (they're all in the Bible) and I recall my daughter saying to me 'that's the best sermon you ever preached daddy – just like the letter you wrote to me'.

As time went on in the war it was determined that Coloured soldiers made good signalmen, they are naturally colloquial 'slangers', most of them understood and spoke and could decipher Shona and they had a language of their own that would not easily be deciphered by the enemy, e.g. here's a classic one, "hey, exe, bowl me the ages" all that simply means is "what time is it?"

## Chapter 20

About this time a transformation was taking place in Government. After the elections engineered by the Smith government and not recognised by the Patriotic Front, the country was changing from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia with the first black Prime Minister Bishop Abel Muzorewa. With much pomp and ceremony Muzorewa moved to the Prime Minister's residence with an entourage of his supporters leading his oxwagon traditional style to install him, as a new traditional chief would so be escorted to his main hut in the kraal.

That sequence of events of a new black Prime Minister just did not take off as was expected by everybody but at least it was a prelude to the next step. It helped set the for the initial exchanges between all the warring factions and the Lancaster House talks were birthed. The ongoing talks progressed to bring the warring factions together and usher in Independence.

Meanwhile, in the closing days of the war, Mutare was getting "revved" - the brunt of the war, as the guerrillas fired mortars into the city at night. Some residents nearer the firing line were digging bunkers. The magnificent lit-up cross on cross kopje, a memorial to African soldiers who fell in both world wars, stood as a beacon and rangefinder for the enemy but by consensus the citizens of Umtali refused to have it switched off. This was the beacon by which the guerrillas on the Mozambique side of the border set the sights of their mortars by. It is interesting to note that not one 'hit' was made on the cross.

There was a big camp in Mutare and all that northeastern area was declared "hot" and many skirmishes took place in the bush areas of Inyanga and the Vumba. Tsanga

Lodge, the military convalescent and recuperative centre for the war wounded, mentally and physically hurt was and still nestles in the Inyanga highlands. During the war years it was run and administered by Dick and Anna Paget who were also well known personalities of the TV series 'Hoe Down'.

For one of our Christmas celebrations there, I invited 'uncle Terry Yon' and his whole music band from the Mutare One Way Christian Centre and we had a great service with all the patients and staff.

The Pagets hosted the team that evening and laid on a grand supper of 'Inyanga chicken' with all the trimmings. A few days before our daughter Donna had enjoyed watching "Watership Down". During the course of our conversation around the table our host mentioned that Inyanga chicken was really 'rabbit'. Donna began to be sick and started to cry, remembering the various members of the rabbit colony.

It was the first time for our family to eat rabbit and eafter that announcement even I felt a bit queasy. In my younger days when I went 'hunting' with a number two pellet gun in the local bush around our homes with my friend Ritchie, if we bagged anything like doves or rabbit I always let him have them to take to his mom as I would not take any such like to my home because of the Hindu influence.

As manpower began to be needed an act was passed whereby Africans of qualifying age were being called up. The first lot were drafted in 1978 going through the same initial training as NENAs and Whites. After 'boot camp' several of them were assigned to the Chaplain's Corps as Chaplain's assistants. I had Sgt. Jeffery Zwimbi assigned to be my assistant. The criteria applied was that if one was active in Christian leadership in the church and on submission of written proof and recommended by the head of the church, they would be assigned to the Corps of Chaplains or Medics, by their choice.

## **CHAPTER 21**

1979 we heard with relief about the success of the Lancaster House talks and the cease fire. The Muzorewa-Smith led Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Government was dissolved and the country reverted back to the Crown Colony of Rhodesia, with Lord Soames appointed the new Governor-General.

Towards the end of 1979 the Commonwealth Monitoring Forces began arriving in the country. It was an education to be at the airport and see the big C31 Galaxys flying in and off-loading their cargoes. America's contribution to the independence process and agreements was to provide the transportation of manpower and equipment

The Monitoring Forces set up Headquarters at Morgan High School Hostel and were Commanded by General John Ackland (after this appointment he was Knighted.) I made a point of going to meet him and introduce myself offering any service I could do for them. As I entered the orderly room Brigadier Olds happened to be there. I spoke to him and just then the General came in, the brigadier immediately addressed him in

very proper English style saying "Sir, the Vicar's here to see you, what have you done?" and everybody had a good laugh.

The General took me into his office and we talked about having services with his troops. They were posted all over the country at assembly points but there was always a remnant at the HQ. We then went to the signals room and he had his signalman connect me by satellite to his Chaplain in UK via Christchurch, New Zealand. The Chaplain and I had a good discussion and I assured him that I would do my best to take care of his flock.

One memorable service I had was a combined Christmas service with the Monitoring Forces, the Coloured community of Arcadia and the police camp residents around the Monitoring HQ. I used the illustration of the big Galaxy C31s cargo planes bringing in the monitoring forces as peacekeepers with all their equipment and compared it with another galaxy delivery 2000 years ago in the form of a delicate baby, Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace and the Galaxy of angels that announced His birth to the shepherds. There was a good turn out of the team and the public. Col Norman Wood did the prayer and benediction.

The Monitoring Forces were to remain in the country for a period of time till the whole transaction of the disarmament and Independence had been effectively phased in.

This was to facilitate the new transition to Zimbabwe which came into being at midnight of the 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> April 1980. By this time I calculated that I had served seven successive governments beginning with Southern Rhodesia, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, UDI, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, back to Lord Soames' Rhodesia and then now the new Zimbabwe. The celebrations were a spectacular event with Prince Charles representing the Crown and handing over the Constitutional instruments of Government to the new President of Zimbabwe.

The Union Jack was coming down and the new Zimbabwe flag was going up. The euphoria of the crowd was high. The Union Jack was folded by two soldiers and handed to Prince Charles who handed it to his ADC. Firecrackers and smoke dispensers were going off everywhere. The noise was deafening. Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa of the Roman Catholic Church officiated at the swearing-in ceremony of the new President and Prime Minister. The entertainment mogul Bob Marley as 'high as can be' on his weed, with his Wailers, entertained the crowds. Local artists like Thomas Mapfumo and other big names also performed.

## **Chapter 21**

### **A TRIBUTE TO A CHAPLAIN**

Interesting developments had taken place the night before the ceremonial handing over. A reconciliation took place between Mr. Ian Smith and Mr. Robert Mugabe almost in Private. An unlikely reconciler was a chaplain, Alec Smith, only son of Ian Smith.

**He was a friend of many freedom fighters and was not the sort of person you'd think had been instrumental in averting a military coup. But this is what he did, and in so doing helped change the course of the country's history.**

**Few Rhodesians will fail to remember that day in April 1980, when after the long years of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence and bloody guerrilla warfare, Ian Smith the Prime Minister of Rhodesia, broadcast to the Nation asking them to trust the newly elected Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, and give his regime a chance. Their shock can only have been matched by Mugabe's astonishing inaugural speech on the eve of Independence promising a policy of reconciliation.**

**There would be no reprisals against whites or minorities, he said. The ills of the past must finally be laid to rest and forgotten. What on earth had happened to make both these men so radically change their stance?**

**The night before the election, at the instigation of Alec Smith and a black colleague, the two men, Smith and Mugabe had been persuaded to meet secretly after dark, at Mugabe's home in Mount Pleasant – a last ditch attempt to avert a threatened military coup by the white Rhodesian Army, should Mugabe beat Nkomo at the election. The armoured tanks were already positioned in the streets of the capital, Salisbury, now Harare, just waiting for the moment.**

**In the event this turned out to be the first of many private conversations between the two leaders, and their unexpected rapport calmed the Nation, Advised by the Governor, Lord Soames, the army quietly slid away.**

**For Alec Smith, that meeting was the culmination of years of dangerous underground work building bridges of communication between the guerrilla fighters in the bush and white Rhodesians.**

**A profound religious conversion experience in his early twenties changed his life completely and forever. He was to say later, "For me God is not a matter of faith, but of fact." The depth of his convictions won him unlikely friends among the black leadership, most significantly,**

**You could say that the beginning of the end of white rule took place over a cup of tea when Alec finally took Kanodereka home to meet his father. Ian Smith who abhorred all that the freedom fighter's stood for, had never met a black nationalist socially. Nor had a black African nationalist ever set foot in the Smiths' home for a purely social event. Afterwards Ian Smith said to his son, "If all black nationalists were like him I'd have no trouble handing over the country tomorrow".**

**After Independence Alec Smith, though not ordained, became a chaplain in the army under Norman Wood and then Val Rajah. He tasked himself to unite these former**

**enemies – the black freedom fighters and the white former Rhodesia army, now the Zimbabwe Army into one coherent force.**

**Smith's strength as a reconciler lay in his abilities to see beyond the views being expressed to the complexities of the man expressing them. He believed that political and social reconciliation was not possible unless individuals were reconciled in their personal lives, the 'whole person approach'.**

**During the eighties and nineties he spoke at conferences on the resolution and reconciliation across the world, meeting privately with Zimbabwean political leaders who trusted his opinion and integrity. Even though ultimately disillusioned by Mugabe and his regime, he never lost hope in the people, sure that in the end they would make the right choices for their country's future.**

**He described himself mostly as a farmer and spent much of the last decade managing his father's farm in central Zimbabwe. Long since reconciled, father and son were deeply committed to each other. Ian referred to him as "my rock".**

**Alec went to his reward on the 19th of January this year 2006, leaving a wife Elisabeth and three children. (Rebecca de Saintonge\*)**

**I was saddened by this news of Alec Smith's passing as he and I had had many serious conversations about spiritual matters. He was strong towards certain views that we reasoned about but was firm and fully persuaded – one such was the Moral Rearmament Movement.**

**Nevertheless we always got on well but I must confess that there were times when he puzzled me and I just couldn't fathom certain of his actions – but now in the light of the above article, confirmed by his dad, I do understand his role after his demise.**

**I was attending an ACCTS MMI Military Christian Fellowship exercise, Table Mountain Top Interaction, with my wife Gina in Simonstown, South Africa in May 2006 where we were speakers and interpreters. I knew that Ian Smith, Alec's dad was in a convalescent home in Fish Hoek recovering after a serious operation and knee injury. I contacted him and made an appointment to visit him with a view of discussing and verifying certain facts of history like the above article.**

**He, Mr. Smith, graciously gave me a whole morning as we sat on the verandah in the sun having tea and biscuits with his retired companion Dr. Harrower and our friend Bruce, discussing certain questions and facts. He confirmed for me the article above about his son and the activities of the night before Independence.**

**I was much influenced of my own impressions of Mr. Smith by a very unusual source, a member of my own race and that was his chauffeur, a good friend of mine, Frank Abrahams. My late wife and I were good friends of the Amrahams' primarily through**

the church. 'Mana' as we called him, and his wife, were founder members, elders and layman of the Arcadia Baptist Church. The church more than occasionally was without a regular pastor and Mana would ask me if I was free to take a service and of course I was only too eager to do.

His children are musicians as are ours and so there was a lot in common between us as families. Whenever we had opportunity to discuss politics of which we were both concerned with, of course Ian Smith's name always came up. He had great respect for Ian Smith and was convinced that he was the most mis-understood, misrepresented and underestimated of all the Prime Ministers that he had had the honour of chauffeuring since the time of Lord Malvern. Mana was an astute judge of human nature and leaders and I gleaned an education of the politics in our country from him.

## CHAPTER 22

National Service had not been abolished yet and my son became eligible and went in with the intake of January 1980, did 6 months, then NS was phased out after Independence. Those who elected to remain and finish their contracts were allowed to but those who requested early release were also entertained as was my son. Immediately he set off to go to Oral Roberts University in the USA to further his music. He had attained his LRSM (Licentiate of the Royal College of Music), as far as the Music Academy in Bulawayo had taken him.

His name appears on the honour roll of the Sibson Academy. He had performed with the ORU team 'Living Sound' who had been here and held concerts for the troops. I had a meeting with Terry Law the leader of the musical group and Gordon Calmeyer the manager who were delighted with my son's performance with 'Living Sound', encouraged me to send him to ORU to further his music. They were impressed with his high standard and offered him a kind of verbal scholarship to ORU.

We were so naïve to believe it was an official scholarship so I sent him to the States with only \$100 US in his pocket, all we had in USD, believing that ORU would take care of all his other needs, board and accommodation, fees etc. Remembering that he was literally straight out of school, was not street-wise, had never travelled before and here we sent him with one small suitcase and the hopeful statements of managers of a music team.

We were so trusting that all would be well but it turned out to be such a traumatic nightmare and culture shock for him that he did not unpack his suitcase for six months while we fought back home to scrape and pay his fees and university expenses as the university gave him not a cent or any concessions. They were ready to deny him entry to university and abandon him to his fate because he could not come up with his first year fees. It was a worrying time for us all but we finally prevailed and were able to resolve the situation by the Lord's grace and mercy.



Arriving there in September, his first Christmas three months later he wrote to his mother that he was so lonely, everyone had gone home and he had nowhere to go. He was living on peanut butter and jam sandwiches and he was thoroughly discouraged. As providence would have it, the post office that served Hatfield where we lived then, had 'lost' the letter somehow in the sorting office. The letter had got jammed in the crack between the table and the wall and was only discovered three months later and delivered with a letter of apology from the postmaster with this explanation.

When his mother read the letter she broke down and said to me 'please bring him back'. It is only when I examined the letter carefully that we discovered that it was three months old and his later letters had been back to normal. It seems the Lord allowed the letter to be 'lost' for those months otherwise there's no telling what his mother would have done to get him back and that possibly could have changed the course of his whole life.

In the course of time there he made many friends and was never lonely again at holiday times. Someone was always inviting him to their home for holidays. His letters were even 'perky' and that he was enjoying all the blessing the Lord had for him. In his last year he met a girl and they became close friends to the point that when they both graduated in 1984 they were on the threshold of getting married. He was Batchelor of Music with honours in composition and conducting.

We thank God that he was able to hold himself together and come through the initial overwhelming odds against him. From his second year to graduation he earned scholarships and his situation eased, as with the Lord's help he got into the groove of the American college system.

Meanwhile I received a posting to HQ 3 Brigade with a promotion to Major, after the Chaplain there Major Eugene Wiseman resigned and went to South Africa, and one by one the White chaplains were leaving for the south. I moved my family to Umtali, the girls began school, Ruth passed her driving licence and we fellowshipped at One way Christian Centre. I was as busy as ever with the new scenario of ex-combatants coming in from Mozambique, surrendering their arms to the Monitoring Forces. The show-grounds of Umtali was the assembly point for that area and mine so I spent much time there.

Major General Tungamirai was the ZANLA commander for the ex-combatants and he constantly addressed them as they dribbled in truckloads to the point. There were men women and children. I came across one little girl and I just felt I should ask my daughter Donna if she would spare a doll for this girl. Hard as it was she did part with one and the little girl was happy when I gave it to her.

## CHAPTER 23

As Brigade Chaplain I worked from the HQ building which was the old Cecil Hotel, Umtali. My first ex-combatant commander was then Brigadier Gava later to be

**Commander of the Armed Forces as General Zvinvashe. He was receptive to my reports and observations as I sat in on Chief of Staff and the Commander's briefings.**

**Soon after Independence the new government was offering an Amnesty to all who left the country to escape conscription as an incentive to return. Many had gone before that, especially Africans to escape forced drafting into the liberation war and so with other races. How many were coming back, I don't know, probably very few.**

**I wrote a letter dated 31st July, 1980, 2 days after amnesty was announced as follows**  
**AMNESTY FOR NATIONAL SERVICE DRAFT DODGERS, CEV and TF**  
**DESERTERS, AWOLS AND ABSENTEES.**

**The recent provisions of the Amnesty (General Pardon and Politically motivated crimes Pardon) Ordinance, introduced by Lord Soames and the new Government, gave a free pardon to those who had committed offences against the National Service Act and politically motivated crimes before and during the war years. It was deservedly well received, however it did not go far enough because anomalies and inequities exist which are becoming more and more noticeable.**

**As the article in the Herald newspaper announced, a man who ignored his call-up and went underground or abroad, and was fortunate enough to evade or avoid arrest, is now a free man and laughing under the amnesty. Similarly, a man who was arrested for failing to answer his call-up, and imprisoned, was freed under the Amnesty. (e.g. a soldier who raped a 13 year old girl in the operational area, was sentenced to 3 years civvy prison. When Amnesty was announced he had done 3 months, was freed, appeared at RDR to volunteer as CEV.) So were soldiers who deserted, were apprehended, and sentenced to terms of imprisonment; they too were freed under the Amnesty. But a man who was sentenced by a military court or by military law to detention barracks for desertion etc., was NOT freed by the amnesty and many are still languishing there.**

**The problem is that a man who answered his call-up became subject to the Defence Act and comes under military law which has not been amended to embrace the Amnesty.**

**Recently an RDR deserter was apprehended after an absence (awol) of over a year. Kept in remand prison, in due course he was tried by court martial and sentenced to 2 years in civvy jail. Rightly, perhaps so, the court martial threw the book at him and justified military law. This is manifestly inequitable in the light of the recent Amnesty and the continuing accounts in the newspapers of those qualifying and being acquitted in civvy courts of law.**

**As the enclosed news article declares 'free pardon', those who 'gapped it' are now heroes returning to red carpet treatment, taking over plum jobs while we are virtually holding prisoners our National Service faithfuls and those who want to be released**

now the war is over, thereby giving every opportunity for our returning laughing heroes to walk in freely into plum jobs. At the moment in Salisbury, Harare alone, I know of 5 'gappers' (let alone the hundreds of other 'draft dodgers') who have just walked into plum jobs while hundreds of those who answered the call are walking the streets looking for jobs. I also know of 5 whites, 2 Coloureds and I imagine a good number of AS who are still in prison with long sentences for offences committed while they were soldiers.

Finally, there are a good number of National Servicemen who can get civvy jobs or return to their businesses and request to be released but are told they are 'essential staff' and cannot be released. This again is providing opportunity for all the jobs to be taken by the 'free boys'.

There are lots in the latest NS intakes who want to stay on, who realise the difficulty of them getting jobs, but there are also those who have qualifications, can find something lined up and want to be released. Let the ones who want to stay be the 'essential staff' and do not deprive those who can start a better future before it's too late.

Val Rajah, Padre, RDR, 31/07/80

I never did get any official reply to the above and with the new takeover someone probably stuck it in 'file 13', the waste-paper basket.

Meanwhile the Chaplain-General Norman Wood DMM resigned and Major Bill Dodgen took over, went up to Lt. Colonel, lasted several months and he resigned to Major Bill Blakeway who went up to Lt. Colonel, lasted a few months then also resigned. They all had been offered incentives to join the South African Armed Forces, dropping down one rank. This was the scheme developed by the two Governments to draw Rhodesians into the SA forces dropping one rank lower than they enjoyed.

I was the next in line and was offered the same incentive to transfer to the South African Armed Forces but I declined, calculating that for me at that time it would be like 'from the frying pan into the fire', as apartheid was still effective, so I chose to stay with Zimbabwe.

From man's perspective and viewpoint there were no more Whites and no one on the side of the incoming ex-combatants with any experience of the Chaplaincy, I was next in line of promotion and according to the Lancaster House agreement I could not be made redundant.

## CHAPTER 24

I was appointed Chaplain-General with a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and in 1981, released from my Brigade responsibilities and assigned to take on the post of Chaplain General and Director of the Corps of Chaplains at Army Headquarters. I moved back to Harare with my wife and two daughters. I got congratulatory messages

from well wishers everywhere, literally worldwide, people assuring me of their prayers and support as I assumed my duties as the first non-white in the history of this country to be appointed Chaplain-General, Defence.

Local newspapers and radio gave coverage of this milestone ascension. My personal reflection was that by God's calculation and viewpoint He took an available converted Hindu and gave him the highest Christian office in the Defence of his country – 'promotion does not come from the north or the south, the east or the west but from the Lord'.

It is reminiscent of the story of Esther Chapter 4:14 "who knows but that you have come into a royal position for such a time as this". I received the above scripture from three different people from three different parts of the world and it was very encouraging, directional and a confirmation for me.

One of the first duties I assigned myself as Chaplain-General was to make an appointment to meet with Prime Minister Mugabe and offer my services to him as his Personal Chaplain which was proper. I didn't even get near him. My offer was refused. I did get to President Banana whom my late wife and I visited at State House. My wife knew Mrs. Janet Banana well from ministry times with Mrs Jill Johnstone in Bulawayo and they were glad to be reunited again. They served us samoosas and tea and we had a good visit, chatted and after praying with them left the President and his wife with the knowledge if they needed us we would be available for them at any time. We had many more encounters with Mrs. Banana after that.

I was now sitting in Army High Command Chief of Staff meetings and contributing my share. I made a point of travelling to all places where my chaplains were. I also made a point of regularly meeting with Heads of Denominations and briefing them of their adherents and the general spiritual temperature in the forces. During my tenure of office, for several years Bishop Peter Hatendi chaired the Heads of Denominations, who were all appreciative of my reports and de-briefings.

## **CHAPTER 26**

The monitoring forces had left by now and the country was shifting gears after the euphoric celebrations by the majority population to arrive at some semblance of normalcy. The new parliament met with great pomp and ceremony, the opening ceremony of the new Parliament of Zimbabwe, continuing to embrace the Westminster system, all reminiscent of the old colonial trappings into the new era, Canaan Banana the President and Robert Mugabe Prime Minister.

In the Prime Minister's maiden speech he spoke eloquently about reconciliation of the races and forces and we wondered what we were fighting for. There was no 'we are communists, socialists rhetoric as was expected but straight forward reconciliation and assurances of honouring the Lancaster House agreement. In an initially impressive gesture of reconciliation, PM Mugabe co-opted both opposition members

including Joshua Nkomo and two whites to serve in the new cabinet. He even invited General Peter Walls to remain Commander of the new Armed Forces. These were gestures that further persuaded many whites to remain in Zimbabwe and give the new majority Black Government a fair trial.

A brand of Socialism seemed to be immerging from speeches and for the first year it appeared that a backward and forward stance was trying to establish itself, the second year brought some upheaval as tribalism flared up between the Patriotic Front Parties and ZAPU that was to establish a significant course for the future of the country.

In February 1983, Zimbabwe was galvanised by Mugabe's announcement of a plot to overthrow his Government and the discovery of arms caches in properties belonging to the opposition party PFZAPU. Referring to ZAPU'S leader, Joshua Nkomo. Mugabe said: "The only way to deal with a snake is to strike and destroy it's head." The dreaded North Korean trained Five Brigade was unleashed resulting in the deaths of thousands of helpless citizens particularly in the Matabeleland rural areas.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1983 police and the army sealed off Bulawayo's high density townships where, in Pelendaba, Nkomo had his home. Within the Police cordon, Five Brigade started hunting for him, but after Mugabe's threat he was already in hiding. That night just after 8.p.m. he learned that his driver and two others had been shot dead in his home. The killers had then rampaged through his house destroying all they could, smashing the windscreens of three cars and slashing the upholstery.

Nkomo's wife MaFuyana, implored him to flee. The following night a disguised Nkomo was escorted from Bulawayo through Plumtree then along the Empandeni Road to an unguarded section of the Botswana Border. They walked across the dry Ramakwabane River and then desperately helped push Nkomo over two border fences into the safety of Botswana.

A year previously Major General Dumiso Dabengwa, Lieutenant Lookout Masuku, Vote Moyo, Masala Sibanda, Dr. Isaac Nyathi and other ZAPU lumaninaries were arrested and, like Ndabaningi Sithole, Bishop Abel Muzurewa and many others in the years ahead, accused of trying to involve foreign agencies in the overthrow of the government.

They were acquitted in the High Court in April 1983 by Justice Hilary Squires, who said Dabengwa's actions were an antithesis of anyone "scheming to overthrow the government". Mugabe's government reacted with fury through the Home Affairs Minister Herbert Ushewokunze. "Let it be stated that the acquittal of Dabengwa and others proves once more that the judiciary we inherited from Smith is not in tune with the present Government," he said.

The men were redetained as, Mugabe said, the government had more information on them than the courts. The 'survivors' were eventually released nearly five years later for by then General Masuku had died in April 1986, as I refer to in a later chapter. Right up to the enforced "unity" of ZANU and ZAPU in 1987 there were "plots" and treason trials involving members of parliament such as Edward Ndhlovu and Sydney Malunga and key security personnel such as brigadiers Charles Grey (a Coloured soldier who also died under suspicious circumstances, referred to in a later chapter), Kindness Ndhlovu, Tshila Nleya and colonels JZ Dube and Eddie Sigogi. The use of torture was widespread as was the hostage system. Kembo Mohadi, today Minister of Home Affairs was one of the thousands of victims. He was taught and brainwashed very thoroughly why not to say "NO" to Mugabe, which is why he is such an effective "yes" man today.

Although ZANUPF won the 1985 elections, Mugabe was angry that he didn't have a sufficient majority to change the constitution and introduce a one-party state. So he broadcast to the Nation in Shona, inciting his supporters to 'stump their fields and weed their gardens' – a subtle proverbial reference to weed out the opposition. Violence ensued as it has before and after every election there has ever been in Zimbabwe. There has been a pattern unfolding, one stage at a time.

First, there was the incarceration of ZAPU liberation war soldiers, then the crushing of their Party, then of all other meaningful parties, then the commercial farmers were thought to support the new Movement of Democratic Change, then the assault on voters – first the farm workers and then the urban poor under Operation Murambatsvina last year, 2005, from which hundreds of people, if not thousands are still homeless and in the process of dying.

Now comes the final onslaught on what is left of any opposition. Soon ZANU PF may have achieved what state security minister Didimus Mutasa said in 2002 was desirable regarding Zimbabwe's population, estimated then to be 13 million. "We would be better off with only six million people, with our own people who support the liberation struggle. We don't want all these extra people."

Judith Todd, who like her father Prime Minister Garfield Todd have been in the forefront of awareness to the international community about political and human rights issues of this country was arrested and still awaits confirmation of charges.

Arms caches were discovered in the Matebeleland area and this led to arrests of certain top Zapu personnel and military high command including Generals Lookout Masuku and Dumiso Dabengwa, Charles Gray together with several others Vote Moyo, Masala Sibanda all incarcerated in Chikurubi Maximum Prison.

A stand among former ZIPRA ex-combatants flared up into full scale civil unrest in the township of Entumbani, Bulawayo, and had to be quelled by the combined efforts of the army and airforce with helicopters doing runs with loud hailers before they would surrender.

**By authority given me by the Director of Prisons, Commissioner Alex Hall I immediately made twice a week visits to these men and made it a regular item in my diary. As time went on and there were High Court hearings, Tribunal Hearings, Ombudsman hearings and the sum total of all these hearings was that these men had no case to answer and found not guilty but were still held under the guise of being threats to security.**

**Nobody could bring up or prove that the other faction had not done the same as mistrust ruled from the beginning. It was said that a whole trainload of surrendered ZANLA arms from Mozambique had just 'vanished' and no great noise was made. No doubt it was in Zanla hands.**

**Nevertheless I continued my visits to the maximum prisons, Harare and Bulawayo and this was found to be raising ire in some circles of Government and the army High command to the point where I was summoned by the commander General Rex Ngongo and told that visiting these prisoners was not in my terms of reference as CG and I should desist from visiting them.**

**I pointed out that as long as they were military men with as high ranks as Generals, were still holding their ranks, and until found guilty and sentenced to prison they were still my responsibility. I could not send junior Chaplains to visit them and that I would stop immediately they were found guilty, cashiered and given prison sentences. They would then come under the jurisdiction of the prison Chaplains and my responsibilities for them would cease.**

**So I dropped my visits to once a week, as usual stopping at a supermarket on the way to Chikurubi and buying Mahewu (an African preparation of a type of health drink) and biljtong (Afrikaans name for dried meat, jerky) from my Chaplain's funds for these men as that was allowed for the remand prisoners. My wife always prepared a couple of dozen samoosas which they enjoyed and were very grateful for.**

**Months stretched into years and there was no respite. Human rights activists were getting involved but another exercise by the Government named Gukurahundi was taking place in Matebeleland. Quoting conservative statistics, over 20,000 Ndebeles were killed by the North Korean trained Five Brigade. Joshua Nkomo would also probably have been detained or killed had he not made good his escape across the Limpopo into Botswana.**

## **CHAPTER 26**

**1982 I was invited to attend a week long Military Christian conference held in Nairobi organized by ACCTS (Association for Christian Conferences, Teaching and Service). It was the first regional Christian Military Conference and officers and wives from eleven African countries attended. This was sponsored by sister organizations, American and British ACCTS and this was the first exposure to Christian ministry for many including myself, into the worldwide military. It was my first time to meet Generals and high**

ranking Armed Forces personnel, retired and serving of other countries and be amazed how they mixed so freely and easily with all other ranks.

I came back blessed by the Conference but sadly to the same everyday occurrence at home especially about the prison Ministry which I continued faithfully.

I found out that Bishop Muzorewa had been arrested and was being held at Goromonzi Police Station. Since he was not a military prisoner and I refer to him as a 'friend in the King's service' and I applied to visit him. The Police Commissioner then was Ngurube and after three attempts he granted approval. I presented myself at Goromonzi and after some haggling and a phone call to Police HQ, Harare, the Officer in Charge allowed me to enter the Bishop's quadrangle type cell.

We conversed for some time and he expressed appreciation of my efforts to visit him. He was held under the Government's Emergency Powers Act for making subversive statements. The following week he was released and we met again in his office over tea.

The first 5 years of Independence changed the course of many a life in the Armed Forces and really in the whole country. Many Whites in particular left the country for better pastures in fear of reprisals by the Blacks. In instances it was referred to as a general exodus of Whites, of young Africans and other races, of brain drain and expertise from the country.

There were those who rationalised that Prime Minister Mugabe and most of his hierarchy all appeared to be well educated and it would be unlikely that they would want their new country to degenerate to another Zambia, Mozambique or Tanzania with the attendant shortages and exodus of indigenous skills. It took 20 years to prove, we're worse off than they were. Today we walk around with a 'billion' dollars in printed paper money in our pockets that can hardly buy a week's groceries.

While the original ZIPRA few as mentioned remained incarcerated another fateful event occurred. In July of '82 an act perpetrated by unknown saboteurs whereby Thornhill Airforce Base, Gwero, was subjected to a sabotage of a magnitude never known before in the history of this country.

The sum total of destruction was that a number of aircraft, eight Hunters four new Hawks and a Cessna were damaged or demolished by explosives and the perpetrators got clean away. While the Air force was staggered by this occurrence a high level Board of Enquiry was convened to investigate this stunning blow to the country.

As the appointed Board, under the presidency of the incumbent Air Vice Marshal Hugh Slatter began investigating, it became apparent that the authorities through the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) were convening their own Board. In the course of events in a few weeks all the top white officers from the AVM down were arrested



and whisked away to various holding police stations accused of perpetrating this heinous crime.

Their lawyers and myself scurried around from police station to police station trying to find where they were being held with no success. They were kept on the move as 'investigations' were going on. These were nothing more than torture sessions to gain 'confessions' from the men. Finally, almost three weeks later, when the CIO were satisfied with the confessions obtained, they were handed over to remand prison authorities and that's the first time I saw them after their arrest. They had undergone severe torture from beatings to electric shocks and were reduced to human wrecks, literally human skeletons, sores all over their bodies and faces.

I had involved myself immediately they were arrested, visiting the families and also trying to trace where the men were held. I came to the conclusion that those conducting their own investigations were at a total loss and were now hunting for a deterrent to discourage any other act of the same sort. Sanctioned by their Government, the best way to do that was to grab some top whites, as they assumed this was done by whites, make them suffer severely, let it be widely publicised as a high profile case so it would make anyone else think twice before doing something like that again and cause untold suffering to fellow whites. Ask someone who has been through Zimbabwe's degenerated prison conditions.

They had undergone inhumane torture and conditions as I could deduce by my own investigations. Finally in time when confessions were extracted by torture they were released to the Remand Prison facility where I made an urgent request visit to them.

On my second visit I took Air Marshal Norman Walshe with me. It literally made him cry to see his men. The men were in miserable condition and it would take some time for them to recover – physically yes, mentally and psychologically if at all. The Director of Prisons, Alex Hall, gave me laxity to visit and minister to the men. All he required is that I, in my capacity of Chaplain-General to be present when the wives visited and the prisoners could have the free across the table visit without the screen and telephone conditions.

Like the other ZAPU military prisoners they went through tribunal and ombudsman hearings which concluded they had no case to answer, but that made no difference to the Government – they were still categorised as threats to the security of the country. They were then transferred to Gweru Remand Prison.

Air Marshal Norman Walshe resigned or was relieved of his post and the Zimbabwe Government solicited the assistance of the Pakistani Government to run the Air Force. The Pakistanis were Royal Air Force trained as were the Rhodesians and could fit into the slot without any difficulty at all. A contingent of about 100 Pakistani, British Royal Air Force trained personnel, arrived with their own ready made Air Marshal, who had

come up through the ranks. Air Marshal Azim Doudputa was a fine man but correctly would not get involved in the internal affairs of the country.

## CHAPTER 27

As I mentioned in an earlier paragraph about my friend and I trying to join the air force in 1949 and were “booted” out by some Sergeant Major with foul words, I was to remember now as I sat opposite this Air Marshal. I had sat opposite AM Walshe and now his successor. I wished that RSM that kicked us out those years back could see me now.

I got to know AM Doudputa well and brought him reports of the Airmen. As I looked upon him, here we were about the same age and he was an Air Marshal, trained by the RAF that was denied me by this country of my birth. I could have probably been the air marshal given half a chance from those days gone by. Another matter that came from him was that when I visited him or officiated for any thing concerning the Air Force, since I was the Chaplain General of the Defence Forces in total, I should wear air force uniform with the equivalent rank of Wing Commander.

I wasted no time visiting the Air Force tailor and he picked out a ready available uniform of a wing commander, I believe it was the uniform of one of the incarcerated airmen. I wore it with pride as often as I visited my Air Force Chaplains or anything to do with the Zimbabwe Air Force. This gave an added impact to my recognition as Chaplain-General of the Defence Forces of Zimbabwe, Army and Air Force – another first and only achievement for me as this has not happened before or since - the wearing of two hats for the Chaplain-General and it only could have happened because the Air Marshal deemed it so!

The incarcerated airmen were then moved from Gweru Remand to Wha Wha Prison (now Kwa Kwa) about forty kilometres away. Under the previous regime political prisoners, including Mugabe, Nkomo, Banana and other top ‘rebels’ were held at Wha Wha.

I was now able to, with the families fly to Gweru sanctioned by the AM. I had Fr. Mel Hill a fatherly figure whose fatherly wisdom and ministry was a great comfort to the wives and families together with Sqd Leader Boet van Schalkwyk the AF Chaplain they lifted a heavy load off my shoulders. A chaplain’s vehicle would be waiting to whisk us off us to Wha Wha prison some 40 ks from the airfield.

We had good visits and I had my connection there, a local Anglican Minister, Fr. Harold Crane who kept me posted on any activity that I needed to know regarding the men and any movements. He had his ear to the ground. Lobbying for the men I was allowed to take Bibles, books, table tennis set and a radio, oil paints, things that were not normally allowed and this only by the grace and favour of the Director of Prisons, Mr. Alex Hall. We paid regular visits and this relieved the wives, families and the prisoners immensely. The jailor joked with a toddler, who always accompanied his mother, one

of the wives, and said he'd put him in number nine cell if he was naughty and so we the chaplains called the little fellow 'number nine' from then on. He liked to kick ball so we babysat and played ball with him while his mummy visited.

It wasn't long before someone in Defence was 'up in arms' about the wives flying with us to Gweru so that had to stop. The only pre-condition required by the Director of Prisons was that I as the Chaplain-General to be present when the wives visited and he would allow open visits – so they left by car early on the visiting day, the Chaplains were flown to Gwelo and we all rendezvoused at Wha Wha Prison.

The airmen were kept in Wha Wha for about 6 months supposedly as their case was being prepared and then were brought to Chikurubi Maximum Prison to await the date of the trial. We the chaplains continued our visits there with no let up. When finally the trial began and they were brought to High Court I made a point of being present at every session. The Judge sat with two assessors and the court proceedings were interesting. Queen's Consul Harry Ognal from the UK was retained by the families and their attorneys to lead the defence.

## **CHAPTER 28**

From the time the men were arrested I had started having Sunday evening services in the Fairways Senior Homes Chapel. Originally it was to be a private service for the wives and families of the airmen but soon the word spread and more and more friends and well wishers of a wide circle attended.

My wife Valerie and our two daughters Ruth and Donna would minister with me. I had various lay people preach also as they were available. I discovered that QC Harry Ognall was a Methodist Lay preacher and he preached once for us at Fairways. Lt.Col. Zack Freeth of BMATT, the former Commander of the Army, General John Hickman, Rev. Tony Ward were others. Lt. General John Hickman had got converted when he was thrown in a prison cell for two days with John Cowan an 'onfire' elderly Christian gentleman. My chaplains many other laymen assisted me during those days.

In the mean time, the trial continues at a steady pace thanks to the faithfulness of the presiding Judge, Chief Justice Enoch Dumbutshena a fine Christian man, who made no lame excuses as judges do these days to deliberately delay trials. Going into it's 6<sup>th</sup> month D-day arrived, the courtyard was crowded and a heavy police presence was noticeable in and around the High Court and into the street. The Judge would make his summary and pass sentence.

He summarized for over two hours and all that he said sounded favourable for the men and winding towards the end everyone waited with abated breath to hear the verdict. Applause erupted in the courtroom as the Chief Justice pronounced the men not guilty, acquitted them and charged the State of extracting confessions by torture.

While a jovial and celebratory atmosphere prevailed it suddenly turned to a hush as people realized that something was not right. The men were being ushered downstairs in the hope of being served their release papers but instead they were being served with re-detention orders, pre-determined and signed by the Minister of Home Affairs Dr. Ushewokunze in case the verdict went in favour of the airmen as it so did. This was a cruel twist of affairs. I followed the men downstairs to the holding cells and spoke to them.

Of course they were devastated and dispirited but these were 'men' and I admired them, they quickly recovered. When there was a short respite from the talking they asked me to tell the wives particularly, 'not to panic' - this must be just a temporary setback and 'sanity will soon prevail'. The crowd in the courtyard was large and getting agitated. I went up to deliver the message, was able to get their attention and addressed them, particularly the wives with the message I was given. I ended off with 'let's all hope so and pray towards that end'. Someone in the crowd was really angry and let out an expletive with a racial slur. He was immediately arrested.

Margaret Thatcher the British Prime Minister and the American President Ronald Reagan had become involved more intensely as evidenced by the British and American Ambassadors in Harare being involved in negotiations between the men and the Government. They had attended the High Court sessions faithfully. During this time the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference was held in New Delhi and it was revealed that "the Iron Lady" called Mr. Mugabe aside and 'whispered' something in his ear regarding the airmen.

## CHAPTER 29

The men were back in Chikurubi and the chaplains together visited them. This time I read for them a passage that my wife Valerie told me to refer as a prophetic revelation given to her and that is from Isaiah "rejoice wholeheartedly ...the Lord has repelled your enemy...you shall fear disaster no longer". Two days later the top two were on their way to London – having been advised by the negotiators, to accept a deal and allow the Zimbabwe authorities to save face. They complied. Margaret Thatcher's 'whisper' was bearing effect.

The Herald of Friday 30th December '83 stated, the two most senior air force men were released from detention in September "on condition that they agree to leave Zimbabwe forthwith". Together with what the 'iron Lady whispered' the British and American representations came to fruition. Zimbabwe 'saved face'. Two days later a third member of the top trio was also released and deported.

The first Sunday evening service after that, I spoke of 'the injustice of re-detentions after acquittal' and elaborated to encompass the ordeal that the men had and were going through.

We also prayed that “Ush (Ushewokunze) would get the push” and this did happen about a month later. He was relieved of his Minister of Home Affairs portfolio and reappointed Minister of Transport and Road Traffic.

The rest of the men languished 3 months more in prison and on Christmas Eve 1983 they were released on certain conditions with a time frame to leave the country. I was already prepared to have a thanksgiving service that night knowing the release of the men was imminent. The three wives and families were overjoyed together with the friends, the lawyers and all the well wishers that were present.

I was taken aback as I came into the chapel to find it invaded by the press and media, BBC, ITN, AFP and independent journalists – there were cameras, floodlights, wires and media personnel all over, so much so that many of the public had to stand outside and by the windows because the chapel was full. No one had asked my permission and I made it known that we were not amused by all this activity and invasion into our privacy.

In my discourse I reiterated my remarks about the ‘injustice and cruelty of re-detentions after acquittal’. There were still members of the armed forces in this situation in Zimbabwe’s prisons but we thanked God for these men at least, were released. It was a wonderful reunion celebration. A few days later these men were on their way out of the country. Altogether, the men had lost everything of their benefits, pensions and their heritage, to top it all to be banished from their own country. They were gracious enough to accept the Government’s release conditions to allow Zimbabwe to “save face” – but lost everything in the process – but not their dignity!

I received the following letter from the group, ladies and men who reside at Fairways Senior Homes;

Fairways, September 1st 1983

Dear Padre,

We, a few of the Fairways residents who have been attending your Sunday evening services for the airmen, feel that the service this evening is a very special and personal one for the families and close friends, so we decided not to come, though we hope to be with you for the last meeting on Sunday. When we heard the news of the acquittal we praised and thanked God, and our hearts are still rejoicing in that the prayers of so many people have been answered, and that these last months have not only brought our men and their families much closer to the Lord, but have been a source of inspiration and help to us all.

We are sorry and sad that the men are back in detention again but live in certain hope and faith that their release will come very quickly.

We thank you for allowing us to share in the services and pray that God will bless you, especially all the chaplains who have given so much help and encouragement.

**We Praise the Lord for you all His devoted servants**

**From us all –  
Fairways residents.**

**I continued my services at Fairways Chapel at the request of many of the friends and supporters who urged me to keep going, remembering that these men and their families still had needs. It may be that it was over in Zimbabwe but they, their wives and children have been thrust entirely into new environments, new countries, they still needed our prayers. So we continued for several months more but it had to come to an end sometime. Our last meeting was a nostalgic, almost painful parting service with all the supporters and well wishers and lawyers, some of whom I have not seen since.**

### **Chapter 30**

**16<sup>th</sup> September 1983 became a fateful day for me. I returned to my office after lunch and found an official signal on my desk. It read, "you are hereby suspended from your duties as CG as from 2 p.m. 16<sup>th</sup> September 1983. At first I thought someone was playing a joke on me but the more I looked at the signal the more it looked authentic and I knew the General's signature. I phoned Colonel Administration and he informed me that it was authentic and that I should come and see the commander right away which I did.**

**Upon entering his office I could see he was angry as he pointed to a pile of newspaper cuttings on the coffee table without saying a word. I did not know what they were, he simply barked "read them" It would take me a while to read them, gather my thoughts and respond so I asked that since it was a Friday afternoon if I could take and study them over the weekend. They were all photocopies so I assumed that he had originals.**

**Now he spoke "these are statements you have been making at your church services" our Defence Advisor in London has sent them. It was widely reported in the UK newspapers and on BBC television. You are suspended as from today pending a Board of Enquiry into these allegations. "See me on Monday morning. You are hereby suspended from your office of Chaplain General. Return to your office now with an escort and remove just your personal belongings. Do not remove any files or documents" and with that he dismissed me, at least allowing me to take the photocopies. A Captain was assigned to escort me where it should have been a person of higher rank than mine, a full colonel, but that is ignorance, or protocol thrown out of the window.**

**For some time I had come to terms with the possibilities of such reaction from the top brass so it was not altogether unexpected. As a Lieutenant Colonel I could have dismissed my escort and gone and done my own thing but we laughed and joked all the way to my office. It reminded me of the time when the General sent me to fire another General. In my heyday of visiting the prisons and General Masuku, General**

Ngongo, knowing my routine of visiting the prisoners, sent me with some papers to the prison and said to me “get General Masuku to sign these papers”. Of course I did not question what the papers were and in prison I handed them to General Masuku and explained the other General’s request for him to sign these papers.

He opened the envelope and studied the contents for a few minutes then looked at me and said, “this is astonishing – he’s asking me to accept being relieved of my post as deputy commander” – I will send it right back to him through my lawyers. So there it was – me a Lt. Colonel sent to fire a General.

I was somewhat disconcerted by the course of events surrounding my forced retirement, but God is faithful and that night I had a peace come over me when my daughter Ruth who had entered for the ‘Miss Golden Voice’ Competition and we all attended the performance including BMATT Colonel Zack and Claire Freeth. Ruth announced the title of the number she had entered to sing, “The Impossible Dream” and announced “I dedicate this song to my father”. Of course I was ‘touched’ to say the least.

To dream the impossible dream,  
to fight the unbeatable foe  
to bear with unbearable sorrow  
to run where the brave dare not go  
to reach the unreachable star !  
This is my quest to follow that star,  
no matter how hopeless no matter how far  
to fight for the right, without question or pause  
to be willing to march into hell  
for a heavenly cause  
And I know if I’ll only be true  
To this glorious quest  
That my heart will be lie peaceful and calm  
When I’m laid to my rest  
And the world will be better for this  
That one man scorned and covered with scars  
Still strove with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable stars.  
To right the unrightable  
To love pure and chaste from afar  
to try when your arms are too weary  
To run where the brave only dare to go  
To reach the unreachable star!

From the musical play “Man of La MANCHA”.

Ruth took second place to a singer who entered the contest with a full live music band back-up. I had not heard that song before and a great peace filled me after that message which I took as a confirmation from the Lord that I had been on the right course in my ministry. I had been all my life straining to 'reach the unreachabeable star'.

### **Chapter 31**

During the weekend I studied the newspaper cuttings. The UK Daily Mail and The Guardian quoted "the Chaplain-General Lt. Col. Val Rajah spoke in his sermon of the "injustices of detentions without trial" which was a far cry from what I spoke about which was 'the injustices and cruelty of re-detentions after acquittal' I could not make such a blatant statement as 'detentions without trial', which in any case would be untrue. So I felt comfortable to face the General.

Monday morning I put my conclusions all to him but nevertheless he was adamant that the Board of Enquiry has been convened and I can tell them my story. The newspapers carried news of my suspension the South African, UK and local papers – "Defence Force Padre Suspended" the Herald said, so I figured I was a bit of a 'hot' potato.

Romans 8:28 – 'and we know that in all things God works for the good for those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.'

The board could not quite get it's act together and one after the other 3 Presidents of the Board found something else more important to do and resigned. This was before the BMATT (British Military Advisory Training Team) arrived to train officers to Staff College level. At this point they were simply ex -bush fighters with high ranks and it simply boiled down to the fact that none of them knew how to run a BOE, to finally conclude and wrap it up with recommendations to the Army Commander. But it all worked to my advantage .

Through one of the UK Correspondents here who made contact with his counterparts of the Daily Telegraph and the Guardian who wrote the offending article, I got signed affidavits to say they were not in my service but got their information second hand. Other correspondents had reported correctly what I did say and if they could get hold of the BBC video clip they could hear exactly what I said. The board tried unsuccessfully to obtain the 'clip' – I suspect that it was withheld from them as a possible protection to myself.

For 82 days I hung in limbo, giving my account to four different BOEs and by now I could tell my story well with all that practice and I learned to weave well my Christian testimony and mission into it. Every board got an intricately woven earful of the gospel as I testified to them.

Finally the fourth BOE which had one White member, ex-Rhodesia Army, and they wrapped it up. What was reported was a mis-quotation by the reporters of what I did say and whatever else I said was within the terms of my reference as the CG. The BOE



accepted that and recommended that I be re-instated as Chaplain-General much to the disappointment of my deputy who had firmed his position and ready to take over as CG by then. The Herald headline said "Defence Force Padre re-instated. Cleared by Military Tribunal".

Below is my statement that I submitted to the Board. By Lt. Col. V.N.Rajah, Chaplain-General of the Defence Forces of Zimbabwe of events leading to the alleged statements as reported in the UK Daily Telegraph and BBC and consequently my suspension as Chaplain General of the Defence Forces of Zimbabwe.

I categorically refute as totally incorrect, erroneous and distorted, the reports in the UK papers The Daily Telegraph and The Guardian, of the proceedings at the thanksgiving service I held on the 1st September, 1983 with the following observations;

1. It reports that the Chaplain General said in his "sermon". Over 200 people who attended the service can testify that I did not preach a sermon that night. It was an 'open' meeting. Sentiments and prayers were open to anybody and some did take advantage to testify and pray.
2. The words in the report purported to have been made by me are incorrect, in fact they are distorted. I spoke about the 'cruelty of re-detentions after acquittal' and not 'detentions without trial'. I also delivered the sentiments of the airmen as quoted by them.
3. As to my appearance on TV in the UK, I can only say it must be passing shots as I either entered or exited the High Court. Because of the high profile nature of the case the place was always swarming with media people. I did not at any time speak to the media directly. The only time they would hear me speak was after the verdict in the courtyard and at the thanksgiving service.
4. As Chaplain-General of the Defence Forces, Army and Air Force fall under my terms of reference and it was my mandate to direct both the Army and Air Force Chaplains. Right from the moment of the first Thornhill arrests, that is, some junior rank officers and NCOs White and Black, the Air Force Chaplain Sqd. Ldr. Rev. Boet Van Scalkwyk was involved with the men and their families. There was no need for me to be physically or spiritually involved at that time.
5. I became involved when the senior ranked officers from the Air Vice Marshal down to Air Commodores and Squadron Leaders were arrested and which according to protocol is correct. I applied the same procedures as my dealings with Generals Masuku, Dabengwa, Charles Gray and other ranks held in Chikurubi Maximum Prison. I visited the Maximum Prison the Detention Barracks's and the remand holding Prisons etc. Efforts that I made to reach these men, Masuku and others is supported by attached photocopies of correspondence. Please note dates. After their re-detention I

made further efforts through the Commissioner of Police Nguruve, then to the minister of State in the office of the Prime Minister, MP Mnangagwa the minister of Home Affairs, through Brigadier A and the Army Commander. (Copies of letters presented).

6. Any suggestion that I paid particular attention or went beyond the call of duty for the Air Force men because they were White or former Rhodesian or were my friends is categorically denied. As a chaplain I must be totally impartial. Whatever the circumstances the Padre is the soldier's friend. I consider it an honour if it is suggested that I went beyond my call of duty in serving prisoners.

7. The Chaplain is involved with the prisoner first-hand and then the prisoner's family. The chaplain cannot escape these relationships as welfare is always involved. He must see the member through and his responsibility only ceases when the prisoner is pronounced guilty and sentenced or found not guilty and released. Total responsibility for the sentenced member, is then assumed by the Prison Chaplains. It can easily be proved by Prison records, and interviews with the men themselves that my ministry is totally impartial, apolitical irrespective of race, colour or creed.

8. That I was visiting the Air Force men was no secret. I made periodical reports (at least once in 3 weeks) to the Commanders of the Army and the Air Force, all through to 'A' Branch. I made reports to the Army Commander at times when I reported visiting Generals Masuku, Dabengwa and others.

9. I definitely remember mentioning my visits to these men in particular to the Secretary of Defence, Mr. Chitauro and also to the Minister of State Defence. All my reports to the Chaplaincy Advisory Board which is held once every month reflects something about my visits to the detained men. A copy of these minutes is distributed to each of the Forces Commanders and to the Minister through the secretary for Defence.

10. On one occasion, early in the Air Force case the Minister of State Defence, Dr. Sekeremayi telephoned me to say that he disagreed with my report as minuted by the Chaplaincy Board that morale was low in the air force, which meant that the minutes were getting to his desk and should finally get to the Minister of Defence the Prime Minister himself. It is an accepted fact that I was fulfilling my obligations as the CG of the Country's Defence Forces.

11. Each chaplain develops his own style and patterns for ministry to the forces. My pattern in case of bereavement, distress, prison, etc is to have church services and prayer meetings with the families. During the days in detention and the time of trial of General Masuku and other soldiers with him, I held prayer meetings for them in their homes. I even went as far as travelling to Bulawayo to hold a service with Mrs. Masuku in her home. Once a month now they still take place in one of the homes. There is no publicity as the Air Force case so no one knows, yet they existed long before the air force case. I stress my impartiality. It follows therefore, that according to my system

of working that I would inevitably have services and prayer meetings for the Air Force families.

12. These I began, please notice, in September of 1982 and ran all the way to September '83. It is not correct that all of a sudden I decided to have a thanksgiving service. These meetings were in progress for a whole year and it was only right to end off with a thanksgiving service. As the date of the judgement was known about two weeks before as the 31st of August it was decided that the thanksgiving service would be the next day 1st of September. Regardless of the verdict, for or against, there would still be a thanksgiving service. The media picked this up and of course were there.

13. I started the service about 6.p.m. 200-250 people were present. After singing the first hymn, and at the very beginning, not in any sermon did I say the following as delivering a message to the wives and families; "I visited the men in Chikurubi this morning. They were in good shape and as best as can be in good spirits and spiritually encouraged. Their faith and complete trust in almighty God is sustaining them at this time. I asked them what message I could give you and they said; 'of course it is a great disappointment to be re-detained but don't be too discouraged . We hope it is just a temporary setback...and who knows what God has in all this of our being re-detained? It could be that the interest and publicity that we are receiving may turn out to be of benefit to other re-detainees under similar plight as us. In that case we would consider it worthwhile to have to suffer this extra minor inconvenience and injustice". What a magnanimous gesture to think of plight of the others incarcerated with them!

14. That is what I said to the best of my recollection, I have since talked with many who attended that service and generally confirmed that that is exactly what they understood - as my delivering the message from the airmen. Many, including families, Diplomats, newsmen and lawyers have indicated to me, since my suspension has been publicised and become well known that they would be willing to give evidence before the BOE to that effect. It is a fact that the Daily Telegraph reporter David Adamson was not physically present at the service and got his information second hand, hence the distortion.

15. I am not a publicity seeker or a sensationalist. There is a saying that 'some men seek after fame and greatness - others have it thrust upon them'. We started our service very quietly and privately particularly for the wives and families. As the trial progressed people began to hear that church services were held and started attending. Then towards the end the media found out and various ones attended.

Likewise about my suspension, initially the press were buzzing around me 'about these rumours that you are suspended and facing a court-martial, etc. I kept them at bay with all kinds of excuses but nevertheless the Herald news article a few days later confirmed it. Brig AQ can confirm that I spoke to him to please expedite the Board.

Unfortunately it dragged on for 82 days through no fault of my own and hence all the publicity here and elsewhere.

16. I felt I was simply doing my duty as CG. I feel that the service Padres and myself did good spiritual and welfare work with these men which is our duty to do. They are reported as saying 'they have no bitterness against anyone – have no thoughts of hatred or revenge – have forgiven everyone that has done anything to them' etc. When asked how this is possible they talk about their personal faith in Jesus Christ.

How that their experience through arrest, interrogation, torture and prison caused them to do deep spiritual soul-searching and renewing their faith in Jesus Christ. Whenever they talk about their spiritual experience they always express their deep appreciation of the way the chaplains conducted themselves and helped them and their families spiritually and otherwise through their ordeal. Many times they mention us by name.

Because these men turned so strongly to God and spiritual values I firmly believe that they harbour no intent whatsoever to retaliate or deliberately hurt Zimbabwe in any way. As Chaplain-General I am satisfied that the chaplains involved have made a valuable contribution to the Forces and the Country as a whole. I am convinced that it has even enhanced the image of our Country, here and abroad, that we, the Chaplains had free prison access to these men at all times.

When I was asked one time by Air Marshal Doudhputa if I really believe these men are innocent I replied to him in this wise: for the top three I will put my head on the block for the other three I'll put my hand on the block. He smiled at me and was satisfied.

## **CONCLUSION**

I apologise to the Army Commander and the Government for any inconvenience or embarrassment that the distorted report may have caused. I affirm my loyalty and dedication to the Army Commander and the same to the Air Force Commander. I have no other interest, save to serve to the best of my ability as Chaplain-General the spiritual and welfare needs of the Defence Forces of Zimbabwe. END. Signatures, witnesses etc.

## **CHAPTER 31**

These were gifted men, among them were artists, painters and writers. I have two prized possessions of oil paintings done in prison. One a seascape adorns my lounge and the other, painted by the AVM, the biblical character Isaiah showing the angel touching his lips with a live coal from the altar. This one hangs in my office at home and is an inspiration to me as I say with Isaiah 'here am I Lord, send me' - Isaiah 6:6. They did many more for family and friends.

One of the men wrote a poem a tribute to the chaplains which was written on toilet paper and smuggled out of Chikurubi and given to me by his wife. Here it is.

### **THE WAKENED SOUL**

How blind we were before,  
 How vain to think that we could manage all our problems alone.  
 Oh yes we were all Christians. That fact was acknowledged by the stamp on our 'dog tags'  
 But there our Christianity stopped.  
 Because you know it's not easy to be a Christian,  
 It involves self-denial and charity  
 And many other aspects that are very non 'U'  
 Like professing and living your faith, you just don't do that sort of thing in the pub, at cocktail parties and braais. After all our friends may not like it and cross us off their party list  
 Because 'religious' people always put a damper on things.  
 Anyway we were self made men, we had it made....Good jobs....lovely homes, loving families. We had done it all ourselves.....Or had we?

Then came a moment that none of us ever even vaguely anticipated – arrested tortured and imprisoned for a crime of which we were totally innocent. How fragile we had become!

Grown..... men unable to talk of their ordeal without breaking down.  
 The sudden realization of a situation we were unable to handle alone.  
 It's so easy to relegate God when it's all going smoothly. But when the chips are down.....?

It's strange how we deliberately distance ourselves from God. But when we need Him, He's right there. And how superfluous a priest is in one's day to day existence. But how essential in times of tragedy.

What comfort and solace we sought from you. How desperately we needed you, to reassure us, that notwithstanding the suffering we had undergone, and our Godless past, the Lord was with us. How you responded.....

How wonderful the joined hands in prayer. The security of God's love, felt through you  
 It's strange though, that even in our darkest hours our greatest, was not for ourselves but for our families. We always knew that you were close to them, helping them to adjust to the iniquity of it all – helped more than you'll ever know.

Strange too that sometimes it takes adversity to find God  
 How blind we must have been not to have seen Him in all the blessings we experienced before. Strange that we should find him in a prison, of all places. But then is it really so strange?

Words are inadequate to describe what you have been and always will be to us and our families. You will never be forgotten, no matter what happens.

**All we can do is to thank God now, as we do every night, for you. You see there is some merit in putting up with the pains of unearned punishment, if it's done for the sake of God. There is nothing meritorious in taking a deserved beating patiently, if you have done something wrong. The merit in the sight of God, if you are punished after having done your duty, is in bearing it patiently.**

**Below inscribed in ball pen : To Val, with love in Jesus and thanks that can never be adequately expressed - Pete**

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**Immediately after their deportation the BBC contacted me and arranged for an interview the Sunday morning after their release. I agreed and taped the interview. Here it is;**

**Reverend Rajah, this is Chris Rees (sounded like) of the BBC Religious Programme and we thank you for agreeing to this interview with us**

**Good morning Chris. Thank you for your interest and for affording me this opportunity to be on this religious programme with you.**

**Question. When did you realise that these men were calling on God. Was it early or later in their incarceration?**

**Answer. To my knowledge these men called on God in Jesus Christ right from the beginning of their arrests, interrogation, torture and imprisonment. During their High Court case their and our prayers were more intense I believe.**

**The Chaplains added to their already found faith by praying with them in their prisoner context, providing them with Bibles and other spiritual material, books and cassette tapes. I believe this all helped to strengthen their faith.**

**Quoted in an interview, AVM Hugh Slatter said "more importantly, most of the group found themselves turning towards religion". Apart from their lawyers it was the service padres led by Lieutenant Colonel Val Rajah, Zimbabwe's Chaplain General who had most regular access to the prisoners.**

**In the AVM's words: "The Chaplains were absolutely outstanding. Our experience had put the Christian aspect of living into perspective. I think it will stay with me permanently".**

**In Gweru Remand Prison, the Officer in Charge was so impressed with these men, their characters and their faith that he asked for a bible and study material and in due time became a believer. He reminded me of the Apostle Paul and the Phillipian jailor who asked them 'Sirs, what must I do to have the faith that you have?' Acts 16:30. Paul's reply, 'believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household'.**

**The men altogether themselves, through each others' influence came to grips with spiritual truths and renewals of faith.**

**One of the men wrote a poem in tribute to the Chaplains. I will just quote some passages for you (I went ahead and quoted passages from the poem 'The Wakened Soul'). I also quoted Matthew 25: 34 to 40.**

**Question. About the wives? How did you organise and minister to them.**

**Answer. I decided with my Chaplains Sqd. Ldr. Rev Boet van Skalkwyk and Father Mel Hill to hold a group service with all the wives rather than try to visit each separately and the wives were agreeable. Our first service was about two months after the men were arrested and about ten people, the wives, their children and close relatives, my wife and I and our two girls, Ruth and Donna. Ruth played the piano and Donna babysat and played with the children. She was just into her teens then. Sometimes there was need for special prayer and we would all get together those who could and prayed.**

**The first thanksgiving service we had was on the 1st September when the first 3 were released and deported. Another is planned for when the rest are released hopefully very soon.**

**BBC. Reverend Rajah, thank you for your time and input to our programme.**

**Self. Thank you again and thank you to all the many people in the UK especially and indeed many parts of the world for your prayers and concern expressed through many letters to the families and the related. Goodbye and may the Lord grant you His blessings of peace. END**

## **CHAPTER 32**

**Montgomery Heights Children's Home, is situated about 60 miles from Harare in the farming community of Mazoe and Concession. It was the dream project of the Emmersons. Since it's inception my wife and I were on the first Board and trustees by invitation of Martin and Margaret Emmerson the founders whom the Lord gave the vision and open door to scheme.**

**We take many visitors to see the place, visit the school which incorporates the ACE system (Accelerated Christian Education of America.) Many visitors are touched and support the orphanage in many ways. We were able to solicit medical supplies, a video system and generally be a supporting network.**

**The establishment still exists today under new management and is doing a sterling service for the community there and the country as a whole, though at this time many farms have been taken by the government, and many farm schools have been closed – but they plod on. Several times they had problems with the Government attempting to appropriate the property but praise God it all failed. Anyone interested can get in touch with us!**

During the days of my suspension I had to report every day to the BOE President and this went on for 82 days. As a precaution, in case I just disappeared, I was cautiously and privately advised by friends still in Intelligence to put certain measures of safeguards in motion. To make sure that my parent mission body is informed if any unusual absence occurs, however short. I had newsmen friends who gave me their direct and private telephone lines for my wife to inform them if any such development occurred. They will begin a search via news media immediately. These were all a source of comfort both to me and my family.

One Retired USA General took a special interest in my case and at least once a week would make telephone contact to enquire and establish that I was still around.

So now, after being cleared, 'I'm back in the saddle again' I continue my visits to Chikurubi to see the ZAPU group and to serve them as I had been doing all along. Meanwhile as the Gukurahundi saga was still continuing in Matabeleland another Government enactment was set in motion referred to as Mindamirefu "the wind that blows away the chaff".

In 1983 more than 6,000 women were rounded up countrywide for allegedly soliciting for purposes of prostitution. In the process innocent women were dragged along to police stations. Indiscriminately, police and army working together, swooped on women on what was called "Operation Clean-up". They even timed women who came out of cinemas. Among those arrested were old women, young mothers with babies on their backs, nurses coming off duty. They were processed at holding prisons and then sent by army truckloads to Mindamirefu, the 'long fields' some location a great distance from the capital.

Vagrants and beggars were targeted too, rounded up and put in camps to work the fields. It was supposed to clean up the city of undesirables in time for the Commonwealth Observer Team's visit, but in the course of it many innocent women and single girls were rounded up as well, that caused untold trauma and suffering to the womenfolk. I sat in on a Human rights activists meeting who took this up but there was no apology. The exercise was a disaster, unsuccessful, shameful and did not last long. A book by William Spring titled the Long Fields (Mindamirefu) covers the exercise and carries an account of my involvement.

Six months after I was re-instated, midyear 1984, I decided to take leave to attend my son's graduation and wedding in USA. The Army Commander and Secretary of Defence approved my application, I imagine with some relief to get me 'out of their hair' and the Prime Minister signed it. I left with my wife and two daughters and were in time for the wedding of my son Gary who married Christine Betten whom he met at Oral Roberts University doing the same music degree.

The wedding was our first experience of such an occasion in America and was certainly an education and our first exposure to American life, a culture shock to put it



mildly. Christine and her family are from Dutch extraction, her great-grandparents having arrived and settled in Michigan as farmers. A large community of them settled in the "Great Lakes Region".

After the wedding my wife, daughters and I went to the State of Arkansas at the invitation of a Christian businessman Joe Layman and his wife Carol-Ann with whom we spent close on to five months. Joe's gesture for having us was in appreciation of what my wife did for him when he visited Zimbabwe, nursing him to health after he got ill when he visited and stayed a few days in a rural village. His body became covered with fly maggots and she painstakingly pressed them out one by one.

Valerie had worked for many years in the 'casualty' department of the local general hospital and was familiar with many tropical diseases and afflictions of the rural poor people and 'maggots' was no exception. The 'trick' is to press them out in such a way that the whole maggot is removed and no 'piece' left to grow again.

I was preaching at a local African township church and I noticed this white man in the front row wriggling and squirming continuously. I could see that he was uncomfortable and at the end of the service I talked to him. He had come to Zimbabwe, paying all expenses, for a young Zimbabwean man Jerry, who was training for some running contest and while here was taken to live in this young man's rural home where he contracted these body maggots.

I invited him to come and stay with us for the few days before he left and he accepted. My wife got stuck into 'de-worming' him, Ruth and Donna dotingly waited on him 'hand and foot' for which he was ever so grateful. He made us promise that if we came to the States we should come and stay with him for as long as we wished, a request which we took up when we went for our son's graduation and wedding. Ruth had completed her 'A' levels and we were also looking to place her at some Christian University.

When we arrived at his Springdale home after the wedding we were made most welcome by the whole Layman family who are business people and own a general and hardware store in the centre of Springdale, Arkansas. They were gracious and allowed our daughters to work in the shop packing and labelling items to earn some pocket money.

Joe Layman owned horses and had a 'ranch style' fenced backyard for the horses to graze and frolic. We enjoyed sitting on the back deck and admiring the horses. Donna in particular loved to get near them and pet them and in so making friends with them earned the job of feeding, watering and brushing them down. Joe trained his horses to be 'barrel' racers and we enjoyed going to see some barrel race competitions.

Donna was admitted into Shiloh Junior School in Springdale town and settled down right away making new friends, fitting into a new system of education, and she made it

very well. A new experience for her, not to wear school uniform but a dress of her own choice every day.

We managed to get a place for Ruth at John Brown University, in Siloam Springs, a few miles from where we lived in Springdale. She learned to drive on the 'wrong side of the road' through rain, sleet and snow but never had a mishap only once perhaps running over a possum.

When we left to return to Zimbabwe it was a traumatic time for us all. She had to become a boarder at the John Brown University, she went through her first year, did well, and got a scholarship for her second, but was too homesick and preferred to return to Zimbabwe and complete her degree in Child Psychology at the University of Zimbabwe which she did.

She then taught English and French at Chisipiti Girls High for several years. She married Basil Fernandes, who along with his vocation and work as a financial controller-accountant, is also a musician and band leader playing band music since his teenage days. Today he and his dance band 'EUROPA' perform for occasions such as weddings, parties, dances, diplomatic celebrations etc. He is the lead guitarist, Ruth is keyboard and other instrumentalists are family members. The band is especially well known for its feature performance every end of the year, playing 'out' the old year and ushering 'in' the new, much in demand and very popular with the community.

On arrival of their first child, Ruth resigned her teaching position and opened a day creche for beginners. A few years of that, then she went on into teaching music. Gary and Ruth went through the Music Academy of Bulawayo, Donna losing out, but nevertheless self taught, because of my frequent transfers with the military. Using her knowledge and experience in music Ruth and her husband Basil now run a successful music school with about 80 students. The 'Young Performers Academy of Fine Arts' is a registered music, dance and drama school and performs concerts twice a year in the Reps Theatre for the enjoyment, encouragement and pleasure of parents, well wishers and the public. It is recognised and registered with the Ministry of Education.

In conjunction with the music school that Ruth now runs, Young Performers Academy of Fine Arts, Europa Band gives practical tuition to upcoming instrumentalists through active participation with the whole band. Youngsters are finding their 'niche' experimenting with various instruments.

### **Chapter 33**

Basil is of Goanese heritage and Goa has a fascinating history with over four hundred years of Portuguese colonisation. The Basilica of Bom Jesu is perhaps the most famous shrine in Goa, dedicated to Goa's patron Saint, Francis Xavier. A wealthy Portuguese aristocrat, he gave up the world for God. A legend in his lifetime, a legend in death, his incorrupt body is enshrined in a silver casket on one of the high altars of

**the Basilica minus one hand which is in the Vatican. In other churches, statues of the body are venerated.**

**Another famous tomb in Goa and of particular interest to Zimbabwe is that of one of the sons of Munomutapa who was converted by the Portuguese, as they criss-crossed the land of Munomutapa, sent him to Rome for studies, he took orders, and was then posted as Bishop to Goa. He died and is buried there.**

**After the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in Bombay in November of 1983, both Prime Minister Mugabe and President Kaunda made a special pilgrimage to Goa to visit the Bishop's tomb which is now located in the Chapel of S. Barbara of Mercy. The son of Muno Gatsi Rusere was baptized Dom Diego, partially literate, he further studied in Goa and became the Vicar of St Barbara.**

**My dear beloved late wife Valerie was always at my side doing her part in speaking and ministering in song and music. She was a tremendously gifted songster and enjoyed her ministry drawing people to the Lord through her anointed Spirit filled messages in song.**

**While in Arkansas, generally in the Springdale area, we circulated easily into Oklahoma and the surrounding States of Texas, Tennessee, Missouri and Mississippi.**

**We ministered in many churches as a family. We interacted also with the Gideons, Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary and War Veteran Posts, schools and universities, though our focus was the armed forces bases primarily through our parent body, ACCTS. We were comfortable at the Layman home as we plied back and forth with much liberty.**

**As people got to know about our ministry we received invitations from many quarters, church and secular. I had taken a travel documentary film about Zimbabwe and as a good public relations person for my country I showed it wherever there was opportunity. Screening it and speaking at a Rotary lunch one day, the course of my life was again adjusted. Present at the lunch was a senator for the State of Arkansas, David Pryor.**

**After my talk, mostly general knowledge about current affairs in Zimbabwe then, he came to speak to me. He told me that the Governor of Arkansas was hosting a celebration for the schoolchildren prize winners in his State and is looking for an interesting speaker, would I be interested. I was flattered but never turned down an opportunity to speak anywhere.**

**We lived in Springdale about 2 hours by car from Little Rock the capital. A friend Jack Sterns met us my wife and daughters, in Little Rock, and guided us to the State Capital Building. I was in my uniform of Chaplain-General and we were presented to Governor Bill Clinton. We hadn't met him before and this was an occasion where he as Governor was hosting the prize-winners of a poster competition held for all the schools in his**

**State. The children were there with their parents and there were probably about 300 people in the state room.**

**Governor Clinton just said a few opening words and turned it over to me. My wife Valerie spoke for about 10 minutes about the life of a rural school child in Zimbabwe and then I spoke for about 20 minutes about general knowledge and current affairs of Zimbabwe and this part of the world. I believe it went down well and we had captured the interest and imagination of the children, especially as this occasion was for them.**

**The Governor then thanked us and presented me with a traditional certificate called the 'Arkansas Traveller' appointing the holder an ambassador of the State of Arkansas. A party was in progress for the young people and cocktail for the adults. Governor Clinton treated us as his personal guests and spoke to some length with us. His curiosity was aroused by our involvements in his state and I gave him a full summary of our activities so far. He wanted to know more about our living conditions in Zimbabwe of which we also gave him an overview. Finally he mentioned that as we were now ambassadors of his state we could call on him when in need. We sincerely thanked him.**

**As he saw us out, my wife said to him "I'm going to pray that you make it to President one day". It was prophetic and I'm sure that she did pray for him. It was in the last days of her illness when she was able to hear the news that Bill Clinton, whom she prayed for was elected the next President of the United States.**

**When we got back home to Zimbabwe I wrote to Governor Clinton thanking him again for his gracious reception and interest in us. I got a reply with his thanks.**

**On one occasion in Arkansas we were the guests of the coach of the University of Arkansas football team the 'Razorbacks'. We did not understand much of the game but enjoyed the atmosphere and sitting in the grandstand nevertheless.**

**The same year my wife and I were invited to the International Military Conference in Seoul, South Korea, so we left from USA for Seoul from Los Angeles on to Seoul via Fairbanks, Alaska. While the conference was in progress I got a request from the Foreign Affairs Department of South Korea to visit them. An official car was sent for me and upon arrival I was whisked away to the office of the Foreign Minister himself Mr. Hykung Hung. After preliminaries he asked me if I would take some gifts for our President and Prime Minister and try to foster friendly relations between our two countries. That was the essence and object of his request for me to visit his offices.**

**I reminded him that I was there in my own private capacity and not representative of our Government but I'll take a chance and that if it is refused I have the option to dispose it as I wish. He agreed and next referred me to the Chairman of the Olympic Committee who also wanted to send some message and mementos to his counterpart in Zimbabwe, Tommy Sithole. The Olympics was going to be held in Seoul in '86 but at**

that time, Zimbabwe by it's strong ties with North Korea was pressured to boycotting the games in South Korea, though they finally did participate. I like to think that I had some small contribution to that decision.

I studied this course of events and I thought 'in for a penny in for a pound'. We returned to the States to continue our itinerary as we still had a few months left before we returned to Zimbabwe. Seoul gave me a wider perspective than the Nairobi Conference and now back in the States we were inundated with invitations from military people we met at the Conference so till our departure we had a calendar full of invites.

We were as busy as ever itinerating. One of the highlights was attending the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. This came about as a result of us ministering in a church in Nashville, Tennessee and I sang a solo on the guitar before I preached. Bishop Muzorewa was on the platform too as he was also visiting that particular church.

I mentioned that American music had a great influence, especially country western was very popular in our country. I revealed the names of some artists like Jim Reeves and others, including Skeeter Davis – the moment I said that, seems like the whole church turned around and said "there she is". After the service she came around to meet us with her dad who was on in years and he had tears in his eyes as he said to me "I didn't know my daughter was singing in Africa". Skeeter said she would try to get us some tickets to the Grand Ole Opry, the ultimate for any 'country western' fan, and so she did, the only seats being backstage as the auditorium was sold out as it usually is, months ahead of time.

We had close up views and afterward met some of the artists especially Porter Wagner who MC'd that night, Hank Snow and Connie Smith. Retired US Army Captain Jim Foster and his wife Lorrie, were our hosts in Nashville. We were able to take photographs with all of the artists and the next day to visit and sing in the same studio that the great Jim Reeves used for his recordings. Ruth sang into Jim Reeves' microphone.

Valerie was an ardent Elvis Presley fan from her teenage days and I made a point on our returning into Arkansas to stop and visit 'Graceland'. It was like a pilgrimage for her to be so near to everything in music that her teenage life meant. I took many pictures of her in Graceland as we went through reminiscing our teenage days.

With heavy hearts we had to settle our daughter Ruth as a border at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Arkansas. That same day we showed the Zimbabwe Film and spoke to 1100 students. It was hard leaving our daughter but God gives grace and peace. We knew it was harder for her and we prayed more fervently for her.

Returning home we flew via London and had 8 days there with ACCTS Military Ministry-International.

We visited together the Chaplain-General of the British Army. We met in the Rudyard

**Kipling room of the palace that was to become Prince Andrew's official marital residence in the near future. We had good discussions and established good relations for future working relationships.**

**I then visited the Salvation Army HQ and met the incumbent head, General and Mrs. Wahlstrom . I picked up that they were to visit Southern Africa soon, including Zimbabwe. I made plans for them to visit my office and indicating that I would be happy to invite Salvationists that were in the Armed Forces and including Mrs. Taurai Ropa Ngongo, then Minister of Women's Affairs for Zimbabwe.**

**Leaving for home via Nairobi, we had a good visit with the Chaplain-General of the Kenyan Forces. We had met in '82 when Nairobi hosted the AMCF Regional Conference and were looking forward to it being hosted again in a year's time in '86.**

#### **CHAPTER 34**

**"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a divine drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away"**

**Into 1985, after arriving home my first errand was to report to the Secretary for Defence who spent an hour with me as I went through my itinerary of 6 months. Mr. Chitauro frowned at my going to South Korea as Zimbabwe had no friendly relations with the South. He simply said to me 'Rajah you like trouble'. I had the Korean Foreign Ministry official gifts for the President, the Prime minister and the Chairman of the Olympic Committee. I presented to each except PM Mugabe who would not receive it from me personally but did nonetheless, through his Secretary of Defence.**

**Tommy Sithole was editor of the Herald then and I visited his office to present him with the message and mementos from his Olympic counterpart. He was appreciative and presented me with the blazer pocket emblem that the Zimbabwean Olympic Team was going to use, and I had this sewn on to my blazer.**

**Into March, Salvation Army General Wahlstrom and General Mrs. Wahlstrom visited Harare. I personally conveyed an invitation to the Hon. Taurai Ropa Ngongo to attend the meeting. I knew she was a Salvationist and had attended Howard Institute as a young girl. Over a cup of tea in her office, I offered to accompany her to the Stadium meeting which she graciously accepted. Today she is Zimbabwe's Vice President.**

**About this time the once a year contest is on in Zimbabwe for 'Communicator of the year'. I entered listing my whole itinerary for '84 and the highlights. I got second to Prime Minister Mugabe who won the contest. If I knew that he was being entered I would not have bothered to waste my time as it would be a forgone conclusion who would win.**

**I resumed my visits to the prisons. Things were now coming to a head with the ZAPU**

remand prisoners. General Masuku was looking ill and there was talk about them all being released but it did not happen that year.

A rumour was circulating that he had been injected with the 'Aids' virus when he reported for a mild illness to the prison infirmary. I examined his death certificate, it gave the cause of death as relating to the HIV virus. Prior to his funeral I spent some time ministering to his wife and asked her straight out if she was infected with HIV to which she replied 'absolutely no' and showed me proof of having submitted herself to blood tests clearing her of the virus. She was firmly of the opinion that her husband, Lookout Masuku was deliberately infected with the virus in prison and sent to die in the general public hospital as a cover up.

Another person to die under suspicious circumstances a few months later was Brigadier Charles Gray. He was a former ZIPRA commander, under General Masuku, one of the very few Coloured men who fought on the side of the guerrillas. I got to know him and his family well. When he was arrested, under some treason charge, I found out that he was held at Waterfalls township police cells. Without asking anyone's permission (I knew if I did it would be refused) I went and visited him. On a Sunday morning I went and had a one-man church service with him. The guards, two of them, allowed us to sit outside the cell in the fenced quadrangle area and have our service. Then the two guards joined us and I was surprised to see them lay down their AK's without any compunction. A few months later he too ended up in hospital and died, a strong young man in his mid thirties.

By this time things were coming to a head for me as the Ministry of Defence was now asking for my resignation. According to my contract I still had 8 years left but that was brushed aside. The Commander requested my presence and told me I was to retire as from 4<sup>th</sup> September which was a few days hence. I literally begged him to consider six months more as that would give me a full 30 years of Government service and that would help my pension. I even asked to go on leave for the 6 months pending. He was adamant there would be no extension so I was sent on enforced retirement forthwith.

I was in my prime at 52 years of age. I met with the Defence Forces Services Commission and put my case to them but their advice was - there were still some whites on the board - 'take this way out now, at least you'll get your benefits and pension or there might be other ways of taking you out', so I took no further action and bowed out. Technically I was fired. Later on, one of the members of the DFSC, Jack Lewis-Walker, my advisor, was accused of being a spy and languished 2 years in prison before being released and deported to Britain.

No sooner was I retired that I got an invitation from ACCTS USA to be part of an exercise code-named Interaction where officers of various countries would by invitation visit the USA and interact with each other and with the US Armed Forces. This exposure would give encouragement to the candidates to promote their Christian witness and begin military fellowships in their own countries.

**This exercise culminated with all participants attending the annual United States Presidential Prayer Breakfast, annually, the third Thursday of February, the American National Prayer Breakfast Committee, initiated in 1980 by the Reverend Doug Coe. ACCTS's grand finale was a service together with a circle of well-wishers and supporters at the ever popular bring and share evening Bar B-Q. The bible says 'when one door closes God opens another'.**

**I returned home to the sad news awaiting me that General Lookout Masuku had passed away just a few days before, after a few months in hospital and that Mr. Joshua Nkomo had come to our home seeking me out to do the funeral. It was the desire and wish of the General that I do his funeral and I felt greatly honoured.**

**One would imagine that he should have been accorded 'National hero' status and be buried at the National Heroes' Acre but that honour was denied him. The funeral would take place on the 12th of April 1986 at Bulawayo's provincial hero's acre a few days after my arrival. A lift was arranged for me to Bulawayo with Prof. Austin of University of Zimbabwe from where quite an entourage of several cars travelled for the funeral.**

**The church service was at the Methodist Church in Mzilikazi in the courtyard as the crowd was large and overflowing into the streets where everyone had gathered (the church was too small). I spoke about the rich man and Lazarus and the discrepancies in their lives. I emphasised the sharp political connotations of the imprisonment and suffering of the deceased and the miserable condition of other prisoners and compared it to the life of Lazarus the beggar who desired even the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table and the dogs came and licked his sores.**

**The rich man I equated to the powers that be, the 'fat cats' their high lifestyle and riding roughshod with no compassion over those that they engineer and consign to be beggars. I was literally daring the establishment and was prepared for any comeback so I held a small tape recorder under my bible. I have the tape to this day and have just listened to it to refresh my memory for this commentary.**

**Dr. Joshua Nkomo addressed the assembled and was reported next day in The Bulawayo Sunday News of 13th April 1986, as posing the headlined question "Why not at Heroes' Acre" after summarising the late General's achievements and contributions to the liberation struggle of his country, Dr. Nkomo asked, "if Lookout Masuku is not a hero, who then is a hero in this country? He added that no person can deny the heroic role played by Comrade Masuku in both pre and post independent Zimbabwe. The ZAPU leader wondered "why men like Comrade Masuku and former ZIPRA supremo Dumisa Dabengwa should be condemned to prison in Independent Zimbabwe, after acquittal by the highest courts in the country"**

**He equated General Masuku with the great General Josaiah Tongogara a man whose untimely and also questionable death certainly affected the Nation and steered it to an**



**uncharted political course. Had Tongogara lived the military command structure would be very much different from today's high strutting military and political hierarchy.**

**After the church service we walked in procession to the burial site not too far away on the Old Vic Falls road. I led the procession with Joshua Nkomo who is a lay preacher of his church, at my side.**

**General Lookout Mafela Masuku was buried in an old cemetery in a remote corner of his country, off the old Great North Road, Bulawayo, hardly known by anybody, designated as the 'Provincial Heroes' Acre. No Military honours, no flag draped coffin or volleys or trumpet "last post" – Had I known or anticipated this sorry state of affairs I would have brought my own trumpet and sounded the last post myself as I did at many a lonely funeral in the war years. I had expected a funeral with full military honours for such a hero, even at 'provincial level.**

**After the funeral I wandered around this little known, obscure, neglected little cemetery reading the epitaphs, the first time that even I had come to knowledge and seen it. I noticed many Sikh names, and a number had ranks. History records that at the early turn of the century these Sikhs were brought into Rhodesia from Indian Regiments as the first instructors for the battalions that were raised from the Atonga, Anyanja and Yao of Nyasaland. These were raised for the purpose of suppressing the slave trading of the Yaos.**

**Military Instruction in the early days was carried out by Sikh non-commissioned officers seconded from the British Indian Army. The battalion took part in the quelling of the Ashanti uprising in 1900. It subsequently served with distinction in both world wars, seeing service in Somaliland, Abyssinia, Madagascar and Burma. Since World War II the battalion has seen active service in Malaya, the Sikh instructors by this time being phased out and replaced by white officers. Known after the dissolution of the Federation as the Rhodesia African Rifles (RAR) the African soldier could go up to the rank of RSM.**

**Obviously some Sikhs fell in battle or succumbed to sickness and natural causes and were buried in this remote corner of the world that hardly anybody knows about. I didn't. They fought for the Empire and fell but unlike the Commonwealth War Graves in the old Pioneer cemetery of Harare where hundreds of war graves repose, no one seems to care much about these graves. This anomaly should be corrected.**

**A news article in the Standard of 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006 states that over 300 graves at the Bulawayo Provincial Heroes' Acre are in danger of caving in after light showers last week. This has raised fears that most of them might be washed away during the coming rainy season.**

**Of the 584 graves at the shrine about 100 have been serviced under the first phase. The government is yet to provide gravestones at the shrine, which has exposed the**

graves to harsh weather conditions. Some of the graves are continuously trampled upon by people visiting the shrine.

A spokesperson, the executive director of the Post Independence Survivors Trust, said the state of the graves "showed that the government does not recognise some of the heroes lying at the shrine. It is part of the government's philosophy and policy not to recognise some of the heroes of the liberation struggle and General Lookout Masuku was one of such. The graves should not have reached such a sorry state. It is up to all of us to honour our heroes and respect the dead"

General Lookout Mafela Masuku reposes in this remote cemetery with warriors of another nation kindred and tribe- the Sikhs - being denied burial by his own countrymen and compatriots to be honoured with those 'graded' National heroes, who fought under his command.

At the Commonwealth War graves in the Pioneer Cemetery, Harare, a distance from the main body of graves which are whites, in a small section of the cemetery lies the war graves of Africans soldiers who fell in the two great wars - distinctly, segregationally, a great distance apart.

Researching the history of these Sikhs, it turns out that they were different from the 'indentured' Indians the British brought here. They voluntarily joined the British Army in India and were seconded to Rhodesia, and initially named the Central Africa Regiment. Later with the incorporation of Africans they were called the Kings African Rifles up until 1963, were first brought here at the end of the nineteenth century. Just proves another way the British Empire expanded with the recruiting of Indians from India. It is to be wondered how many Indians have fallen in foreign fields for the cause of the British Empire.

### Chapter 35

Back in Harare I had no more official access to the prisoners as I had enjoyed before but in due time the ZAPU group were released including Dumiso Dabengwa. I visited him later in his office when he was made Minister of Home Affairs in the ZANU PF Government. He remained in that post till the new elections.

By this time I had accepted a Staff post with ACCTS (Association of Christian Conferences, Teaching and Service) which entailed representing the world body in this southern part of Africa, SADC. I have just completed 20 years with them. I have been available to travel around the SADC region keeping them updated on conferences and holding seminars, arranging travel for candidates. Lt.Col. Dell McDonald USAF (Ret) was the executive Director then. ACCTS manifesto or mission statement is; 'To assist in the development of Christian leaders in the armed forces of the world and in the establishment and growth of military Christians fellowships'.

1987 to '89 saw my wife Valerie and I back in the States itinerating to raise support for

our Africa ministry. We also had in mind to settle our daughter Donna in University. We needed a good car as I intended to travel extensively on deputation. I was speaking at an early morning Gideon's breakfast meeting and in closing mentioned that we need a good second hand car to do our deputation ministry. The word went around and I got a call from a businessman who was at the meeting telling me to go and see a certain garage owner and he would try to help me.

Of course I lost no time and met Mr. Guy Strickland the owner of Strickland Motors in a small place called Stillwell, Oklahoma. Stillwell, people told me, as it was just on the State line on the Arkansas side and Oklahoma on the other, that as late as the 1920s still had outlaws and lawmen, cowboy style, crossing the State lines. People still wore holsters and guns even then. Looks like I was fifty years too late to enjoy that scenario.

Guy Strickland had heard of my need through the businessman who was at the Gideon's breakfast. He had us sit in his office to await the arrival of the vehicle from the workshop. We exchanged the usual formalities of greetings and small talk and especially the 'big' talk – about the spiritual and the Lord's work of which he was an ardent supporter.

Soon his foreman drove into the showroom with 'the car' a new Chevrolet Corsica. Guy Strickland got up and said "here's your car, let's go take a look at it". Both my wife and I were flabbergasted and thought surely this must be a mistake - he's misunderstood us – we have no money to pay for a car – least of all, this sort of car.

He said again 'here's your car' noticing our unbelief. I reminded him that I had said we needed a used car, totally on loan, and that it wouldn't matter much if I put on a scratch or a dent or two, with all the driving we envisage doing. He said "this is a used car - when I was praying about your need, the Lord told me to give you the best used car I have and this is the best second hand car that I have. It is a demonstration car, and has 11,000 miles on the clock". For that year '84, this model of the Chevrolet Corsica won the 'car of the year' award for it's class".

What could we say – we were humbled to no end – almost dazed. We thanked him most profusely – he simply said "don't thank me, thank the Lord, this is His business, His car, and you're doing His business".

My wife and I drove out of there like right royal and practically lived in that car for two years. We covered 44 of the 48 contiguous states visiting bases and ports, army, airforce, navy and coast guard. Another miracle the Lord provided was through another businessman, Don Birge in Fort Worth, Texas, who owned a Texaco Service Station.

We were speaking at a church meeting and in the course of my preaching gave God the glory for providing us with such a wonderful vehicle. At the close of the service Don offered us his 'card' to full in petrol at any time at any Texaco gas station when

**we needed to, throughout our stay. Unbelievable!! By the time we were done with our deputation rounds and sent his card back to him we had 'chalked' up 750 dollars worth of fuel. (fuel was cheaper then). What a contribution to our cause and to the cause of the Kingdom. We are still in touch.**

**When we got back to Michigan where our son lives we rested a few days and then headed north for Canada with the intention of visiting as many of our denominational churches who originate from Canada. We also had in mind to settle Donna at Trinity Western University, Vancouver as we had applied to place her there.**

**We drove up the top end of Michigan through the Mackinaw Bridge over into Canada and picked up the newly opened Coquihalla yellow trail from Winnipeg to Vancouver. It had just been opened a few weeks ago and at the end of the trail at Vancouver, we were presented with stickers, mementos and brochures.**

**We branched off the main trail here and there, sometimes to the north and sometimes south to visit our affiliated churches of the Apostolic Church of Pentecost. We would stay overnight with the pastors or church members. Most times, services would be arranged for us to speak, receive an honorarium and we'd press on back to the main trail and on till we reached Vancouver where the trail ended.**

**We arrived at for Trinity Western University in Vancouver with great hopes that Donna's application was successful and she would soon be settled but we ran into immigration and student visa problems. I had assumed that Canada, being a Commonwealth country like Zimbabwe, we would not need to apply from Zimbabwe but found out otherwise.**

**We made several attempts, going across the border to Seattle, USA, and applying from there, getting medicals done at high cost and re-applying, but all to no avail. In between the goings and comings we enjoyed fellowship with our sister church in Seattle which hosted us. We finally had to give up settling Donna in Canada and once more looked towards the States.**

**Finally God opened a door for our daughter Donna at Judson College, Selma, Alabama. A college with the distinction of "a Womens Tradition since 1838'. Norman Wood who was now pastoring a church in Alabama was playing golf with the president of Judson College and mentioned our need to him. The next thing I had a request to call the president's office and bring my daughter along.**

**She was enrolled immediately as a boarder with a bursary and just fitted in comfortably. She had many hilarious and some scary times as she related some of the goings on at this girls' college. In our itinerary, anytime we were a few states from her we would make a point of passing Judson College just to check her out to see if she was still surviving. She did very well there and we were proud of her.**

It wasn't long before she was 'in love' with a friend of her youth from Grand Rapids, Michigan and this was entailing long distance driving to see one another till they hit on the idea that she should move to Calvin College, Grand Rapids, and in due course, the next semester after two years at Judson, the transfers were effected and she moved to Calvin College.

Calvin is a well known and popular College and many nationals from African countries seem to land there. There were Kenyans, Zimbabweans and others whom I made an effort to meet with through the Inter-Varsity fellowship groups. They always give me opportunity to address the groups whenever I am in Grand Rapids. Several are now pastors in churches in Zimbabwe that we keep in touch.

Donna completed her Teaching degree with an additional degree especially for the hearing and speech impaired. She immediately got a teaching job and enjoyed her vocation for a few years till it was time to get married but she delayed it due to her mother's illness. Like her sister in Zimbabwe she continued to teach. As time became crucial she put off her marriage and came to Zimbabwe to be with her mother in the hopes that her mother would rally, get well and be fit enough to travel for her wedding. That was not to be as a further chapter will reveal.

The Missions group that we're affiliated to has HQ in Calgary. We visited as many as possible of our affiliated churches and finally came down to Seattle. From there down towards San Diego we visited Army, Air Force and Navy bases, even the nuclear submarine base, on ACCTS ministry.

We spent a good few days in Monterey at the Navy Language Training School and also spoke in chapel there. We spent some time in the Los Angeles area. One of the airmen I served in Chikurubi was now working for McDonald Douglas Aircraft and we had good visits with him, his family and his new friends and workmates at a braai they put up for us.

Leaving LA we picked the centre States and moved northwards to the Dakotas. We had contacts pastoring churches there. They arranged for us to speak in several churches and we were blessed with honorariums and promises of on-going support. That itinerary over, we needed to make it to Michigan fast for other commitments but heard on the radio that a blizzard was brewing and approaching west to east. We decided to push on, try to beat the blizzard and make it to Michigan.

I did not very much cherish the thought of driving in a blizzard. The word blizzard conjured up frightening scenes in my mind though it would not be the first time that I would drive in snow. We left early in the hope we could beat the blizzard as it would be travelling behind us.

As we travelled we realised we couldn't beat it so had to take shelter in a Motel 6 till next day. With the blizzard passed, we proceeded and experienced how difficult it was

to drive in heavy snow. When trucks passed they splashed the whole car with snowspray slush and one could hardly see in front. We thanked God we had a good car that gave absolutely no trouble all the time we had it. We arrived safely in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

How we did it all – travelling into 44 States, in all kinds of weather - I don't know - 'only' God! To this day I marvel and give God thanks for keeping us safe. Worst for me was driving in the snow. We did not even carry a blanket or extra foodstuffs, or a torch, as I came to find out later that these are essentials for travel across the country in America with it's temperamental weather changes. All we did was live from one fast food place to another, church to church, base to base. God was good to us, we suffered no sicknesses or discomforts.

We never landed in a ditch with all that driving the speedometer showing 94,000 when we were ready to turn the car in. ACCTS then arranged to buy the vehicle from Guy Strickland and we ended with it for our use to the end of our stay. We were truly blessed and thanked God when we realised the magnitude of the task we had undertaken, and He allowed us to fulfil our objective to raise support for our ministry, many which still stand us good to this day.

### **CHAPTER 36**

During our itinerary people blessed us with household items, books etc and we bought some necessities. We met with International Aid, a group that assists missionaries get their goods shipped to various destinations worldwide. We had to buy a used 20 foot container and our stuff was packed into that. Some contacts and friends sent gifts for us, directly to International Aid, that we didn't even see till we got home.

I bought an almost new Silver Wing Honda 500cc motor cycle for \$600, the owner a small man fell with it before he'd done 16,000 miles so wanted to get rid of it. When I got home I sold it and the container for a good sum and paid off my property. I also bought a Honda scooter for \$200 that I am using to this day, my little 'lifesaver' I call it, when fuel is creeping up to Z\$2 million and more a litre here.

It was two years we were away from home and according to Zimbabwe Customs laws we could bring in a motor vehicle duty free as returning residents. With the help of a friend in Zimbabwe who had connections in South Africa we bought a Toyota Cresida in Johannesburg and drove home to Harare. We were back now in Zimbabwe in July '89 and the container arrived 3 months later all intact. We were blessed when we offloaded to see what the Lord had provided. There was much for charity too, medical and material comforts like medicines, clothes, blankets, etc. which we eventually distributed.

Mid 1991 Valerie begins to fall ill and tests show colon cancer and she goes through treatment, radiotherapy, chemotherapy, nothing spared, but she continued to deteriorate into the next year and finally in December '92 she succumbed and went to

be with her Lord. My life was shaken, so confident I was that she was just going through a bad patch and she would finally pull through. We buried her in Bulawayo from St John's Cathedral which she loved so dearly and where we were married 31 years ago.

One blessing - the Lord allowed her to see before He took her, was the lady who played the organ under the street lamp those many years ago when she was a child singing 'joy joy' songs. Valerie told her testimony wherever she spoke and once speaking in the Baptist Church, Jill Johnstone who knew her story remembered about the joy joy lady with the upsweep hairdo, came to see Valerie and told her she knew the person she was talking about and that this person was very ill and wanted to see Valerie.

We made a time and Valerie was nervous in case it wasn't the lady she had in mind or was just mistaken what she looked like but nevertheless we went. The moment Valerie entered the room she was overjoyed as she knew, as both their spirits witnessed, without a doubt that this was an older version of her joy joy lady. She was ill with cancer and her husband brought out a family album with old pictures and Valerie could pick out this lady and other different ones. There was tears and joy as they hugged each other and thanked God for bringing them together after so many years. "Cast your bread upon the waters and it shall return unto you after many days".

There were two pastors in the room, one her husband and they both prayed touching prayers for this precious reunion. It was not long after that this lady went to be with the Lord, not too long after that Valerie went too and not long after that Jill Johnstone also went to be with the Lord. God had allowed them to meet here before they would meet in heaven and showed them both the fruits of their labours. The rest of the people in the photo wore Royal Air Force uniforms so these must have been with the Empire Training Scheme.

My daughter Donna who had graduated by now and came to be with her mother the last few days, was making plans to get married but put it off in the hopes that her mother would recover enough to be at her wedding. That was not to be, and her mother went on to be with the Lord in December of 1992. We had her funeral service from her beloved St. John's Cathedral where we were married 31 years ago. I asked Rev. Gary Strong a family friend and who Valerie cared much for, to take the Cathedral service and Father Evans Gliwitzki of the St. Francis of Assisi Anglican Church, Barham Green, took the graveside service. We were all much comforted.

Immediately after, I arranged to take Ruth who got leave from Chisipite Girls High School where she taught English and French at that time, to represent her mother at Donna's wedding and we travelled together with Donna for her nuptials.

The wedding was arranged for April and Donna married Roger Betten. Ruth and I stayed on a few weeks more before we returned via Lisbon where Ruth left me and

continued on to Harare while I remained to take a Portuguese language course. I went for two months to Cambridge Portuguese Language School, Lisbon, but really, so soon after Valerie's homegoing, was unable to absorb anything. The good thing was that I came away with a lot of teaching material that would later come into good use.

Life as a widower is not easy especially the first few months and years. I seemed to loose my bearings again as I did after my father died and seemingly went off the rails but again by the grace of God He brought me back to where He wanted me. I was again smitten by guilt for what I did and did not do for Valerie. Our lives as ministers of the gospel was not easy going. There was lots of opposition from the powers of darkness and that caused some variance and differences between us, but with prayer and the Lord's help we always overcame.

In January '93 I received an official invitation from the state of Arkansas informing me that as a holder of the 'Arkansas Traveller' award that I had been presented with by Bill Clinton in Little Rock State House in 1984, I am invited to his inauguration as President, (my wife's prophecy coming true). Was I interested? I couldn't wait to get the answer back by letter so I telephoned Senator Prior. Yes!

This was a big matter of interest so the local Herald Newspaper interviewed me and gave me cover story as did the sister paper the Bulawayo Chronicle. The Herald had headlines "Come see me Pal says Clinton". After the appearance of the news articles friends and well wishers were writing and phoning me their congratulations. It appears that I was the only one invited from Zimbabwe and what an honour that is.

In 1992 the year of the elections in America when Bill Clinton was running for President I had written him a letter wishing him success. He wrote back thanking me. Later on when he won the nomination I wrote congratulating him. January 5<sup>th</sup> '93, I got a letter from David Prior informing me that as a holder of the "Arkansas Traveller' award I am invited to the inauguration. Air tickets were arranged auspices of State of Arkansas could be collected here and I travelled to Washington DC, arriving a few days before the inauguration and was met and hosted by Guy and Ginny Jarrat, ACCTS staff, Washington Area Ministry.

On the day of the inauguration, I moved in with a Navy couple Ryan and Shannon Wise who lived closer to the Capitol Buildings anticipating difficulty getting to the venue on inauguration day. I had tickets for seats in the stands with the Arkansas Travellers - 18 of us. It surfaced afterward that somewhere or someone had not passed on to me the tickets for the rest of the celebrations but nevertheless I was happy with what I did enjoy and experience.

After the inauguration I went to Michigan for a few weeks and since I had brought all my Portuguese language material I decided to return home via Brazil and do some studying there as I waited for the Brazilian UMCEB Military Conference to take place



end of July. So I had three months with the Fellowship there. I diligently did my studies with the help of a retired lawyer friend whom I was placed with. In between lessons I travelled with the President of the Military Fellowship Major Dr. Almeida, and his wife Mirtes promoting the Conference.

The organisers of the Conference had invited Brigadier General Charles Duke the Apollo 16 Astronaut to be the opening and main Speaker. In good time before the conference he informed them that he was unable to accept the invitation so they simply turned to me and said, "you're an international speaker, you are a friend of Charles Duke and you just attended the inauguration of your friend Bill Clinton so you be the speaker" I was thrown in the deep end and advertised in the National Armed Forces Christian paper "Contato" and the local newspaper.

I tried to get hold of the person who was appointed to be my interpreter with no success. Five minutes before my scheduled appearance on the opening night of the conference, he came to speak to me assuring me that he had lived in Texas for ten years and will have no difficulty interpreting. When our turn came - what a disaster! He could not fathom my accent, which certainly was not Texan, and kept saying 'what?' till I decided to cut short anything I was going to say to the minimum.

The Conference itself was a great success as it was held in the capital city of Brasilia and many of the top brass and Government officials attended the opening and the rest of the days was well attended by military representatives from all over Brazil. It was held at the Cadet Military Academy. Elias, an old friend and a refugee from Mozambique, came across from Lisbon to be with me and my host Hernande my lawyer teacher-mentor and together we had a great time. My Portuguese was improving.

About 300 delegates and cadets were always in attendance and ministry for the rest of the conference was taken by churches that support the military fellowship and various special speakers. Like myself, there were many internationals in attendance. Church choirs excelled as they led in worship and praise and the ministers who preached were on target.

### **CHAPTER 37**

On the closing day my life took a turn again. In the food line I met a woman who could hardly speak English but was with a cousin, an air hostess that could. So we started a three way conversation and I learned that Rosane the hostess had a brother who was a chaplain in the Brazilian military and he had invited her and her cousin Gina to the closing ceremony and there they were. That was Saturday the fifth and last day of the Conference. I had a short closing speech with another interpreter and we did better this time. For both the opening and closing ceremonies I wore the Zimbabwe Air Force Uniform of Wing Commander.

**After the closing ceremony there was a get together of the officials and guests and I had a further chance to talk with Gina. She invited Elias and I to her church service at the main Presbyterian Church the next day and we honoured the invitation.**

**Gina met us and introduced us to her Pastors and after the service asked us to visit a congregation on the outskirts of the city which was their project and practice every Sunday after the main Church service. We went to the poor side of town a locality called Somambaia and held a service as usual, only this time as I would be preaching, and we would need an interpreter so Gina had asked someone from the church to accompany us to do that.**

**She introduced me in Portuguese and then passed it to me to speak at the same time motioning to the interpreter to come forward. He froze in his seat and I not knowing this, just went ahead and started speaking. Gina just stood there and had to interpret. I thought she was doing pretty well and forgot that she could not speak English. I believe that God gave her a special enabling to be able to interpret through the Spirit what I said in simple English.**

**I had only 8 days left in Brazil and I realized that I had taken a fancy to Gina. There was nothing else I could do and verbal communication was limited and difficult but body and sign language seemed appropriate. I always had my friends Elias and Hernande with me. As best I knew how, I made known that I liked her and would be in touch.**

**With friends she came to see me off at the airport and upon my arrival in Zimbabwe I made contact and spoke by phone to her in broken English and limited Portuguese and we exchanged letters before the days of email. I would get a letter and though I could make out in general what she was saying I went to a missionary friend who confirmed what I had read and she had to do the same with my letters.**

**In between these periods I got an invitation 'out of the blue' from an organisation called "Pugwash". This is an international scientific orientated organisation that monitors world affairs especially in the area of prevention of nuclear warfare. This was their 44th yearly meeting and I got invited, again, by the stroke of the Lord's hand.**

**I was travelling on a bus from Sao Paulo to Rio de Janeiro and happened to be seated next to a lady and we conversed all the way. It turned out that she was French, Dr. Venance Journe, a scientist doing a project in Brazil and that she was an official of the 'Pugwash' movement. She seemed interested in my background and vocation and said she will have me invited to the next Pugwash meeting.**

**It wasn't a year later that I received a fully sponsored invitation to be a member of the movement and to serve on a panel at the next conference to be held in, Chania, Crete in July of 1994. I would be involved on a panel discussion "towards a war- free world"**

**The whole conference was geared towards the nuclear threat of the day and that the generations to come would be facing. It was an eight day conference and many top scientists and speakers of all races and institutions were presenting papers and discussions. It was extremely high powered and enlightening.**

**Crete is a beautiful island and comes under Greece. In biblical reference, the Apostle Paul sailed into Crete on his way to Rome, not as the master of his own ship but as Rome's prisoner. Paul and the whole of the ship's company were shipwrecked off the coast of Malta the next island from Crete. The ship broke up and sank to the bottom of the sea since the ship's captain and the Centurion Julius did not heed Paul's warning not to leave the safe haven of Crete. Acts 28**

**Crete as a nation too had sunk into the depths of the sea of sin. Broken to pieces morally by the incessant pounding of a godless lifestyle, Crete needed the good news of the gospel. Paul sensed this but unlike the sunken ship, Crete was not beyond redemption, and so it is with any of our lives.**

**Whether Crete was on Paul's heart before his two years house arrest in Rome, we don't know. We only know that once Paul was free from Rome's chains the first time, he apparently went with Titus to Crete and left him there. When Paul wrote to Titus it was about A.D. 62 he didn't know that he would pass that way again returning to Rome for final imprisonment and martyrdom.**

**The Cretetian civilization is dated to ancient pre-Christian era. They worshipped the sacred Minoan Bull and relics of that era have been archeologically excavated, the public and tourists visit the area and can view the almost intact beautiful mosaic floor of the temple. We were taken to view these ancient ruins and the many well preserved ancient Minoan artefacts.**

**The Pugwash meeting was held in Chania the Capital at the Greek Orthodox Theological College. This was the 44th Pugwash meeting. The first was held in Pugwash, Canada, from whence it took its name. Originated by Aristoteles Onassis and Sir Cyrus Eaton in 1957, who together invited a number of the foremost scientists of their day to meet and "undertake a joint struggle for peace", following the Bertrand Russel/Albert Einstein appeal for world peace.**

**The meeting was opened by the General Director of the Orthodox Academy of Greece, Dr. Alexandros Papaderos who took Psalm 133:1 "How good and how pleasant it is to live together as brothers in unity"**

**He said one of Pugwash's main concerns and efforts is given in the words of St. Paul on the Aeropagus:**

**"Men of Athens.... God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth gives to all men life and breadth and everything. And He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth.... They should seek God, in the**

hope they may feel after him and find him. Yet He is not far from each one of us. In him we live and move and have our being; even as some of you poets have said for indeed we are His offspring Acts 17:22-28 – In this spirit we again welcome all of you”.

Next the president of the Alexander Onasis Benefit Foundation presented his welcome speech ‘wishing success to this 44th conference in the interest of mankind’.

A representative for the United Nations read a message from the General Secretary then, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. The first and last paragraphs read; “As this 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference convenes, it is more than ever clear that the world faces new and difficult dilemmas. It is a world torn between integration and disintegration, between community and chaos. It is a time of turmoil, and yet of independence. There are both great dangers and great opportunities ahead.

So my message to this 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Pugwash Conference is one of optimism. In science and technology, humanity possesses the means of it’s own security and progress. We know that our problems can be solved. With a sense of awe at the magnitude of those problems, together we must muster the will to carry our common project forward.

I wish you every success in your deliberations. Pugwash has a proud tradition. Your efforts today are needed even more urgently than in the past. I look forward in anticipation to learning of the outcome of your conference.

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali**

I really was out of my depth with all these scientists but nevertheless felt I had made a worthwhile contribution on the panel “working toward a war-free world”.

Usually when I visit a city in another country I take some memento to present to the Mayor of that city. In this case I had a good visit with the Mayor who also gave me a memento of the island of Crete to present to the Mayor of my city, Harare. Upon arrival back home I made arrangements with the Greek Embassy to join me to present the Mayor of Harare with the memento. Mr. Dimitris Moschopoulos the First Consul was assigned for this task. The mayor of Harare then Charles Z. Tawengwa cordially received us and sent back his good wishes and compliments with a gift from the Harare City Council through the Consul.

My next brush with Pugwash was to attend a Conference in Rome, in February of 2007, invited by a branch of Puwashites, the Isodarco International School on Disarmament and Research on Conflicts. The subjects on discussion this time will be “Terrorism, Counterterrorism, and Human Rights.” This topic is up my street and I will feel more comfortable with this topic to present a paper on my experience on the subject.

The city of Chania is beautiful, ancient and modern. In my free time from Pugwash commitments, I loved to walk on the shoreline and often my thoughts turned to Gina in Brazil. I gave my future some grave and serious thought and concluded that I should

get married. My present lifestyle was just 'drifting'. Maybe that huge Cretian full moon that shone ahead over the ocean was affecting me. At the same time I prayed and put it all to the Lord and sent Gina a postcard from there.

Rather than go on indefinitely, when I got home after Pugwash, I wrote to Gina asking her to marry me. There was silence for a good while as she had gone to a friend to read my letter and it spoke about marriage. Understandably she was cautious, not sure and was also praying about it. I thought she'd given up, that I'd probably frightened her away, when one morning, on a really busy day the postman brought me a slip for an express letter from Brazil. I knew that must be from Gina so by permission I kept some people waiting that I was going to travel with to Beira, to rush to the post Office to collect the letter.

I signed and got the big express envelope. I opened it and inside was a smaller envelope and taking it out I saw only one word written on the envelope in inverted commas "SIM" which I knew to mean, YES.

So I got back to the team I was travelling with and we proceeded on the journey. Along the road I opened and read the letter of 3 pages. In general I made out what she wrote but I knew friends in Beira that would interpret it for me more accurately. Two different missionaries read and confirmed that she would be happy to marry me. When I got back from Beira I phoned and wrote and faxed my joy at her consent to marry me.

About the same time in Zimbabwe I was organising an ACCTS Conference in Kariba where for the first time the South Africans would participate as apartheid was now abolished. The conference was in September delegates from the SADC countries arrived and a good conference was held. Apartheid had just been abolished in South Africa and 13 countries participated with South Africa for the first time in it's history attending with a multiracial team led by the Chaplain-General Major General J.P. Jordaan. It was a historical milestone for us all.

Into '94, preparations were going on for the world Conference of the Association of Military Christian Fellowships (AMCF Int.) which takes place once in ten years. The last one I had attended to was the Seoul Conference in '84 and this was ten years later. This one was going to be held in the USA at the Pat Robertson CBN Centre, Founder's Inn, in October. I would be participating and leading some seminars and serve on some discussion panels.

I wrote to Gina that I could come to Salvador, her home city, get married and then go with her to the Conference and after that go to my children and introduce her. This could not be, as photocopies were not acceptable and originals and other documentation for a marriage had to be presented in person, so I put plan 'B' into action and went to the World Conference, after that went to Gary and Donna and their families over thanksgiving and left there mid December for Salvador.

## **CHAPTER 38**

**I was celebrating with some war veteran friends at the Crispus Attucks Veterans Post in Grand Rapids. My friends at the Post were always happy to see me, and talk went on till late by then I had a few drinks and was driving to a friend's house when I was stopped by a patrol car and detained at the State's pleasure for the night. In America the law states that even if there is an open bottle of beer or any liquor and one is stopped you are liable to be arrested. So now I qualify to work with Prisons Fellowship International. I have sincere and Godly sorrow that I let my Lord, my family and friends down in this way.**

**Two days later I was on the way to Salvador, Brazil. Gina met me at the airport with an interpreter friend and we rejoiced to see each other. Documentation had to be done, visits to her pastors, one who was also a lawyer and her legal advisor and a host of other details to be taken care of. Finally all was set and we had a civil marriage on the 27<sup>th</sup> and the church wedding ceremony the next day. The Pastor accommodated us though it was bible Study evening but I believe the congregation enjoyed the change from a weekday bible study to a wedding. Together with many of Gina's friends and family it made a churchful of people to bless and pray for us.**

**A couple from the church gave us a gift of a week in the local Meridian Hotel which was an immense pleasure and a wonderful honeymoon present. During the day we had to clear Gina's police and security record, get new Identity documents and a new passport with her new name. This was all done in the few days after Christmas and that in itself was a miracle to have all that officialdom and bureaucracy accomplished in the last week of the year, with the holidays in between. God gave us favour with man.**

**The forth of January, 1995, we left Brazil and the next day we're in Zimbabwe – for Gina it was sink or swim. No one spoke Portuguese and she started catching on to English quickly. Within six months she was able to interpret for me as I kept to simple language.**

**In the same year we were in Brazil again en-route to the USA. Whilst there for a month, we had many ministry opportunities and now I had my own interpreter. The Lord blessed our partnership in the gospel and we saw people being blessed and uplifted. We had many ministry opportunities in the Armed services of Brazil and feedback was encouraging and a joy.**

**Arriving in the USA, Gina met Gary, Donna and their families for the first time and it was a blessed consolation for me as they received and accepted her without reservations. It was such a wonderful re-union for me and so Gina entered into a ready-made family of three children and 8 grandchildren. She had already met Ruth in Harare with the same open and joyful reception. It dawned on me and still does, how well my children had been trained by their mother.**

The next project in the USA, I repeated the exercise that I did with Valerie, I got a vehicle and began an itinerary. This time with Gina we did 24 States and in the process, when and where we could, we met many of the friends and supporters of almost ten years back. We were blessed with pledges of support and many of the womenfolk, sympathetic with Gina's new status of taking up housekeeping in a strange country, showered her particularly with kitchen necessities.

We spoke about the devastating Cyclone Elaine that had just passed through Mozambique and the southern tip of Zimbabwe before we began our trip. We highlighted the needs of the people in the affected areas. People began to respond to our appeals and much medical supplies began to arrive. The Dairy Farmers Association of America, head office in Springfield, Missouri responded by sending 50 bags x 50 lbs each of high protein powdered milk.

This all necessitated the need to take home a container which we had not envisaged but were prepared to. Again, God gave favour and a shipping company agreed to procure a used container at a low cost, and do all the shipping at low cost. A trucking company, Art Moulder Sons of Grand Rapids, transported all the commodities that came in for us, free of charge, from Michigan to Tulsa, Oklahoma, from where the container was packed and to be shipped from. Art Moulder, his wife and sons were supporters from our first contact of 1984. The 'boys' are all grown up now and managing the trucking business. We are truly grateful for their continued support.

In due time the container arrived in Zimbabwe three months after we did. Again we marvelled at the Lord's undertaking for all our needs. When we surveyed the contents we were greatly encouraged and began distributing the supplies received. 24 mission clinics benefited with supplies of various medical supplies and three big hospitals that could use the more sophisticated equipment. Orphanages and pregnancy centres received the milk powder with unimaginable joy.

Another Ministry God gave Gina was ministering to a number of Brazilian missionaries working in Mozambique. They travel into Zimbabwe to do their shopping, medical necessities and consular needs at the Brazilian Embassy in Harare. In the course of time 10 babies were born to families who had to come to Harare for delivery at the many clinics here and they would spend a few days before and after, Gina giving pre and ante natal care.

Some years back we had visited Maputo in 1996 and interacted with the Christian group in the military forces. For the second effort we returned to Maputo in 1998 we were with General Ian Durie, the Vice President of the MCF of South Africa, Col. Tom Capps and spouse, to further previous discussions on the establishment of the chaplaincy department in the Mozambique Armed Forces.

The third effort was most productive as we continued to press on with the desire to see a recognised Chaplaincy established. We were making progress, the Commander was attentive. As the weekend was upon us he postponed discussions to Monday.

In the interim General Durie decided he wanted to visit a member of his church who was a missionary in northern Zululand, not too far from where we were in the southern part of Mozambique.

He asked me to join him and we travelled in a hired Toyota 4x4 vehicle. Having left early we arrived at the venue in Zululand by sundown and had time to have fellowship and supper with the missionary. We then attended a Zulu gospel service and in the morning a different one. I enjoyed both as I can get by with Zulu which is related to Ndebele, the language I grew up with in Matabeleland.

When we returned Sunday night Gina told us that the General had sent for us on Saturday and since we were not there she went with Daniel of the Mozambican MCF. General Ladimo was most gracious to receive her and after a short discussion he gave her further instructions to relay to General Durie to meet his representative group of the Deputy Commander and others he had selected for the meeting on Monday. A healthy discussion ensued on Monday and we left with conditional assurances that the establishment of the official chaplaincy department in Mozambique is definitely on the drawing board.

General Ian Durie former commander of the British in Desert Storm and Chairman of ACCTS Military Missions International the British side of ACCTS led our delegation to the Commander and the Defence Minister getting undertakings that they were in favour of the scheme and it soon would be implemented. At the moment a Military Christian Fellowship has been formed and we have delegates attending ACCTS activities in other countries.

Meanwhile Gina's English continues improving rapidly so we're able to work as a team whenever we are in Portuguese speaking countries she acts as my interpreter. We travelled several times to Maputo in the context of assisting to establish a chaplaincy in Mozambique.

**A sad note to add here. Major General The Reverend Ian Durie, OBE CBE MA our friend, mentor and travelling companion died tragically in a road accident in Romania while on active spiritual combat duty. He was speaker at the Cadet Bible Conference. Also killed in the same accident was a Romanian General, the Commandant of the Academy, a Captain of the Romanian Army, probably the General's ADC, and a civilian driver.**

As a Brigadier, Ian Durie commanded the artillery units of the First Armoured Division in the First Gulf War, and was awarded the CBE. He rose to be Director Royal Artillery,



left the Army in 1996 then studied for the Christian ministry and was ordained into the Church of England.

He became Executive Chairman of Accts MMI and it is in this role that many members remember Ian Durie, giving Godly leadership and direction, with a passion for training, equipping and strengthening chaplains and lay Christians in the military forces of his and other countries. He is a great loss to my wife and I.

### **Chapter 39**

We have two families in America, Gary's and Donna's and whenever we are in the States we first cover our responsibilities and itinerary with ACCTS and then go on to family and enjoy our seven grand children. Usually it seemed we get there in time for Thanksgiving and enjoy tremendous blessings with all the family of both sides for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year then usually leave for home.

Mid to end nineties Gina and I travelled much and it was wonderful to be approaching a new century by God's grace and His mercies. This was a chosen generation to see the twenty-first century. What a great privilege for this generation to see the end of a century and the beginning of a new one. I thank my God that I was so blessed. The world waited to see the clock ticking away the minutes and then the seconds then the countdown to zero hour and what an explosive celebration for some. The whole world acknowledged the turning of the century counting from the birth of Jesus. For others with deep spiritual overtones we joined that mass of people that saw the new century in, on our knees at a watch-night service.

It is a great moment to see an old year out and a new year in, but it is no ordinary thing to see one century out and a brand new century in. I am aware that various religions have their own calendars and this was no big deal for them. It is interesting though to note that regardless if they want to or not Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Chinese and many other religions have to acknowledge the birth of Jesus every day as they write the date according to the current working calendar. Calculating history – His-story – from the advent of His birth for those who believe, it was a momentous and sobering event.

It was a great honour for me to be selected by the International Association Of Evangelical Chaplains for the Centurion Award, Chaplain of the Year, the presentation made at a dinner held at the Hilton Hotel, Washington DC on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2002.

The following is my acceptance speech.

By permission I borrow a quotation from the book of a respected friend, the Attorney General of this United States of America, a man who prayed for me and my country in his office. He says, referring to his own ascendancy to the office of Attorney General of the USA, "when you pursue noble things – sometimes noble things pursue you".

**I reflect on my own life, as I know very well the import of such aspirations into ones life. I was born a Hindu by religion, apprehended by Jesus Christ in adult life, did not begin or choose to be a career soldier, but from a flourishing pastorate, providentially got thrust into the military chaplaincy when the need was great in my country – to serve as Chaplain then to end up Chaplain General of the whole Defence Force of Zimbabwe. A remarkable thrust.**

**In the height of my tenure of office I managed to get fired as a result of my lobbying for human rights, making representations for incarcerated military but construed by my Government as aiding and abetting enemies of the State. A Christian's belief is 'for every crucifixion there is a resurrection'.**

**I got fired but was immediately invited serve and I do to this day with ACCTS military ministries worldwide – and here I stand tonight in the Washington Hilton, to receive the award of "International Chaplain of the year" – like winning a spiritual academy award!**

**I do believe that I am pursued by noble things by the 'Hound of heaven' (the Lord Jesus Himself) apprehended and elevated by Him from Hindu to the highest Christian office in the Armed Forces of my country – thank you Lord Jesus for all you have done and are still doing for me and my progeny according to your faithful promises. I want to thank the International Association of Evangelical Chaplains for this honour conferred upon me. I receive it as from the Lord Jesus through the hands of you His servants. Thank you. End.**

**Into the new century, I particularly had to take the time to reflect on my mere seventy four years as I've done in this autobiography. We wonder if there will be a next century. If so I certainly won't be around to see it. If Jesus tarries and does not come in this century then there will be a generation that will see the twenty second century. But if He should come there are some living that may yet see Him. I wish I could be in that number.**

**What a day that will be  
when my Jesus I will see  
When I look upon His face  
the one who saved me by His grace  
When He takes me by the hand  
And leads me through the promised land  
What a day, a glorious day that will be.**

#### **Chapter 40**

**So far the new century saw us itinerating twice in the USA and UK and the same in Brazil. A highlight of our latest USA visit was a meeting with John Ashcroft the US Attorney General. I got an offer from a friend who knows him well and asked if I would like to accompany him on this visit to the AG. We arrived a day before our appointment**

and had a good visit around the capitol building, Washington DC, spent some time walking through the National Cathedral and other points of interest. Next day I had an early appointment with the US State Department, Office of International Religious Freedom.

I keep in touch with them and give feedback on religious freedom in the country. It can honestly be said there was and is no religious persecution in Zimbabwe. All religions have freedom to practice, even what we consider errant 'cults'. The only time there was some semblance of harassment or persecution was when eleven Christian ministers were arrested in Bulawayo and held in jail over the weekend under the country's POSA (Public Order Security Act) laws.

My younger brother, a pastor was one of them. Special police permission had to be had before assembling together and though permission was applied for and granted the police later rescinded and said permission had not been granted. If more than two people meet, even on the street, it could be construed as an unlawful gathering and they have to have permission says POSA.

Of course if the church is silent on the subject of Government maladministration and injustices, the government has no need to chastise it. In general, pastors and ministers in Zimbabwe are non-committal re the poor peoples predicaments brought about by the Government. Every day big advertisements appear of large evangelistic crusades but they won't say a word against the government. I have lost much faith in many of our ministers of religion in this country and when I have occasion to, I clearly tell them so.

Women's activist groups called WOZA (Women Of Zimbabwe Arise) are not a religious group and they have peacefully demonstrated several times over food shortages and injustices. Every year many were arrested some with children even babies on their backs were detained in police cells each time under the same POSA law. They have more backbone than many of our church leaders. This week they had a 'sit in' in front of Parliament protesting against remarks made by an unthinking member of Parliament that women are inferior and unable to bear responsibility. Police are becoming aware that WOZA has teeth and that world attention is focused on their movements and the police brutality against them. This time the police were 'gentle' and removed them with coaxing and no arrests. I personally stood by to witness this.

#### **CHAPTER 41**

The next AMCF (Association of Military Christian Fellowship) International Conference was held in Seoul, South Korea, in September 2004 again, after twenty years. Gina and I were invited and participated. It was held at the Yonngi Chou Ansani Prayer Mountain complex and it was a spiritual high.

Since that first time I went to Seoul in 1984, now twenty years later, Zimbabwe has since established friendly relations with South Korea who have opened an embassy in

**Harare. Again I like to think that my efforts of twenty years ago did bear some fruit eventually.**

**An AMCF Africa Regional Conference of SADC countries was held in Gaborone, Botswana in July '05, and we were involved as conference staff. While there we spent a few extra days with a chaplain friend while a motor mechanic worked on replacing our troublesome engine with a good low mileage second hand imported one. Though used it is in first class condition and serving us well. With the situation in Zimbabwe as it is, we are reduced to resort to this type of arrangements.**

**Once a year in the earlier part, the South African Military Christian Fellowship have an exercise in Cape Town labelled TMTI (Table Mountain Top Interaction) and we travelled to assist as ACCTS staff. We were involved in the previous two years of TMTI and this year, 2006 it was held the first two weeks in May. We flew to Cape Town and being a day earlier than others gave us time to assist in the preparations. This year, candidates from six SADC countries (Southern Africa Development Community) participated. It is a continuing yearly programme and we look forward to those in the years that lie ahead.**

## **PART II**

**In this segment I will deal with my interest in human affairs and politics. When I started work at Government Printing and Stationery in 1956 it was located in the old Scotts Building, Main Street and Eighth Avenue, Bulawayo. We then moved to the ground floor of the present Tredgold Building which houses the city's magistrate's courts and other important Government offices.**

**At all times I had easy access to the courts and loved to sit in on the sessions particularly the political ones and in those years there were many. I'd slip away from my office in Printing and Stationery in less busier times and sit in on the courts. Ordinary criminal cases were heard on the first floor and the more serious plus the political ones were heard on the second floor. I began to develop an interest and taste for the legal mind and I sought and studied famous court cases especially some of the ones that went through the 'Old Bailey' courts in London. I read famous barristers, lawpersons and judges. My favourite still is the Marshall Hall cases.**

**During Federal times many cases of a political nature were heard. The courts were always crowded and at times when it was some important person or issues being tried there was always a crowd demonstrating outside the courts. During those days there never was a dull moment around Tredgold Buildings and I believe that I got influenced and drew conclusions of justice and injustices by both the government and oppositions.**

**One such important trial during Federal times was that of the President of Malawi Dr. Kumuzu Banda, who, every moment the court recessed he would stand in the**

passageway overlooking the quadrangle from the second floor. Many supporters filled the quadrangle and he waved his famous animal tail swish in response. That particular case was heard 'in camera' and the public barred from the courtroom.

Such was the atmosphere and background that fueled much of my interest in human affairs, justice and injustices. I had friends among the magistrates, prosecutors and interpreters of which there were many and I loved to hold conversations with them. I was loaned many law books, had access to the magistrates' library and at one stage, before my conversion to Christianity, was contemplating taking up law studies.

Another push towards public interest and human rights was when I met Mr. Charlton Ncebetsha, and Mr. Joel Patsika. They were putting out a newsheet called "The African Home News" but of very poor quality and very small circulation. They approached me as a printer to help them produce a better quality newspaper. I had the means and experience so began to print the paper and it took off with a good circulation. Copies are today displayed in the National Archives as one of the early political newspapers. I was proud to be associated with it.

Some people 'dubbed' my place of work, Printing and Mission Station – because it was a missionary rendezvous centre – out of town missionaries came and met with me and I printed for anyone doing the Lord's work, so long as the material was supplied. This went on for several years till Mr. Ncebetsha died and the African Home News discontinued. At about that time the political situation in Rhodesia was explosive and developments would finally lead to the all out liberation war and on to Independence.

But much before that, Joshua Nkomo wrote articles and views in the 'Home News' copies of which I still have. At one time he was in a public debate in the 'Stanley Hall' where the Bulawayo area political meetings were held, with the Mayor of Bulawayo, Donald Macintyre, The Prime Minister then Sir Edgar Whitehead and Mike M. Hove who had been an Ambassador in Federal times. Discussion and debate was about majority rule plus Mr. Hove's candidature for the Gwaai Constituency for the United Federal Party.

#### **Hindu Roots**

I believe my interest and enthusiasm for justice co-relating with my spiritual experience carried me through my Chaplaincy days to the point where I was finally relieved of my position as Chaplain-General.

It can be said that people who have left India have over the years lost the fervour and zeal for their faith so far away from home. It can be said that these Hindus hardly practice their true religion as it should be practiced in all its requirements when away from the motherland.

**'Sati' for example is a law of strict Hinduism. A widow is required to sacrifice herself upon the funeral pyre of her dead husband but is hardly practiced outside of India and even in India today, only in the remotest of places due to the law banning Sati.**

**The abolishing of the law of Sati is owed to a Christian missionary, William Carey. Carey was a cobbler in England and God was dealing with him in his cobbler's shop. He made a globe of the world out of leather and he prayed regularly. God sent him to India where he turned printer abhorring the practice of Sati and as a missionary in Bengal wrote and fought for it's abolishment. India, under the British Raj at that time became aware of Carey's representations but at first would not interfere in the religion of the 'natives'. As Carey's sheer persistence continued they finally enacted legislation to abolish the practice.**

**William Carey was also the official translator for the Government. He spoke and wrote many languages, his speciality was the Bengali language. One Sunday morning as he prepared to take his usual church service, an official messenger arrived at his doorstep with a communique from the British Raj (the Government).**

**The messenger said he had orders to wait for the translation. William Carey said that it was known by the Government that he did not do translations on Sundays. The messenger said nevertheless 'my orders are to wait'. Upon opening the seal Carey saw that it was a document of the official legislation passed stating it would be a criminal offence for any persons encouraging the practice of Sati. In other words the practice is to be abolished by the decree of law of the British Government.**

**He did not preach that Sunday Morning but completed the translation His autobiography states; "the Lord's day that Carey did not keep" he assigned his deputy Bro. Marshman who gladly obliged. The edict was sent to Carey on Sunday December the 6th. Carey jumped for joy, abandoned his plan to preach that Sunday to one of his other preachers, in order to carry out the fast unto the Lord spoken of in Isaiah 58:6 and Proverbs 24:11 and 12.**

**India honoured this great missionary calling him an illustrious son of India, and on the bicentennial, the two hundredth year of his arrival in India, a special 6 rupee postage stamp was struck in 1993.**

**Soon after my conversion I received many invitations to share my testimony and conversion experience. This one time I was speaking to a group at the Teacher Training College, Bulawayo.**

**During my talk I mentioned that outside of India very few adherents of Hinduism really practice their religion to the full measure. I pointed out a few practices that should, but were not kept and one particularly was that of Sati.**

**A young Indian student put up his hand. He told the assembled group that the practice of Sati was now abolished and no more practiced on pain imprisonment. This gave me some good ammunition. I said “exactly, do you know who that abolishment is owed to – a Christian Missionary, named William Carey who fought the British Government on this issue from almost when he arrived in India in 1799 to December 4th 1829 when Lord Bentinck, then Governor General of India signed the edict passed by parliament declaring Sati both illegal and a criminal offence.**

**At long last the widows were legally free to live as human beings and no longer would children be orphaned in the name of god and religion. Sati required that it was the eldest son’s duty to torch the funeral pyre with a dead father and a live mother. One can hardly imagine the horror of such a demand. I am the eldest of my family and it would have been my bounden duty to torch my mother alive. A loving god would not order, require or demand such a practice.**

**Another hand went up, this time it was a Missionary, who stated that he worked in Malawi for many years and during that time he attended one funeral of an Indian man. He said “as the funeral was in progress, and the funeral pyre was at it’s fiercest, all of a sudden a terrible scream emanated and a woman ran full speed from the crowd and threw herself on the pyre and was burnt alive”. So I said, “here is testimony and proof that this woman was practicing to the full measure, her faith as required by her religion of Hinduism which demanded that sacrifice”.**

**Discussion on the subject continued after the meeting closed with a few of the group and I believe they had some ‘food for thought’ – something to ponder upon.**

**Every religion, Christianity included has it’s genuine and counterfeit priests, and religious leaders, crooks and cranks who lead the simple, innocent and illiterate astray. That is the devil’s strategy. With the enlightenment of our day we are witnessing this exposure becoming more and more apparent.**

#### **EXTRACTS FROM ‘CHRIST OF THE INDIAN ROAD’**

**by Dr. Stanley Jones, Missionary to India 60 years.**

**1. About Ghandi. When India, a non-Christian nation, sought to pay her highest respect and compliment to her highest son, she searched for the highest term she knew and called Mahatma Ghandi, “that Christlike man”.**

**2. On arrival of the train at the station, a great crowd gathered around to hear Ghandi speak. The Mahatma came out, took out a New Testament and read the ‘beatitudes’ then finished by saying, “That is my address to you - act upon it” – that was all the speech he gave but it spoke volumes.**

**At the celebrations of the Independence of India from the British, Ghandi’s favourite hymn, ‘Lead kindly Light’ was played in his honour and later at his funeral.**

3. "Now if any peoples on this earth should have found God, apart from Jesus Christ, the Indian people have earned that right. They have searched for God as no other nation on earth has ever searched. If sheer persistence of search could find God in joyous clearness, then the Indian peoples deserve to earn that right."

4. Jesus stood between the Greeks and the Hindus, mid-way between east and west, and said, "I am the way the truth and the life". Turning towards the Hindus He says, "I am the way" – the Kharma Marga, a method of acting; "I am the Truth" – the Gyana Marga – the method of knowing; "I am the life" – the Bhakti marga – the method of emotion, for life is emotion" Jesus thus is saying; "I am the Good, the Beautiful, and the True; "I am Gyana, Bhakti and Kharma, for I am the Way the Truth and the Life". I mention the above facts that makes one realize the great responsibility of serving the demands of a demanding religion.

Sonnet from "The Christ of the Indian Road.

"The women of a lowly caste of Gujerat  
Upon each succeeding birthday add to ankles  
And to arms a ring of heavy brass, until when age  
Creeps on, weighted down through life with this  
Accumulation of years, they totter to their tasks,  
And then the burning ghat and the dreadful realms,  
Of Yama Kharma.

Thus I saw our aged India weighted down with  
Accumulated custom and sapping superstition,  
With scarce strength left to lift herself  
To stand upright among the Nations.

She raised her eyes, weary, but spiritual still  
Full upon me and seemed to say,  
"Adopted son of mine, if your love be true  
Loose me from these weights and set me free,  
For I would serve, but mind you son, be gentle,  
For by long association,  
They-seem-to-be-a-part-of-me"

O' Master of my heart, give me the touch of  
Gentle power that I may help to loose our Bharat,  
Mindful of every moment, how Thy nail pierced Hands  
– didst gently loose my shackled soul  
From many a chain of lust and clinging selfishness  
And bade my happy soul be FREE"



**Various means of divination, including astrology had enslaved the human spirit in India with chains of fear and superstition, making it vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous priests and astrologers. This made biblical injunctions against divination come alive in Carey's mind, and later quoted by Dr. Stanley Jones, reassuring him that God's Word was the light that India needed for her emancipation.**

**In 1965 when this eminent missionary visited Zimbabwe at the invitation of Rev. Gary Strong, he had been a missionary in India 57 years already, so read the posters. I was just a new convert then and desired to have him speak to the Indian Community since he personally knew Mahatma Ghandi, Pandit Nheru, Mohamed Ali Jina, Tagore and other great Indian leaders. Dr. Jones was having retreats with the Methodist Churches of Zimbabwe and was in Bulawayo for a few days.**

**I went to the retreat centre in Hillside and at recess found a moment to talk to him about coming to speak to the Indian Community. Most Indian senior folk had heard about him through their newspapers, All India Radio News etc. He was very gracious, took out a little diary and checked. He had only one day free and that was the very next day, a Tuesday. Without hesitation he said I will come tomorrow. I was hesitant due to the time factor. There was no time to advertise and probably none would turn up and it would be a waste of his time - so was my thinking, not God's. I conveyed that to him, saying it's too short notice and none may come.**

**He simply said "Rajah, you go and do what you can, that's all God asks, and He'll do the rest. I give you my word that if only 'one' person turns up for the meeting I will preach my best sermon" – WOW – that got to me and still is a great inspiration when I have to confront similar issues.**

**I hastily printed a good number of flyers (advertisements) and mobilised a team of distributors. Lloyd Schuetz, our pastor then and myself, with some youngster volunteers covered the whole of the city of Bulawayo's Indian business district distributing these flyers to the Indians in every shop and accessible home.**

**On Tuesday, by faith we removed every piece of furniture from our lounge and dining room and replaced it with benches borrowed from Trenance School. 87 Indians mostly men, arrived that night to hear him as he touched hearts and minds. It was a response I had not expected. Some stayed long after to talk to this famous man. Then I remembered William Carey's words – "attempt great things for God and expect great things from God".**

**Dr. Jones spoke from the wealth of his experience in India and Indians could identify with many.**

**One example he spoke about was the partitioning of India and Pakistan when both countries were granted Independence by Britain in 1947. During that period of time, mountains of administrative material had to be exchanged. The railways in particular**

had a great amount of paperwork and other material to be exchanged – India to give what related to Pakistan and vice versa.

Initial instructions by the hierarchy of both sides was that everything was to be exchanged on a one on one basis. India gives one and Pakistan the same and so on.

Negotiations started. Both countries had selected their best teams considered for the job. The Indian delegation was headed by a Mr. C.T. Venugopal, a Tamil Christian and one of the General Managers of India's railways. I lost track of the Pakistani leader.

According to initial instructions negotiations was expected to take weeks if not months but Mr. Venugopal overruled and gave instructions to his team that they are to bring every piece of paper, file and item in one lot and present it to the Pakistan delegation. It took practically the whole morning and when the last lot was brought forward Mr Venugopal announced, 'that's the lot that we have'.

This took the Pakistanis by surprise and the head of the Pakistan delegation instructed his team to reciprocate and do exactly the same thing. He received certain protests but his final words were – "I know Mr. Venugopal, he is a devout Christian man - and if Mr. Venugopal says that is all he has, I believe him, that's all he has and I respect his forthright gesture. We will do the same".

In two days the whole deal and transactions were completed, signed, sealed and delivered. The railways lost no time, beat or efficiency but continued running smoothly. It took one man who listened to a different drummer, the Lord Jesus Christ, to conclude with a note of victory bringing glory to God. What a magnificent Christian testimony!

Through the efforts of Southern Baptist missionary Bob Beaty, I got established to teach Bible Knowledge which was in the curriculum of African Education of Rhodesia.

Part-time from my job I taught at Luveve and Mzilikazi secondary schools. Together with Bible Knowledge after each class we had Scripture Union which all went down very well. My students got good grades and most passed easily.

Once or twice a year, organised by Bob Beaty, we had Scripture Union camps and I loved it when we went to the Conollys' Ranch in the majestic Matopo hills. The beautiful stone and thatch chapel built high on a huge domed rock was an inspiring and moving sight. Mr. Conolly senior made himself available and was always around. He would come over to check if we had need of anything. Usually we would have about 60 to 80 boys and girls from the black schools and once in a while we would take our own groups from our churches.

All three of my own children loved to go to that particular camp. My late wife would lose herself in some corner of the huge rock for prayer and drink in the scenery. We have Mordicai Mhangu a prominent lawyer in Zimbabwe today, some doctors and others who are true blue Christians and a great asset to our country – unlike the

**indictment I mentioned of the outputs of Rhodesia's nominal Church Mission Schools that churned out many of our godless leaders of today.**

**When my father passed on my grandfather the blacksmith come to live with us, grandma also having passed on by then. I have great remorse that I lost track of my grandmother in her evening years as she and grandpa had separated by then. Tiana, my beloved grandmother lived her evening years a recluse and finally ended in the Ingutsheni Mental Home where she finally died.**

**I have such precious childhood memories of her since I would be the eldest of her grandsons and she lavished great love upon me. I remain ever regretful that I was not more sensitive and attentive to her as I grew older distracted by other pursuits.**

**For grandpa there was very little in the way of work for his profession for by this time the motor vehicle was taking over but nevertheless he built his full blacksmith workshop at our home, (still there today) and tinkered away at anything he could get his hands on – sharpening knives and axes fixing wheel barrows and so on.**

**He developed Prostrate cancer and was admitted to Richard Morris Hospital several times. He gave up drinking liquor altogether and concentrated on his health. I was the interpreter between him and the doctor as he spoke his own brand of Tamil and English mixed. As his prostrate cancer condition advanced the doctor asked me to tell him that there was little else that they could do and in fact gave him some three months more or less to live.**

**I conferred with his surviving children and my Pastor at that time, Lloyd Schuetz and we decided that we will bring him home, gather all the family together and have a healing prayer service in my house and trust God. The doctor gave permission for us to 'borrow' him from the hospital and I collected him with the promise to return him in time for his next morphine shot.**

**We seated him in a comfortable chair and began our service in the lounge of our home. Grandpa hardly had any idea what it was all about. As many as possible of his surviving children and their families came. There was an anointing right from the beginning and what a Holy Ghost unctioned meeting it was. Time was going and grandpa was getting fearful that the pain would hit him soon. He kept asking when we were going to get him back to the hospital.**

**The service ended and together with his eldest son, the Pastor and I drove him back to the hospital and delivered him in time for his next shot of morphine. A powerful testimony ensued in that the nurses on duty began to notice in the following days that he did not need the prescribed doses of morphine and they took him for a further prostrate x-ray which showed that the original cancer the size of a golf ball, had shrunk to the size of a thumbnail.**

**A sister from the hospital came to our Bethany Church to testify of this 'miracle' as she called it, and she became a believer. Grandpa went on to live comfortably for at least 8 years from that night he received his healing.**

**Since he had not much blacksmith work and he just tinkered around, did some gardening, pruning and grafting trees of which he was an expert and authority, there was lots of time to talk and I had the benefit of spending long hours listening to his life story and the 'old days'. What a pity that there was no such things as a video cameras then, so I only could take still life and got him speaking on reel to reel tapes. Cassettes tapes were not even out then, just the old reel to reel type.**

**On a certain day at the end of the each month was pension day. Grampa would prepare a whole day before, polishing his boots and fixing his clothes just as he wanted it. On pension day I would drive him to the Post Office where he collected his pension. He would then go 'shopping' mostly buying biscuits and sweets for his great-grandchildren, the frequent little visitors to his room, his chewing tobacco and things for cooking that he liked. Occasionally he bought a shirt or trousers or other clothes for himself.**

**By this time in his life he had exchanged his 'Lord Kitchener' moustache for a full beard. It was pure white and long, touching his chest, though some hair on his head still had some colour. He could well have played the part of Moses in our church plays.**

**Valerie's family is 'Anglo Indian' - her mother was Hindu, of Punjabi stock and her father white, by name McKenzie. Custom and culture prevailing, mother and children were disapproved, frowned upon by the family to put it mildly. That was all 60 years ago.**

**As the years passed seven children were born. The father, sad to say did not live with them, had a perchance to wanderlust. The family lived in Rhodes Street, Bulawayo, between the Baptist Church and St. Johns Cathedral, the Anglican church.**

**The family's plight became known to a kindly Anglican Priest through Sister Stella Jane a duty nun at the Cathedral who 'discovered' them. The children remember going to play in the forecourt of the St. John's Cathedral especially after weddings, to pick up the trinkets and little stationary horse shoes and paper silverware that was showered as confeti on wedded couples. One day the nun on duty, Sister Stella Jane, gathered them together and asked them why they did not come to church - to which they told her the whole story of their lives.**

**Sister Stella Jane insisted on visiting the mother of these children and in the course of several visits she had the whole story and brought it to the notice of the parish priest. He in turn offered to baptise the whole family, contrary to strict church rules, and despite the fact that the parents were not married.**

**This accomplished the mother and her children began attending the Cathedral services regularly from the very next Sunday. They recall that on their first visit, all dressed in their Sunday best and in their excitement they all went to church early and took the very front pew. Before the service could start a church warden removed them from the front to the very last row at the back. In those days non-whites had to sit in the back pews. Nevertheless that did not dampen their ardor to attend church those early days. This little troop could be counted upon to be there come rain or shine.**

**As the children grew the mother and children moved location from Rhodes Street to live in the Brickfields where many of like families lived. Sister Stella Jane rode a bicycle to visit parishioners and earned the name of the 'flying nun' – she could be seen by the children 'flying' down sixth avenue extension, her habit blowing with the wind as she free-wheeled and peddled along, faithfully doing her visitation rounds, and always a welcome visitor.**

**Valerie's mother could not even remember the kindly priest's name but the children never forgot the name of the flying nun, who contrary to church rules and practice, with much compassion, took them 'into the church'. After their baptisms all the children went on to fulfill all the requirements of the church, through to their marriages and the baptisms of their offspring and are staunch practising Anglicans to this day.**

**Before my conversion, Valerie and I were planning to get married and with great enthusiasm made our appointment with the Parish priest of St John's Cathedral, Cannon Sergal. As he studied our application he dropped a bombshell on us stating that he couldn't marry a Christian and an Hindu, as I still was, with the 'full' blessings, rites and ordinances of the Anglican church.**

**Valerie was an ardent Anglican and I knew that her heart's desire was to be married with the full blessings and ordinances of her Church. She was devastated. She loved her church very much and never forgot the kindly Anglican priest and nun who had both done so much for her mother and the whole family those many years ago. She spoke about it so often that I have clear remembrance of it.**

**She was pained that she could not have the full package blessings of her church. I'm sure the priest noticed her consternation but his hands were tied. I then asked the interviewing priest, the classic question "what must I do to be a Christian"? He gave me the churches' 'rules', that I have to take catechism classes for 6 weeks, be confirmed by the Bishop, be baptised and then I could get married with the 'full' blessings of the Church.**

**So, as a means to an end I went through the catechesim classes was then confirmed, baptised on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 1960 by the incumbent Bishop Hughes, and got married on the 9<sup>th</sup> by Canon Sergal. I think I just went through it all as a formality, my Hindu 'pull' being too strong. Unfortunately I gained much knowledge in the head and little in the**

heart. It did not mean a thing to me but to marry this girl I loved. Soon I dropped going into the church but I faithfully drove my wife and her neighbour friend Mrs. Morta every Sunday while I sat in the car reading the newspaper.

Our home and married life was bliss and our first child came along – ‘it’s a boy’. I was over the roof with joy as Indian fathers are when the firstborn is a son. We named him Gary Benjamin (son of my right hand after his maternal grandfather.) Isaiah records – blessed is the womb that brings forth first a son.

### **PART III - MY PERSONAL SPIRITUAL JOURNEY**

I am the eldest of my father’s nine children. I grew up with him grooming me to become the priest of the family. I learned diligently all he taught me and practiced as much as I could.

When he passed on at age 81 in 1955 I conformed strictly to all that he had instructed me for his burial. Two of his closest friends whom he also instructed to help me in case I was overcome, arrived drunk, began looking for sticks to light a fire as part of the incense requirement. It delayed the proceedings some, but non-pulsed I carried on the singing and chanting until they were ready. From then on I became the priest of the family and observed the usual as I had been taught. Important for me was to make sure that temple worship for my brothers and sisters did not diminish.

My father did not favour cremation as Hindus are supposed to. I still don’t know to this day if it was to ‘spare’ me the eldest son, and his family the trauma of facing a cremation. By custom it is the duty of the eldest son to put the torch to the funeral pyre. One can imagine how much more traumatic it could be for the eldest son and siblings if ‘sati’ was to be practiced.

A year later, a missionary began visiting our area. My first encounter with him was at the customary Hindu one-year prayer feast in honour of my father. A large photograph of my father was placed on a flower strewn table in one corner of a large room with incense burning. His favourite foods and sweetmeats were cooked and his friends, family and relatives partook of the foods served on banana leaves doubled, sitting cross legged on the floor as they were served with different helpings, singing and reciting prayers, with me leading.

I noticed this white man among us and deduced that one of the relatives brought him here by mistake. Unbeknown to me, one of my uncles, Ganesh Jack did bring him along as the man had made contact with that family to work among them. So I went to him and briefly explained what the occasion was about and told him he was free to leave if he got uncomfortable. He told me that he would like to stay if he may and he did. That was my first experience with a missionary, his name was Albert Roberts.

On Sundays he was having meetings under a large overhanging tree across the road directly opposite our house. Kids would come from all over the area and he also would collect kids from other areas and they all converged under the tree for his meetings. He belonged to a Canadian Missions Group, The Apostolic Church of Pentecost (ACOP) that I am presently credentialled with, and they have workers all over central Africa and into South Africa. In time this missionary got married and worked with his wife Verna ministering the gospel. He also administered African schools on two farms under the Government Ministry of Education scheme. It was a good and useful scheme then.

Farm Schools were, for the majority of farm children the only means of education for the children of the farm labourers, who lived with their parents on the farms all over the country. Today, with the Government take-over of the farms for so called equitable land distribution these farm schools have dis-intergrated and all farm labourers are now displaced persons. Most of the farms on which are large bungalows, the greedy desire of the chefs (big-wigs), are now glorified sun-downer venues for the chefs and their cronies.

Sunday School was a lot of fun for the kids. They went on picnics jammed full in one, two or more volunteer cars and came back with exciting stories of the places they've been to and the things they've seen, games they played and so on. The kids enjoyed these excursions and I did not forbid it so long they did not get baptised. I condoned this as it is acceptable in Hinduism with it's over 300 million gods, one more, Jesus, was neither here nor there.

One may visit Hindu families and proudly be given a tour around the home and particularly the temple-prayer room that would be filled with pictures, statues, the smell of insense burning day and night and invariably one would see a lovely expensive copper or silver cross with an effigy of Jesus still on it. For a Hindu, adding one more god to ones collection did not matter so long as one did not get serious about Jesus and want to forsake the god of the fathers. Muslims are the opposite – adding another god to Allah is anethema. Any idols and man made statues and pictures are forbidden

One who is Indian looking as myself may walk the streets of any city or town in the country and be accosted by vendors selling stone or wood carvings and the moment one refuses to even look at their wares they conclude 'Arab' – 'Arab' and leave. Even they know that Muslims don't have idols.

My wife was captivated by this whole episode as she heard songs she sang as a little girl – Sunday School songs and street corner 'joy, joy' meetings came back to her memory and she joyfully went and joined the lot under the tree. They called it "joy joy" from their childhood days because they always started with the song "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy deep in my heart". Missionary Albert Roberts, was an accomplished musician, and who later toutored our son Gary on the piano. For these meetings he

held the kids spellbound as he played the trumpet with one hand and chorded the piano accordion with the other.

He had the foot pedal for the drum using an old tin oil drum that he had got covered with animal skin on one side. Later on, one of the kids a young Indian boy, my nephew, Harriette graduated to be the drummer. He fixed a tennis ball to a stick to beat the drum. I'm sure it sounded better. Children of all races looked forward to and came to these meetings with joy.

It was not long before my wife invited the whole lot of these 'joy, joy' people as she called them, into our home to have their service. Of course, knowing her it was inevitable before this would happen. I was angry at first. That was my Sunday afternoon gone - but what can you do when you're only a year married and much in love. I was not amused though and stayed away from their meetings.

Recalling the war years, about 15 years ago, my wife remembered herself as a little girl with a number of other raggedy friends would run to the street corner at the Baptist Church in Rhodes Street and join in with this crowd. She also remembered in the midst of the singing the youngsters catching 'flying ants' around the street lamp. Her memories of the ones leading the "joy joy" meetings in the mornings were of men in blue uniforms, one playing the trumpet and a lady with a special high hairdo playing the foot pump-organ as they sang all the 'joy joy' songs and heard bible stories. Evenings they gathered again for 'heavy preaching' on the street corner and there always was a crowd of people.

The meetings continued in my house but I showed no interest to attend or listen. I busied myself in another room drawing architectural plans for houses. I had accquired a knowledge of this after I did my own house and began to get requests from others to draw their house plans get them passed through the municipality or government town planning offices and this went on for a while until my conversion. By then I had passed plans for over 100 houses 'and several churches.

But one cannot be in one's own house and not hear someone speaking. One day my attention was captured when I heard a challenging statement. It must have been Easter time and they were talking about the resurrection. This is the first time I heard about such a thing. I had heard about Jesus, that he was the God of those who called themselves Christians. Nothing in all that was attractive to me, that he lived and was executed Romans style, then was buried. I had no quarrel with all that.

But to hear that he rose from the grave was an astounding statement. That he is alive and worshipped by millions of Christians all over the world made me think, could they all be wrong? And here my young brothers and sisters were receiving this teaching. I had never heard of anyone of the great religious leaders making such a claim, or their followers.



The temple duties and prayers were still observed and the children and myself faithfully keeping vigil. By now the family had lost a member, Ramalingham who came after me. He died in a motor-cycle accident in Salisbury. With his passing I was smitten with guilt as I felt I was the cause that he had left home. As elder brother I did harrass him and when old enough he had left home to live with a relative in Salisbury.

He began drinking heavily and I believe the motor-cycle accident was as a result of this. I carried this guilt for a long time, throughout my Hindu days and it was only when I understood forgiveness through the cross, repentance and confession after my conversion to Christ, was I able to forgive myself for my brother's death, as Christ has forgiven me. That is one of the great doctrines of Christianity, the forgiveness of sins after confession and repentance.

Later we were to loose another brother Chidambaram through illnes. He left a wife, two daughters and a son. Loosing two sons was a sad blow for my mother. It was my duty as the elder brother and priest of the family, to comfort her but I regret now that I look back I wasn't very much of a comforter. I did make sure though that my brothers and sisters did not lag behind in worship in the temple, though I myself was getting caught up in another pursuit – the Rosicrucian Movement.

I had come across a newssper advertisement that was quite intrigueing. It announced "what cosmic power did the ancients possess" and went on to elaborate. This really caught my fancy and I put this down to the searching spirit developed in me in the pursuit of God in our own temple worship. I duly filled the coupon and sent the required fee to The Rosicrucian HQ in San Jose, California, USA.

Soon I got all the introductory material and lessons and as I pursued the studies and advanced to various levels of the teaching I became quite sure I had found the right thing or the ultimate path to the Gods. I pursued the studies diligently and was advancing up the ladder to higher steps in the teaching.

There was any amount of Egyptology information and teaching mixed with a fair amount of philosophy somehow reminding one of Freemasonism with an Eastern flavour.

A thorn in my side was that my third brother, today a pastor, and one uncle decided to be baptised by imersion by Pastor Roberts. I was furious when I heard of it. I had strong 'words' with them but nevertheless they 'stuck to their guns'. Unbeknown to me, I too was to follow them soon.

Try as I might I could not get the thought of the rerurrection off my mind which led me to decide that I should be honest with myself and look deeper into the question. I asked my wife to show me the relevant portions of scripture about the resurrection. I read it all but was still sceptical. I am a printer and I know anyone can put anything

into print and one mis-spelt or misplaced word can change the whole sense and meaning of a paragraph.

I was an earnest seeker and also prayed and asked God to show me the truth. I read all I could about it and continued reading the Bible, I read many books of the history of the Roman occupation of Palestine and could not deny that the man Jesus Christ lived, was executed, was buried – but to rise again? – never heard of such a thing and it was disturbing.

Now I dropped my Rosicrucian studies and began pursuing the resurrection with more earnestness, hunger and prayer. With Rosicrucianism I had got to the plane that I could request baptism in the bath in the great Pyramid the next time the Rosicrucians made a pilgrimage there, an arrangement Rosicrucians have with the Egyptian Government. I was so informed by letter from the Grand Master in 1959.

My quest of the resurrection account consumed me and the more I read and researched the more the evidence pointed to the truth, that the resurrection actually did happen. I read secular historians of that time and they held that the believers of Jesus had cause to believe that He did rise from the grave as He said He would and they gave their lives for it. I developed a hunger to read the Bible. It just seemed that I could not get enough of it and as I pursued study of the Bible I came to the conclusion even before I was converted I believe, 'that no mere man could have written this book'. I was convinced that this Book is by Divine inspiration and revelation. The cross was no more an offence to me but a savor of life unto life.

The Gospel of Matthew verses 62 to 65 of Chapter 27 and then Chapter 28 verses 11 to 15 is so crystal clear to me of how practical unbelieving people would react. There is enough for me in that account of the stone being rolled away, it was absurd to blame ten timid disciples who all ran away at the cross, to now, all of a sudden become so embolden as to overcome a platoon of elite Roman guards, break the official seals, roll away that heavy stone and whisk the body away. One can become a good detective by studying the whole account of the resurrection.

After Pentecost The Jewish religious leaders told the guards to lie that the disciples came and stole the body away and they will be compensated. As I contemplated all this, some other information came to me. I was sitting in the doctor's office awaiting my turn when I picked up a Reader's Digest at random and began to browse. An article caught me attention about five young men, Christian missionaries in Equador who were speared to death by the savages they were trying to reach with the message of Jesus Christ in January of 1956.

I wondered why they would do such a dangerous act to bother reaching these people. They were all University graduates, all married with children and why would they take such risks – for what? I got books and magazines on this subject and read it all up and became more convinced that these believed in the resurrection and they are in heaven

according to their beliefs. One of them, Jim Elliot wrote, “he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot loose”.

I followed this saga as at that time, many other young people were giving themselves to the mission field. It was as if the five Martyrs of Equador had given their lives as an example for many others to be called. I did not understand it all then but today as I have kept these men in the forefront of my Christian understanding of missions and missionaries I give God the glory for his calculations, engineering and mathematics.

The wives went back and continued work among the Acua Indian tribe in Equador. Ten years later the very killers, many converted to Jesus Christ eventually, appeared at a Billy Graham Crusade in Berlin, Germany in 1967, and told their story through an interpreter. The full story in the book “Through Gates of Splendor” by Elisabeth Elliot.

Steve Saint was a little boy of five when his father Nate the pilot of the light plane that landed on the river beach carrying the other missionaries endeavoring to make contact with members of the tribe. Very soon they were all martyred.

Many years later when Steve was 15 he went back with an entourage of his mother and aunt to the very spot where his father was killed and he and three others were baptized by Kimo and Dyuwí, two of several killers of that day many years ago, but now converts to Jesus Christ and taking the gospel message to their people. It is a fascinating story from the beginning and the end is not written yet! The tribe is now known as the Waodani People.

If this is not all God then what is. Stevie/ forgiveness/ the cross

I concluded that Jesus was a revolutionary – He died in active combat against the enemy. For me, the evidence was overwhelming for the resurrection. I concluded that I must accept it by faith and trust God to lead me to deeper revelations as I progressed. It worked. The scriptures opened up to me, I felt a divine leading – which I now know as the Holy Spirit – and I grasped the doctrine of the power of the resurrection.

I had now found the truth in Jesus my true cosmic helper and God. I did not look back since then but He has taken me to still higher cosmic heights with the revelation of His resurrection.

Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true or false? That is the question you will have to answer and all other questions will be fall into place. I had searched if any other person ever made such a statement of rising from the dead and if that could be substantiated in this 20<sup>th</sup> century. There was none.

The Bible says ‘faith comes by hearing and by hearing the Word of God’, discussing the issue I read other leaders of great religions but came across none that ever made the

**claims of Jesus - that he'll rise again, He will have victory over death - death could not hold him in the grave – and the investigative scenario of evidence that no one can deny.**

**I came across more and more evidence, undeniable facts, infallable proof that the resurrection was true and my preconceived ideas and thoughts were loosed and the bondages and 'religious' teaching fell away. I believe with the revelation of God I finally came to the conclusion that the resurrection is a fact and simply by faith I surrendered myself to the living Jesus. In simple faith, I confessed my sins, repented and received Jesus Christ as my own personal Saviour. What a joy and relief when I did that.**

**My quest was over. I sold all my drawing boards and architectural equipment to concentrate on my new found faith. I loved God's Word the Bible. I literally devoured it and enjoyed the bliss of God speaking to me through His Word, tapes and messages.**

**He that hungers and thirsts after righteousness shall be filled – In the day that you seek me with all of your heart I will be found of thee – it is true as say the scriptures! Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.**

**A convert's enthusiasm for his new religion is often greater than that of a person who is born into it. (Ghandi) I entered into this realm. On the day that my wife decided to be baptised, I too made up my mind to follow her into the waters of baptism at Bethesda ACOP Church in the old Njube township. The church was still under construction with the walls up to window level but wisely planned by the missionary, the baptismal tank and floor were already done and was in use as a meeting place. Many were baptised that day by Albert Roberts. I had no more quarrel with any member of the family that requested water baptism. In due course they were all baptised.**

**The life of the Apostle Thomas fascinated me. Most South Indians will speak about Thomas some time or other. I recall my father speaking about St. Thomas and St. Francis Xavier who died and is interred in a glass coffin in Goa – on the opposite coast of Madras on the west of India.**

**Tradition says that at the dispersion of the Apostles, Acts 8: 3 and 4, Thomas made his way through Syria, Persia (now Iran), north east India, now Pakistan and came southwards finally settling near Madras. Along the route he travelled groups of people adhered to his teachings of Christ and attached themselves to him and his entourage, as he taught and travelled, finally settling near Madras.**

**The Mar Toma Church of the Syrian is spread out much in the State of Kerala. The monastery is situated on the outskirts of the city of Madras (now Chennai). Tradition says that Thomas the Apostle was martyred, shot full of arrows in the back and**

speared as he knelt to pray on that spot where the monastery stands today and is buried somewhere there.

Also known as the Mar Toma Syrians who follow the teachings of Thomas the Apostle, they have links with the Syrian Jacobite church, and have a tradition that they are a direct descendents of those evangelised by the Apostle Thomas as he and his followers travelled through Persia, and India. They form the majority of Kerala's Christians and are members of both Orthodox Catholic and Protestant denominations. They have a high social status but have become little more than a caste within Hindu society, and a few have broken out to become vital witnesses to those of other cultures. There are many converts out of non-Christian religions into the Evangelical churches in Kerala.

This was a mixture of peoples from the territories mentioned and they all settled with the Apostle, later building the monastery and adopting a new country and spreading and preaching the message of Christ throughout the south. The offspring of the years of inter marriage has produced a fair in complexion almost blue-green eyed Indian in the south.

They taught the Christian message and I will not be surprised if my own father did not come under some influence of their message – because though he professed to be Hindu his belief was almost Christian. He did not believe in re-incarnation but going to heaven when he died. He was also fair in complexion with a tinge of greenish eyes.

They exist today and recently I met a young expatriate teacher here in Harare, an ardent adherent of the Mar Toma Church of the Syrian, who related to me this account of the church and his people there. If you looked at him you would not say he was an Indian born in Madras, but he does come from that group. He is fair in complexion and has positively green eyes.

As our pursuit of our new found faith in Christ developed and increased we became aware of a spiritual anomaly - The Temple. All my brothers and sisters confessed faith in Christ. My mother was still not sure and of course we had grandpa. The missionary got grandpa a Tamil Bible and he was reading it. (I have since presented it to his youngest daughter Violet who is an ardent believer and follower of Jesus Christ to keep as a memento of her father.)

Our problem was the temple. What to do with it and how to discontinue its use without hurting feelings. We put this down as an urgent matter of prayer for God's direction and undertaking.

Well, God answered miraculously in this manner. Usually in the months of September and October in Bulawayo, just before the rains set in, there is always strong gusty winds that sweep across the landscape. This same year we committed the temple to the Lord, one day very strong winds came and lifted the flat roof of the temple and

deposited it over the road in an open field and with the dislodging of the flat sheet-iron roof, one whole side of the temple walls collapsed.

This temple structure had been standing since 1943 and this is what happened twenty five years later. Coincidence - or - Providence? There was no point in trying to build it up again as all the walls were damaged by the uplifting of the roof. My mother and grandpa agreed to put away all the temple furniture, the lamps and statuettes, brass cobras and god-pictures - there ended the saga of the temple.

Not long after that my mother was led to the Lord and professed Christ as her Saviour. Grandpa went on reading his Tamil Bible and I believe that he must have made some confession of faith as the missionary Roberts spent hours talking with him.

Against my better judgment, or was it just plain ignorance, I decided that I would keep a small suitcase full of the miniature brass temple idols to use for my speaking lectures, when I was invited to share my testimony as it now appeared that I was getting invitations to speak about my conversion experience, mostly with Scripture Union groups with whom I became active and the Teacher Training College.

I used to take my little suitcase along and display the little statuettes and talk about them. I would keep this case on the top shelf in our kitchen at home ready for use the next time. In retrospect now, I realize it was an unwise thing to do - but I was a young convert and I thank our God that He is a patient teacher through His Holy Spirit.

It so happened that in 1973 a Billy Graham Crusade was planned for our city with the evangelist Howard Jones a Billy Graham associate. To set up the crusade, six members of an advance team from Africa Enterprise, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa were involved. Three of the team stayed with us. They were with us for about two weeks and one of them David Peters was also of former Hindu background with much experience of Hindu demonology.

He kept saying he was uncomfortable in the house. He asked us if we had any fetishes and of course it did not dawn on us that my little suitcase was full of them till one day my wife, denying any knowledge of fetishes, was led to say 'but we have this' and pointed to the case on the top shelf in the kitchen. Upon opening it he was horrified that I was keeping these idols and brass cobras in the house and said we must get rid of them.

I could not bring myself to destroy them so I turned them all over to him. He and his co-workers got a hold of one of grandpa's sledge-hammers and smashed them all to pieces with much reciting of the scripture and prayer in-between.

Then they asked for a bag in which they put all the pieces and I drove them down to the Umgusa river, not far away and they threw the bag far into the deep end and there ended that saga - I cannot say that I was not saddened or in some measure moved

emotionally, having grown up from earliest childhood with these idols – but the translation from darkness into the glorious light of Christ was of far greater recompense – “as Moses looked forward and away unto the recompense of his reward”, Hebrews 11:26.

We now strongly advise missionaries and any Christian visitors not to buy and take home mementos such as carved idols, wood or stone or any ‘other spirit’ inspired artifacts found especially in African countries.

The missionary work was expanding rapidly. I am now just as enthusiastic as my wife and the others. Our home was becoming too small for the meetings and we moved into a classroom at Trenance School and soon that became too small before we found a more suitable venue, the George Francis Community Hall.

By this time I am understudy to the missionary, Albert Roberts and those that followed him. With a string of degrees to his name, in Education and music, he chose to be a missionary in Central Africa. That was also an incentive and inspiration for me – I remembered the martyrs of Ecuador. Soon we moved into the city, and bought the historical, then redundant old ‘37 Club’ which had served the local Coloured Community well for many years since 1937 as a social gathering venue.

The new Davies Hall was built adjacent to the now redundant ‘37 Club’, a more permanent structure and meeting place for social activities for the Coloured Community, that served them till the present Government took it over for use for it’s regional party headquarters.

1972 the Roberts’ left Rhodesia to plant a new church in Sao Paulo, Brazil and a new missionary couple were arriving to replace them. On the day of their arrival, my wife and I did some grocery shopping of the basic necessities, filled the boot of our Morris 1100 car and were ready to drive to the airport to pick them up. There was no time to go to their proposed new home and stock up their fridge so I drove with all the shopping in the back of my car.

Because of space my wife decided to stay behind and give opportunity for my sister to be the welcoming party with myself. My sister Asotha had met the couple in Canada when she went through Eston Full Gospel Bible Institute, from ‘69 to 72’. She had graduated and returned home just a few weeks earlier in time for the Roberts’ farewell and now to welcome our new arrivals.

As we drove to the airport it was a drizzly day, the road was wet and the tyres on my little car was not the best. As we approached the Umgusa bridge, it appears there was a lot of oil slicks and I hit a slick with my smooth tyres and at the speed I was going, lost control of the car which began to swerve from side to side of the road. No matter how I tried to control it with steering wheel there was no bringing it back under control.

Fortunately for us there was no oncoming approaching traffic as the little car swerved into the wrong side of the road and careened over the verge, into the high slope that made the bridge and continued down to the bottom amid all the screams of “Jesus, Jesus help us” by my sister with my ‘amens’. The car finally came to rest and to our relief we got out and I surveyed the situation.

What had happened is that we were lodged against a large jutting out rock that arrested our freefall as we slipped over the side of the high embankment – but the wonderful thing - and this is my Psalm 91 ‘he shall not cause thee to dash thy foot against a stone’.

Part of our purchases for the couple was a full-pack plastic enclosed rolls of toilet paper. Somehow in the movements of the freefall the boot had opened up at the very precise moment that we were going to hit the arresting rock and lodged itself between the rock and the side of the car. Unimaginable precision and timing that I believe only God could have engineered. We certainly had protecting angels assigned to us that day.

We had to leave the car in that situation, climb up the embankment and wave an oncoming car to give us a lift to the Airport. We had to do the same with our new arrivals, get a lift to where my car was at the bridge. The new missionary, Albert Heinzig and his wife Mabel got their first taste of their new assignment. He and I got to the bottom leaving the women on high ground.

As we further studied the situation, had it not been for the arresting rock the car would easily have slid another 20 feet or so and possibly turned over, so steep was the slope. He walked in front ‘feeling’ out the ground and I followed slowly till we drove a distance where the incline met the road again and I was able to get on the tarmac. I recall this vividly, and the date too, 7<sup>th</sup> of November, 1972, as I had many a brush in my service time as the chaplain, and this incident came to mind, reminding me of God’s protection and deliverance. “Not an arrow shall hit till the love of God sees fit” was my confidence in that wonderful Psalm 91.

On the site of the old ‘37 Club’ structure we put up a permanent building, I drew the plans, missionary Albert Heinzig, a few African labourers and members of the church constructed the edifice and Bethany Apostolic Church of Pentecost stands there today. It is at Bethany that I did my internship and pastored after the Heinzigs had to return to Canada.

Later on we were to sell the old steel and tin structure of the ‘37 Club’ that had served us so well as a place of meeting and worship to a benefactor, Ralph Ward, who reconstructed it in Hwange to be used as a storeroom for his transport business.



One lasting and loving memory I have of the old place is a message and object lesson the Lord gave us all one Sunday morning at worship service - 'defeating the devil'. For some reason when we arrived inside the church it was buzzing with moths, (they must have all hatched out that night) and all were making for the windows because of the light. Then a strange sight unfolded when a number of little birds also came to the windows and started pecking at the window panes trying to get at the moths.

What an object lesson that was. I revised my message and I believe the Holy Spirit switched me on to speaking about defeating the devil. I pointed to the windows and all could hear the pecking on the glass. Here were these moths and the birds couldn't get them - they were safe as long as they stayed within the confines of the inner sanctuary - and so it must be with us, to defeat the devil we must stay within the confines of God's love.

During our tenure of pastoring many young people passed through the church, today many are professionals, doctors, nurses, lawyers etcetera, the most notable being Pius Ncube, later and presently the incumbent Catholic Archbishop of Matebeleland. His aunt Mrs. Anna Payne was a member of Bethany congregation and she used to bring him to church, especially youth meetings, when he spent his college holidays with her. Every time I go to Bulawayo I make it a point to visit the Archbishop - young Pious as I call him, in his diocese offices.

He welcomes my visits as we have chance to discuss the current situation in Zimbabwe and he values my perspective and input. Several Public statements that he made are non-scriptural, non-biblical and we discussed them. One was that he outspokenly said "he was praying for Mugabe to die" and of course this got wide publicity and raised Mugabe's ire to make many derogatory remarks about the Archbishop, notwithstanding that he professes to be a devout Catholic. Unmindful of the scripture "touch not the Lord's anointed" Mugabe has called the Archbishop a 'mad fool' and worse. Of course Mugabe is still living and he makes a laughing stock of the Archbishop.

A better advice the Archbishop gives is the public statement where he urges that "Christians should 'stir' Mugabe with prayer". Nevertheless he is the most outspoken and almost a lone voice in the wilderness for the church at large in the country. He has gained the respect and gratitude of the populace, especially in his large diocese area of Matabeleland which is practically most of the western half of Zimbabwe.

Missionaries came and went through the years, notably after the Roberts' we had the Lloyd and Madalene Schuetz, Jim and Doris Lapka and Albert and Mabel Heinzig till the mid-seventies when Foreign missionaries were then getting directives that they should remove from Rhodesia as the guerilla war was escalating and their governments would not be responsible for their safety. Many Foreign missionaries did leave and those that remained did so at their own peril and risk. The Elim and other massacres during the liberation war are stark reminders.

**After Dr. Earle Stanley Jones' admonition, my enthusiasm for reaching as many as possible with the gospel took new heights. I began to concentrate on an area known as Forestvale, near Luveve Township. Forestvale was low economy housing mostly a mixture of poor Coloured and African folk lived there. It was a large area and the population quite dense. We began a Sunday School in premises of another benefactor, Julius Van Beek and held services in his garage-store room. Every Saturday night I screened a film, usually a Billy Graham production and we always had a full house.**

**Sunday afternoons, while my wife took Sunday school in the garage, I held open air services in what could be called the sports field nearby. I usually placed two large outdoor loudspeakers on the top of my VW Comby vehicle and played taped music to attract the crowd. It became a regular feature and people would come, many adults, children pushing wheels and car tyres and we all gathered some sitting on the dirt floor others standing in front of my vehicle.**

**Speaking through two microphones, one for the interpreter we certainly attracted a lot of interest and attention. Sometimes I would have musicians come and minister in music and song, sometimes our own groups then I'd preach, and sometimes other church groups and preachers. We had the Dorothea Mission group under Patrick Johnstone, now of 'Operation World' fame, several times and the open air ministry showed a lot of promise and results.**

**One youngster whom we met many years later, Charles Fisher, is now pastoring a thriving church in Kariba dates his spiritual journey with Christ from those early beginnings. Saturday morning is a busy day when many people go into town from the townships for shopping. Bethany Church stands at the cross-roads of a very busy intersection down 6th Avenue extension and a lot of traffic passes that way.**

**An outreach project was adopted by the youth of the church and they would spend the morning distributing literature, counselling and just talking to people as they passed by. Most times a music group would be playing 'catchy' music and choruses within the church fence and pedestrians would stop and listen, be handed some literature and sometimes even join in the singing.**

**I believe that many came to be interested in the gospel, even came to know the Lord through these many outreaches. Recently, attending a conference in Bulawayo, I was assigned to speak at the first church built in Bulawayo, at Njube Township, where I was baptised as I mentioned earlier. It turns out that the incumbent pastor Isaias is one of those who was reached by the Saturday morning outreaches. He received Christ, went on to study and became the pastor of Bethesda.**

**I recall reading and being impressed by the following charge that further inspired my early years;**

**Preacher, to no other man on earth does God give such an awesome task as you. You trade in eternal things. Yours is a calling that Angels might envy. To you is given a power that hell fears above all other powers on earth. You are a divine delegate, a God-endued ambassador, a plenipotentiary. Life and death are in your hands. To some your message is a savor of death unto death, but to others your words are a savor of life unto life. (Sodom had no Bible\*)**

**A young pastor in England, Jeremiaiah Horrox who loved to study the planets and the stars and make scientific discoveries, one year calculated that the planet Venus would be passing across the sun on that Sunday morning just when he would be preaching. He debated, prayed and finally entered these words in his diary, now on his gravestone at Westminster Abbey; "Called aside to greater things which ought not to be neglected for the sake of subordinate pursuits" Such was his strong persuasion for preaching the Gospel.**

**As I reflect on my years, first as an unbeliever and then as a believer I cannot but marvel at the goodness of my God in Jesus Christ. How that me and my family were brought out of the darkness of Hinduism into the glorious light of the Gospel of Jesus through the efforts of missions. It is as if we came straight through with no detours and deviations along the way to the whole truth of the divine message of the Gospels.**

**First it was the resurrection and I rejoice in the clarity of that truth as embedded in my spirit. I stand solid on the fact that Jesus rose from the dead and is alive forever more. Now I turn to a subsequent experience, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. At first I was sceptical that such an experience was genuine and real for today but what I was witnessing practically on a daily basis I could not deny or discount.**

**Yes, there may have been some counterfeits as the Devil is always wont to exhibit his mis-guided power – but one can sense the genuine. The Holy Spirit is present to confirm and give assurance of that fact. Satan is always put to shame.**

**I put my conversion experience around 1963 and because of my unbelief, until I again surrendered by faith to seek after the Baptism, I 'lost' three years. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April (Government payday) 1965, at a special 'laying on of hands' service in our small '37 Club' church, Lloyd and Madeline Schuetz being our pastors, and special speakers Harry and Gweneth Jackson, I received the blessed Baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. Now I rejoice in the fact that I cannot deny my own personal experience. For the first time I discovered for myself why the disciples were accused of being drunk at Pentecost. That's exactly the way I felt at my own Pentecost - in the highest spirits. Just drunk with joy!**

**I don't intend in this book to enter into a discourse of the pros and cons, true or false, genuine or counterfeit, for today or not for today – but suffice to say I gained further confirmation, assurance and revelation reading John Sherril's book 'They Speak with**

**other Tongues' which covers the subject exhaustively. I recommend it to anyone who is searching for truth on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

**I further quote one of my favourite authors, Methodist missionary, Dr. E. Stanley Jones writing of his own experience: "When I received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the campus of Ashbury College, it changed me from being a student of Christianity into a teacher of it. It was then I learned the difference between a disciple and an apostle" he writes. "One is passive, the other active. A disciple is a man who sits at Christ's feet".**

**An apostle is a man who goes out for Christ into the world: a missionary, if you will; although a missionary does not have to go any further from home than next door. The point is that it is this experience of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which translates the passive into the active and motivated me to offer myself to the Lord Jesus as His missionary to India". ESJ.**

**Personally I have not exercised any public prophetic ministry in tongues but find myself energised and edified in my prayers, drawing closer to God as I use my prayer language speaking with other tongues and at times with groanings in the Spirit.**

**All through my life I enjoyed perfect health. I was always health conscious, a teetotaler all my younger years to middle age. As teenagers a couple of friends and I began gym training and body building at Jack Rich's gym in the basement of Downing's Bakery. There again we had to have our own time – we did not train with the whites – but at least Jack let us use his gym. The Mr. Universe of our time was a South African Reg Park and he literally inspired South and Central Africa to take up the sport.**

**A couple of us friends went into it seriously. I believe that health consciousness and bodybuilding did us all a world of good and especially me throughout my military years.**

**1958 a number of us friends travelled to Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) to visit the annual Mozambique Expo where Reg Park gave demonstrations of his methods of training and had his brand of body building equipment and weights on display and for sale. We were all further inspired. At the same time we spent a pleasant two weeks and made it a holiday.**

**In my sixties I began to develop some health problems. I was having Prostate problems. In '89 I had a TURP (transurethral resection of the prostate) and I thought my troubles were over but unfortunately for me the problem re-occurred in '94. I happened to be in Brazil and had access to the best Military Hospital, courtesy of the superintendent who happened to be a Christian pastor also.**

**They gave me the whole 'gamut' of the exams and concluded that I had prostate cancer. I had several options – surgically remove the prostate, or radiotherapy at that**

stage. I chose to have radiotherapy which I faithfully took for three months at the best cancer research centre in Rio de Janeiro.

Upon returning to Zim I had another TURP and further tests. My PSA count was high and treatment pointed to an orchiectomy. Gina and I had been married 12 years when all this came up. Nevertheless, Gina, a most understanding person both about my medical and psychological malady, arranged and helped me go through the processes.

Today, July '06, I was talking to Harry, a good friend and we are on the same Board of Africa Enterprise. We met in the street and had time on our side so we chatted. Finally, Harry asked "and how is your health these days, Val". The discussion now centred around to our 'manly' issues as he has the same troubles, and we always compared notes. His affliction is of a lesser degree than mine and he's also a few years younger than my 74 years. He has gone through four TURPS – and feeling good now he says – but I felt led to reveal to him my whole condition in case he has "to come to it". We have the same Urologist.

I said "Harry, recently my PSA (Prostrate Specific Antigen) count skyrocketed up to 95 (ninety five) and that's medically unacceptably high. I was advised by our urologist Doctor friend that due to my prostrate cancer history "bilateral orchiectomy" was the next step. He said 'what's that' and when I gave him the biblical application of the words 'eunuch' his eyes opened so wide and because of the way I put it to him he laughed and laughed, nearly went into hysteria right there in the street – thinking I 'was pulling his leg'.

When he realised that I was serious I had to explain the whole operation to him in detail and that I am now feeling fine. An orchiectomy is when the testis are surgically removed due to high PSA count that indicates it is cancerous. I had a recent blood test and the PSA has come down considerably.

I recently had a visit from my Bishop. He was concerned about certain developments in the church and needed to discuss some points. He seeks me out to get a feeling and to put out feelers. As a young man I officiated at his marriage some 27 years ago and today he is my Bishop.

Some time ago he appointed me to his Apostolic Team as Advisor and father figure. I have been exercising this office for many years now and have provided all the services listed but he has now honoured me and made it official. He has listed my terms of reference as follows;

- \* To provide counsel, advice and accountability to the Apostolic Team on a voluntary basis.
- \* To speak into the life of the Apostolic leader and the rest of the Team.
- \* To hold the Apostolic Team accountable in terms of doctrinal purity, and to watch against excesses in leadership.
- \* To provide a "father" relationship to the Apostolic Team.

- \* To pray for and maintain a spiritual cover over the Apostolic Team**
- \* To assist in arbitration in the event of disputes within the Team or in the event of grievances brought against the Team.**

**For many years my denomination has been going through transitional convulsions. Hick-ups! When the missionaries had to leave the country from the mid seventies onwards, an inadequately trained, ill-prepared leadership, including myself, were ordained to take over the churches.**

**From one superintendent to another over the years, for several years, the work of missions and the churches floundered. Some little groups left to start their own churches but the majority clung to the mother-body of the ACOP mission.**

**The present Bishop, a young convert of over forty years ago, rose in the ranks of the church hierarchy to be superintendent and then in the course of time Bishop. He has an Apostolic ministry and to such has been recognised and consecrated.**

**With his leadership the church has solidly gained it's lost momentum and has expanded positively to serve the other countries in it's mandate, Malawi, Zambia, Congo, Mozambique, Botswana and even a group of diaspora in the UK. It's spiritual progression is an encouragement to me and I am privileged and honoured to serve my God, His church and Bishop in this context of my terms of reference as appointed by Him.**

**My final conclusion is that Christianity can be mocked and ridiculed as it is today my many, Islamists in particular - BUT it works. It changes lives. If you trust Christ, start watching your attitudes and actions, because Jesus Christ is in the business of changing lives.**

**But Christianity is not something you shove down somebody's throat or force on someone. You've got your life to live and I've got mine. All I can do is tell you what I've learned and experienced – after all is said it's your decision.**

**Perhaps the prayer I prayed will help you: "Lord Jesus, I need you. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Forgive me and cleanse me. Right this moment I trust you as Saviour and Lord. Make me the type of person you created me to be. In Christ's Name I pray. Amen.**

**Addendum:**

**Like you this Christianity or not?**

**It may be false, but would you wish it true?**

**Has it your vote to be so if it can? – Browning**

**The Bible does not offer it's gold in nuggets.  
It is a mountain range whose wealth**

**Must be mined, smelted and refined.  
Every bush is aflame with God, but...  
Only those who have renewed vision  
Pause to remove their shoes! Anon.**

**I searched for my soul, and my soul eluded me,  
I looked for my God, my God I could not see  
Then I searched for my brother – and found all three! Anon/**

### **PART III AN ANALYSIS OF COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS HINDUISM AND ISLAM.**

#### **HINDUISM TO CHRIST – A THESIS BY RUTH RAJAH**

**India is a land wonderful in it's history, picturesque in it's life, unbelievable in it's present conditions, yet it holds the promise of a fascinating future. No country in the east is of greater interest to the West than this land. It is a very extensive land, stretching east to west a distance of 1,900 miles and possessing a wonderful variety of climate ranging from great snow in the North to fierce and extreme heat in the South. Her culture and religions are worthy of study both for what it was in the past, what it is today, and for what it will become; a people who are held in the dark firm grip of evil and where only the light of Jesus Christ can penetrate and dispel the darkness.**

**A brief study of Hinduism is here done, the heart of the religion and social system and compare it with the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

**"India is the mother of religions", and her toleration for other religions has been notable. For centuries she has been the refuge of Zoroastrianism, and the followers of this ancient cult of Persia found a pleasant home in India. There are also more Mohammedans in India today than in any other land, and Christians have also lived, fairly peacefully, almost from Apostolic days.**

**Mohammedanism was carried into India in 711 A.D. at sword point and established itself there in the same manner. They believe in one God "Allah" and are deeply pious. Islam believes that there is no other true religion, and has bred bigotry and intolerance and radicalism. Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha, whose mother says he was the son of Maya a god who is considered to be among the greatest founders of religion. They believe in kindness to all living creatures, and many leading aspects of life and teaching of the Buddhist religion can be traced in source and emphasis to Hinduism. It is no little wonder that Buddhism is said to be 'that child of India'.**

**Disregard for sacrifices, high morality and reverence for life in all it's forms are held by the Jain religion. This religion is an offshoot of Buddhism but differs from it mainly in**

**their objects of worship and ritual. The Jains worship saints rather than gods, and attain to sainthood for their charity among the poor and for maintaining hospitals for animals.**

**Yet another religion in India is Sikhism which is really a compromise between Hinduism and Mohammedanism. In keeping with their creed, the Sikhs are never to cut the hair on their head or face, and are never to smoke, unlike Muslims who are heavy smokers but non-drinkers. The Sikhs are warlike and valiant, and constitute most of the Indian Army. The main religion in India is Hinduism, to which three quarters of all the inhabitants of India belong.**

**One may wonder what Hinduism is? It is a mixture of Brahmanism, Buddhism and demon worship. In the south today, people are devil worshippers, and according to their moods of preference, they give themselves to the worship of Hindu gods or village demons. Worship in Hindu temples is just a past-time to it's followers, but the appeasing of the demons at their shrines is the most serious concern of their life. Thus Hinduism can be seen as a huge cloth of many colours, patched together without harmony or consistency. Not only has it philosophies that oppose each other, but also three different ways of salvation, 330,000,000 gods and deities, as many laws and customs which lack in consistency and unity of purpose and teaching.**

**The general character of the Indian religion is that it is unlimited and comprehensive, up to the point of confusion; it is a boundless sea of divine beliefs and practices; it encourages the worship of innumerable gods; it permits every doctrine to be taught, every kind of mystery to be imagined; any sort of theory to be held as to the inner nature and visible operation of the divine power.**

**The goal of the Indian religion of Hinduism is communion with the supreme. It is a life of realisation, an inner vision of god. Man must achieve absolute freedom and must escape from blindly serving ordinary experience. The Vedas is the essential foundation of the whole spiritual tradition of Hinduism. Veda comes from the word "vid", which refers to the doctrine that is not based on faith or revelation, but is a higher knowledge which is gained through a process of intuition or seeing. Hinduism places emphasis on the divine possibilities of man.**

**The Supreme is in the soul of man. Hindu thinkers are conscious of the immensity of the infinite and Supreme spirit which is inexhaustible and mysterious. Thus, when approaching the different conceptions, the Hindu has a sense of humility and deep awareness of human frailty. The problem facing man is the conflict between the divine and the undivine in him. Yoga-sutra-bhasya says that the mind's stream flows in two directions, one leading to virtue and the other leading to vice. The aim of the religion is therefore, to overcome the conflict.**

**In order to see the spiritual world, one must close their eyes to the world of nature. The Katha Upanisad says that a man is turned outward by his own senses and,**



therefore loses contact with his own deepest self-respect. His soul has become taken up in outer things, in power and possessions.

In order to find its right direction, the soul must turn around and find the meanings and realities which it has missed. Thus, in order to hear the spirit world, the noises of the outside world must be shut off. This belief is not to renounce the powers of sight, hearing, or speech, but to open the inner eye to the spiritual realities and capture an insight of the spirit world.

Throughout the ages, oneness with the ultimate spirit has been the governing ideal of the Hindu religion. To the Hindu all men are seeking for one Supreme. One of their verses say, "The man of action finds his god in the fire, the man of feeling in the heart, the feeble minded in the idol, but the strong in spirit find god everywhere". A gradual revelation of the supreme in man is the aim of life to a Hindu. This revelation is governed by the law of Karma, in which the Hindu does not believe in a god who sits on his judgement throne condemning or rewarding men, nor does he administer justice according to his sweet will. They believe that god is "in" man and that man is on trial every moment.

Every honest effort will do him good in his eternal endeavour. Thus, a character is being built which will continue into the future until oneness with God is attained. Further, one need not be disheartened if the goal of perfection is not attained in one life. Re-birth is accepted by all Hindus.

To experience a perfect life, man's consciousness has been divided into three activities. The path of knowledge and illumination, the path of faith and devotion, and the path of work and services. To a Hindu, mere knowledge which lacks warmth of feeling leads to coldness of heart, while emotion without knowledge is hysteria.

Mere action that is not guided by wisdom and love is a meaningless ritual. Direct consciousness can only be attained by a prayerful attitude in which intellectual pride is killed and the mind is open to God. The Yoga discipline is intended to train the mind to hear "the mighty voice of the silence within".

Hindus accept all kinds of worship. The highest form of worship is the practice of naturally realising the presence of God. Meditation and contemplation come next, and the worship of idols ranks third.

In the defence of idol worship it is known to have been said that because man is unable to comprehend God, he uses the help of images of beaten gold and silver. He concludes that if these images help man to know what God is, then let them love and remember God through them. Hindus have many different gods relating to every part of life. Krishna, the typical god of love and beauty, is worshipped by men and especially women who are dominated by emotion and sentiment.

**The ethical discipline is intended to enable man to realize his potential, so that he will be able to stand secure in his soul, free from the past and not fearing the future. Moral progress is not judged by one's power over the world but by his control over the passions of the heart. The Hindu thinkers, aware of the distance separating human nature and ideal perfection, devised a system of culture and discipline to train the individual for his destiny. This system is known as the Dharma which shapes the moral feeling and character of people. Within the framework of the Dharma, both the individual and the society must conform to duties, which include cleanliness, good manners, social service, prayer and worship.**

**To become the ideal person, the individual must go through an education which involves restraint and suffering. All have to pass through this discipline irrespective of class, rank, wealth or poverty. Finally, when the individual is thoroughly disciplined for the higher life he becomes a 'sannyasi', which is a disinterested servant of humanity who finds peace in the strength of the spirit. Thus, a state of perfect harmony with the Eternal is reached, and the education of the human spirit is ended.**

**Being conscious of the demands that the Dharma makes on life and the gulf that separates man from the ideal, Hindu philosophers have concluded that man and his habits will change very slowly. Millions of lives will be consumed before one perfect is produced. To reach this highest plane requires much toil and agony. "For our hearts to pulse with joy, countless hearts must be crushed by suffering".**

**India has a caste system under which people are divided. This division is made on the basis of whether the intellectual emotion or will is more dominant. Those with the gift of thought and reflection are the 'Brahmins' who are the highest class. The 'Kshatriyas' are those strongly inclined towards heroism and war, while the business man belongs to the 'Vaisyas' special class. The classes can be said to represent the intellectual, the military, the industrial and the unskilled workers. The caste system has brought much strife and antagonism between the classes and has prevented national unity. Untouchability is a terrible curse of India. It is not even given a name.**

**Hinduism and Christianity are two religions with vast contrasts. Christianity is beautifully explained by Jesus in Luke 15, as being a divine method of seeking and saving lost mankind. "Thus sayeth the Lord" can be found innumerable times throughout the Bible – a revelation of God to man.**

**Hinduism on the other hand, is man's longing for God. Christianity worships one God who is portrayed as a loving Father. His personality is revealed to all with such power and tenderness that cannot be compared. Hinduism finds no assurance or comfort in worshipping it's many gods whose number not only bewilders but also claims that any one is supreme.**

**Two faiths and teachings concerning man are no less divergent. In the Bible man is represented as the son of God. He is fallen and wilfully rebels against his Father. Though he plunges to the lowest depths of sin, God's love follows him, and he is**

**promised Eternal life through repentance faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Man is represented as a friend of the Supreme. Hindus regard the human soul as part of the Supreme Soul. To magnify the soul and not human life makes this life into one of evil having no solution and possessing no moral significance or spiritual value.**

**In Christianity, God Himself is the one who works out a plan of salvation. He condescended to human life and brought redemption to the world through His own death. Man cannot redeem himself, nor can he atone for his past or be assured of his future. Jesus Christ alone is his only hope. How different is the picture shown to us by Hindu philosophers concerning human redemption. Theirs is a redemption that must be accomplished by themselves. The ever present fact of Hinduism is the terrible loneliness and isolation of man. His actions determine his destiny. Christ does not insist that man bears his burden alone, but offers to bear it for him and free the guilt belonging to every soul. Yoga allows for man to be absorbed into the Supreme through high mental discipline. Intellect cannot save or exalt a soul.**

**Re-Incarnation is the popular doctrine in India. Hindus believe that their destiny is already fixed, that there is nothing that can be done which will affect the unseen power who is working out all his actions, even those of his former births. This belief is in direct contrast with the Christian view, where God's grace is extended to man. There is no blessing in any Hindu incarnation. It is no wonder that the belief of their returning as fish, fowls and beast makes them a people who lack moral aim.**

**In order for man to want to attain holiness, there must be a life which stands as a bold example. In Christianity, Christ stands as an example. His command to all is to follow Him and believe in Him. He has stood through the ages as a perfect ideal. Hinduism offers no such example. Not even their gods live as super human holiness. The Bible is a book of revelation from beginning to end. New truths are taught, and the divine light of Christ glows through the entire book. In Hindu literature, superstitions, ceremonies, and laws of social and religious bondage compose their scriptures.**

**Christianity is a faith that exalts the individual and shows his rights and responsibilities with a marked clearness. Hinduism is an enemy to individual freedom and gives no rights to him. The caste system has taken the place of the individual. Hindu thinkers believe that men were created differently just as there are different kinds of animals; to bring them together would be unnatural and sinful. Thus, every man has his social and religious status fixed firmly for him, even before his birth. The caste system has robbed man of his birthright, independence and self respect.**

**Hinduism holds it's followers in a grip of fear and darkness which overshadows every aspect of their lives. The difference that Christ brings to one and the experience of freedom, love and joy found in Him gives new hope and a reason to live. What a God and Saviour who has stooped in love to save souls! Perhaps the greatest difference between Hinduism and Christianity is that Christ came down to us; a condescending God, while in Hinduism the individual must work his way up to God. Having been so**

close to the grip of Hinduism, the present writer can be thankful for the translation from darkness into the glorious light of Jesus

Research for Thesis for comparative religions by Ruth Rajah, John Brown University  
March 1985

The following is my tribute to my daughter Ruth:

Ruth remains a treasure  
in the annals of the Almighty  
He found one day in Moabs dust (Jer 48:47)  
This pearl unclaimed and took her in.  
She never wore a crown, yet from her seed  
The Prince of Peace was born.  
Ruth has this witness, that she pleased the Lord,  
Because her life was one of service  
And her heart, a fountain of grace !  
Anon

#### 1995 PRESS NEWS ITEM –

##### Rat catchers in demand in India.

“It’s a lesson learned from childhood: Don’t kill rats because they are a vehicle for the god Ganesh (the Elephant god)”

The night rat-killers – once despised in predominantly Hindu India – are now heroes. For Hindus, the rat is the steed or vehicle of the elephant-headed god Ganesh, and few Hindus would deliberately kill one. But you wouldn’t know that travelling these days through Bombay, where the Government is receiving 2000 dead rats at dawn every day, and New Delhi, where over 100 rat killers are deployed each night in the worst affected neighbourhoods.

The rat killers are doing a fine job says a Government official after 54 people died of a plague in Surat, north of Mumbai. The disease which can be spread by fleas from infected rats or coughing by infected people can be cured by antibiotics if caught soon enough.

A rat catcher says: I have been doing this job for five years. When we used to catch rats earlier, people sleeping on the streets threatened to beat us and always cursed us – now they shout ‘come here , there are lots of rats’. Each rat catcher is paid about \$3 every night that he produces at least 25 dead rats. In New Delhi where people die of the plague, every night the city send out at least 100 rat catchers, known as rat gangs to kill as many rats as possible. “They are doing a fine job but we need to have more people to kill rats”.

The capital’s rat catchers are on official pay rolls earning a monthly salary of \$80. Although many of them work in filthy shantytowns, rats are found everywhere in India.

**According to Government figures rats destroy 4.5 million tons of food grain every year in India where many people are farmers.**

**But the plague – a-rat-verses-man issue – has spawned a controversy that is transforming the religious belief of Hinduism. The fear of plagues and vermin related sicknesses are surely but slowly making some Indians re-think their religion and that it is better to kill rats and vermin. “From Childhood we are told not to kill rats said a spokesman but what I see now makes me feel that we should kill rats” Other Hindus believe that it is sinful to kill any living creature due to the re-incarnation theory.**

**The temples are the worst infested with rats and are worshipped. So much food offerings are placed in spaces in the temple and rats come out in their hoards. The rat catchers are not allowed inside the temples to ply their trade and also being outcasts are not allowed to enter the temples. If by accident a tourist or anyone stepped on a rat and kills it they must recompense with silver to the temple custodians to be absolved. That could have been someone’s relative in the reincarnation process.**

**But the paranoia appears to be making many Indians rethink their religious beliefs. 1995 GR Press release.**

**Who are the rat killers – in the abominable caste system, the lowest ratings the Harijans are the rat catchers – the untouchables. In the religion only the lowest of the low would do such a task – and yet they are the salvation of the upper ratings of the castes.**

**Hinduism advocates the caste system very strongly. The lowest of the low are the Untouchables and these are accommodated as part of the religion of Hinduism and the Karma of reincarnation.**

**It was Mahatma Ghandi who gave Untouchables the Hindu name Harijans meaning “children of God”, in hopes that it would provide them with some respectability. Joshi, Ziana.**

**Mahatma Ghandi in his biography was admonished by his Swami (religious teacher advisor) for not wearing the ‘shikha’, a tuft of hair on a bald head and a sacred thread around his neck a practice which he discarded when he was in the UK and then South Africa. Now he was back in India, of a higher class and his Swami required him to comply with his religious belief.**

**His answer was, “I will not wear the sacred thread and tuft of hair when countless Hindus can go without it and yet remain Hindus. Moreover, the sacred thread should be a symbol of spiritual regeneration, presupposing a deliberate attempt on the part of the wearer at a higher and purer life.**

**I doubt, whether in the present state of Hinduism and of India, Hindus can vindicate the right to wear a symbol charged with such meaning. That right can come only after Hinduism has purged itself of untouchability, has removed all distinctions of superiority, and shed a host of other evils and shams that have become rampant in it. My mind therefore rebels against the idea of wearing the sacred thread” The Swami did not appreciate his position and Ghandi never complied. (Autobiography M.K. Ghandi)**

### **ISLAM**

**For the sake of this book which it is hoped will give a overview, certainly not exhaustive, about the Muslim religion, since India is both Hindu and Moslem and only in 1947 did the partition become effective there are still millions of Moslems in India.**

**Ayodhya is an ongoing contention between Hindus and Muslims and will not be resolved except by Government decree. As mentioned in an earlier chapter it is the place where King Rama had his kingdom and palace. According to Hindu history Ayodhya existed thousands of years before Islam which originated through Muhamed the founder of Islam an Arabic word meaning ‘submission’.**

**Muhamed was born about AD 570 in Mecca, which is today in the Kingdom of Saudia Arabia. He claimed to have received a series of revelations from God (under the name of Allah) which were written down and compiled as the Koran, the Islamic Holy Book. A follower of Islam is known as a Muslim, meaning ‘one who submits’.**

**Muhamed’s claim to be a prophet of God was not immediately accepted. His first followers were members of his own family. He eventually had to flee to Medina (where he now lies buried) to escape the wrath of his fellow townsmen. Progressively however his claim that he was a prophet won increasing acceptance until he was able to return to Mecca at the head of an army. Muhamed lived to see most of his Arab people accept his teachings. Before he died the foundations had already been laid for the Islamic wars of conquest which were to spread the faith of the desert prophet throughout the middle east, north Africa and ultimately (very nearly) the ends of the earth.**

**The Mughul emperors made a systematic effort to spread the message of Islam by the sword. Thomas the Apostle many centuries before, travelled through Arabia and infiltrated into India from north to south peacefully, preaching the message of Christ and gaining converts by their own free choice and will but the Mughul Emperors used their armies to invade and conquer the land for Islam by the sword down to about central India.**

**Basic Muslim teachings include, the future judgement of the world under the laws and commands of Allah, the creator and the judge. Muhamed imposes five main obligations upon Muslim believers;**

**Acceptance of the Confessions of Faith (“There is no God but Allah, and Muhamaed is his prophet”).**

**Prayer five times a day.**

**Giving of alms.**

**Fasting from food and drink during the hours of daylight in the month of Ramadan.**

**A pilgrimage to Mecca, to be undertaken at least once in a person’s lifetime.**

**A number of other important rules and regulations are binding on Muslims. Although Islamist apologists may deny it, women have a decidedly inferior position in the Muslim world and the segregation and veiling of women is widely practiced under the guise of purity.**

**As in Judaism, circumcision is an initiatory rite to which all males converts are required to submit.**

**While items two and three, in the above list may appear surprisingly ‘Christian’ there is a dramatic difference. The difference is characterised by the term “Jihad” meaning ‘holy war’. Islam is all embracing. Muhamed not only gave out religious teaching , but also directions for political, economic, social and financial control of the world. For the faithful, Islam is the ultimate dispensation it deserves, and will ultimately attain (so they say and believe) universal domination.**

**The purpose of Jihad is to eradicate the ‘infidel’ by the sword or conversion – it makes no difference what method is used, so long as the desired result is achieved.**

**Jihad threatens the Muslim world as much as it does the West. One faction of Palestinian Muslims massacre members of a rival faction. Muslim Iraq and Muslim Iran are now in their seventh year of a devastating war with both sides claiming to be fighting for Islam. Within their countries the Shiite and Sunni factions vie for control.**

**Muslim fanaticism knows no limits. The ultimate personal sacrifice is the greatest glory. “Martyrdom” in a ‘holy war’ guarantees paradise. So to kill or be killed for the sake of Jihad becomes the purpose of existence for many Muslims.**

**“Committing terrorism is like achieving manhood for a Shiite” says William Quandt a middle east specialist. “Everybody is scrambling to be the most militant.”**

**Historically, Muslims have been a divided people. Their infighting left them an easy prey for outsiders. Whenever they were united, their strength was significant. Even as long ago as the time of the crusaders (12 century), the Christians enjoyed victory when their Muslim enemies were divided, but when they were united the Crusaders were often defeated.**

**Reality of Christ Lost : Islam spread rapidly across North Africa between AD 600 and 800. The vast territory had once been almost the heartland of the early Christian world**

and in Augustine of Hippo had produced one of the greatest saints of Christendom. Yet North Africa swiftly fell to Islam.

Western historians have attributed the fall to the brutal conquest and continuing persecution of Christians. Yet more recently, Dwight Barbour, a Baptist missionary and author who worked in North Africa for many years, has come to a somewhat different conclusion. By the fifth and sixth centuries AD, North African Christians were spiritually bankrupt. There was a serious lack of scriptural teaching and much biblical illiteracy. In short, Christians had lost the reality of Christ in their lives.

Brute force alone, therefore, cannot be blamed for the rapid spread of Islam in north Africa. A weak, uncommitted church provided fertile ground for the Muslim conquest.

Today, the population of Egypt is 86% Muslim. It is to their credit that Egyptian Christians have shown greater tenacity than their confreres elsewhere in North Africa, where Muslims total 99.5% of the population.

Many westerners believe that it is almost impossible to win Muslims to Christ, and the people of Islam, generally speaking, have been neglected by missionary endeavour. There is no gainsaying that Muslims are highly resistant to the gospel. A Catholic priest working in Algeria baptised only one convert in twenty years. Other missionaries in Muslim lands (with the exception of Indonesia) have found the going almost equally hard and some 'missionary statesmen' have advocated giving up the struggle altogether. A missionary who laboured his life in a Muslim Country spoke of missions to Muslims in North Africa and how drearily unresponsive the people were whom the mission was trying to evangelise.

He contrasted this with the receptiveness found in, Black Africa, and suggested that on the basis of "showing a profit for Jesus" the North African mission should be moved, "lock, stock and barrel" across and opened in some black African territory. In it's new location, instead of winning one convert a year, the mission could expect to win a thousand and missionary manpower and resources would thus be used more productively.

Although spelled out quite as explicitly as this, arguments of this kind seem plausible. And there is a factor of human nature. It is only natural to desire to work in a mission field where 'things are moving' (Korea for example), where people are responding and where there is a minimum of hostility. Of course it is true that most Muslim lands are closed to overt missionary activity.

Despite these considerations, missionary-minded Christians would do well to reflect that the Great Commission has not been repealed and that our Lord's command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15) includes the Muslim world. Also the command to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19) applies to Muslims as much as anyone else.



**The extent of Protestant missionary outreach to Muslims is pathetic. Less than two per cent of North American missionaries work in the Arab world. More missionaries labour in the American State of Alaska (which has a population of 300 thousand), than in the entire Muslim world, which totals at least 850 million.**

**Facing the challenge of world evangelisation, many Christians have been re-evaluating methods of presenting Christ to Muslims. Some observers believed that the secularising influences which have undermined the Christian faith of many in the West might also have their impact in the world of Islam. Few expected the opposite reaction which has and is occurring in Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Iraq and Iran**

**A different story in India when Hindus and Muslims co-co-existed peacefully but with the coming of the Mogul Armies invading India from the north, Hindus were converted by brute force and the sword.**

**Increased exposure to the West, the influx of petro dollars, resulting in economic and political power and improved educational opportunities have all seemed to aggravate Muslim fanaticism. Yet the Islamic world is still divided and large areas of it are in a state of outright war or political and economic turmoil. These factors are having an unsettling effect on Muslim beliefs, at least in the thinking of many younger people.**

**Michael Youssef, an official of the Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training states: "In the midst of this kind of struggle and anxiety, the Christian gospel can be very attractive. We should be watching for stress points in the ideological struggles of the Muslim world".**

**Perhaps an obvious stress point that has not been taken into account is the inner emptiness which only Christ can fill. In every Muslim country there are growing numbers of isolated RADIO believers who have accepted Christ through hearing the gospel expounded on Radio and more recently by satalite television. The great majority of these isolated radio and TV believers are aged between 12 and 23. In Iran a young believer recently led 20 people to Christ in six months. In America where many Iranians have been stranded due to the revolution in their country, there have been Iranian converts to Christ in almost every major city.**

**Afghanistan is one of the least evangelised countries in the world from a human standpoint the war which is now going on there would appear to render impossible any prospect of winning Afghanis for Christ. Yet, as a result of the war some Afghanis have been converted. RADIO evangelism in Pushtu, the principal language of Afghanistan, has found listener-ship among the hundreds and thousands of refugees, and the beginning of a response. At least five Afghani converts to Christ are now themselves actively engaged in spreading the gospel by Radio among their fellow-countrymen.**

**Don M. Mcurry, founding director of the Samuel Zwemer Institute, one of the world's foremost co-ordinating agencies for Muslim evangelism reports "the sale of bibles in Muslim countries is unprecedented. Christian RADIO and TV programmes are eliciting a surprising number of enquiries and a significant increase in enrolment in Bible correspondence courses. Many field missionaries are reporting a greater degree of receptivity than in previous years". He adds "stress produces openness. Restless hearts in search of meaning and peace are finding their rest in Christ".**

**Living Bibles International has been experiencing this same type of receptivity. Nearly 100 thousand copies of the new Persian Living New Testament for Iran have been distributed since it's release in 1979. LBI staff in Teheran report more conversions of Muslims in the past 12 months than occurred during the previous 20 years.**

**The Arabic Living New Testament has also been received more widely than the most optimistic predictions. In 1982 several thousand copies were printed and veteran missionaries predicted that it would be three years before they were sold out. Since 1982, 120 thousand further copies have been printed. A further 30 thousand copies have been printed in the forthcoming sixth printing, already out since this prediction.**

**The Zwemer Institute Newsletter recently acclaimed the success of the Arabic Living New Testament as 'without precedent' in Arab world evangelism. In certain respects the language of the bible and the Islamic Koran are similar. ( See Footnote) . The Koran calls Adam " the chosen of Allah", Noah "the preacher of Allah", Abraham "the friend of Allah" and Moses, "the speaker". The Muslim's holy book calls the Lord Jesus Christ 'The word and spirit of Allah'.**

**Muhammad regarded the Christians and the Jews as "the people of the Book" and in a different category to other 'infidels'. Muslims accept as scripture the book of the law (Torah) delivered through Moses, the psalms through David and the New Testament as the 'Injil' or the gospel of Christ.**

**Since there are a number of major contradictions between the Bible and the Koran, the Bible is declared to be inaccurate and corrupted. There is no rational basis for this. The Muslim attitude is that if the Bible says one thing and the Koran something different, then the Bible must be wrong! For example, the Koran asserts that Jesus was not really crucified: it only 'seemed' to be so (according to one Islamic theory, not found in the Koran itself, God arranged for Judas Iscariot to be crucified instead of Jesus).**

**This kind of reasoning is one of the supreme weaknesses of the whole Muslim case If the Christian Gospels are really corrupt and inaccurate, who 'corrupted' them and when were they corrupted? The Christian Scriptures have come down to us from a huge variety of manuscripts and sources and the kind of 'corruption' alleged by the Muslims would have been quite impossible to perpetrate.**

**‘Despite these considerations, the theoretical acceptance by the Muslims of the Bible as scripture, albeit ‘corrupted’, gives valuable scope for an evangelistic approach to them. Most Muslims know about Jesus through the Koran which mentions Him in numerous passages and praises Him. His virgin birth is accepted and Muhammed acknowledged Him as sinless.**

**Michael Youssef, quoted earlier, states that the Koran can be used to bring Muslims to the feet of Jesus. Virtually all converts from Islam say that the God they knew distantly in the Koran they now know more fully in Jesus Christ! The Bible can become the link between Muslim and Christian. All the hate and the animosity from the centuries can be swept away as the gospel is presented in a culturally and sensitive manner.**

**Because of this common heritage and the great need that exists, Living Bible International has singled out the Middle East as one of the major front lines for Scripture distribution for the next three years. Increased conflict with the outside world as well as continued infighting will render increasing numbers of Muslims be open to the gospel of love and peace.**

**Hatred, bloodshed and exploitation have marred the relationship between Christians and Muslims for 14 centuries. Muslim fanaticism today is only a reflection of a history of disgrace on both sides. Yet, Christ asks us to go as sheep among wolves. He commands us to love our enemies. Isaiah the prophet tells us in chapter 60 that the sons of Ishmael will come with acceptance to God’s altar.**

**The written Word of God in a clear and readable translation in their own language is one of the two keys to fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah. Christians need to start new among Muslims. Devoid of all cultural baggage which has hampered the true message of Christ for so long, Christians, armed with the Sword of the Spirit will melt the sword of Islam’s fanatical hatred with fervent love.**

**The second key of course, is prayer, and it is to be feared that very few western Christians have any particular prayer burden for the people of Islam. John Wesley commented “God will do nothing but by prayer” and certainly no breakthrough in Muslim evangelism will ever be attained and sustained and agonising prayers of God’s people. While it is always pleasing to hear of individual Muslims coming to a saving faith in Christ, where is the burden for the thousand million Muslims coming from, who are living and dying outside of the Body of Christ?**

**A considerable number of Christians are burdened for the salvation of the Jews. Of course, this is an entirely legitimate and proper concern. But where does one look for a parallel concern for the vastly and more numerous people of Islam. I am convinced that the main reason why so few Muslims are won for Christ is because so few**

**Christians are praying for them to this end! To those who have never given a thought about praying for Muslims, I would suggest, the following prayer intention:**

**\*That the Lord of the Harvest will raise up many more missionaries to labour in the so-needy field of Muslim evangelism.**

- That converts to Christianity in predominantly Muslim countries may remain stronger and steadfast as they live their lives in an environment of unremitting hostility to their new faith.**

**\* Support Radio and Television Ministry. That individual converts won through RADIO and TV ministries may become acquainted with one another to enable them to pray together, study the Word together, and to give each other mutual strength and support.**

**\* That God will raise up leaders for each group of isolated believers.**

**\* That the spirit of fanaticism found in the hearts of so many Muslims may be dissipated.**

**\* That predominantly Muslim countries may become increasingly open and receptive to the Gospel.**

**Broadcasting is undoubtedly the most effective instrument and tool of Muslim evangelism. It is costly and has numerous ramifications. A RADIO or TV station broadcasting the gospel requires a substantial staff of technicians, broadcasters, linguists, programme compilers, accountants, and by no means least, personnel who are able to reply accurately and sympathetically to hundreds (if not thousands) of letters which pour in week after week from listeners seeking guidance, counsel, and sometimes salvation. The financial implications of this can be well imagined. Concerned Christians should make all these things a matter for insistent prayer.**

**Jerry Lock, Church World Dec 85**

**Today, with all modern technology, internet, emails, satellite programmes, videos, DVDs etc., the message is getting through. There are no fences for airwaves and anything gets through cyberspace, good and bad. There's no way governments can ban or jam every programme. In general 80% are getting through and are in demand by the population, like it or not.**

**Although the Q'oran acknowledges Jesus to be the Son of God, many Muslims don't believe that God ever had a Son. But the Muslims don't know why God sent Muhammed in AD 570. The answer to this is because the Roman Church had gone astray and presented a foul smell in God's nostrils; for instance the certain Bishops and Popes who were called to be pure and celibate, lived immoral lives in Rome.**

**It is only recently that the ordinary church goers were allowed to read the Bible as the Roman Church said that only the qualified bishops could translate the Holy Scriptures. But the Bible says something else when in John's gospel tells us clearly that it is only the Holy Spirit who teaches us all things!**

**God's ways are not our ways and I thank God for this as He has a unique way of getting through to us. Luther is a clear case in point because he had never read the Word of God until he went to join a monastery and this is where he discovered that we are saved by Grace and nothing else. Romans 8, verse 28, showed him that the grace of God is a free gift and you don't have to pay for it.**

**INDIA'S TOP DEFENCE SCIENTIST A TAMIL MOSLEM OF HUMBLE BEGINNINGS – by Narayan Swamy; New Delhi**

**A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM, the man who made nuclear weapons tests possible for India's Hindu nationalist government, is a Tamil Muslim who rose from humble beginnings selling newspapers in a Hindu holy town. As a 10 year old school boy in Rameshwaram, in India's southern coastal tip, Kalam earned extra money for his family delivering newspapers in his neighbourhood every morning.**

**Half a century later Kalam (66), is the father of India's ambitious defence missile programme. Last week he combined with the Atomic Energy Commission Chairman R. Chidambaram to explode five nuclear bombs.**

**After graduating in science, he studied aeronautical engineering in Madras and in 1958 joined the Defence Research Development Organisation which he now heads. He joined the Indian Space Research Organisation in 1963, but returned to DRDO in 1982. Last year Kalam was awarded the "Bharat Ratna", India's highest civilian honour.**

**On Sunday, Kalam- with his trademark- unkempt hair – shared credit for India's nuclear advances with many others including the Armed Forces.**

**"He is a very simple person without any airs," said K.S. Jayaraman, one of India's leading science journalists. "He can be very deceptive and is highly secretive. I find him a very deep thinking person. His secretive nature of course goes with his job." The secrecy ensured that only a select few in the Indian Government knew New Delhi was bracing for a series of underground nuclear explosions. Kalam and his team fooled satellites and spies. At his Sunday Press conference, he refused to say how that was done, although he said that he and Chidambaram were asked by the government to make preparations for nuclear bombs barely a month ago.**

**Despite his elevated position as a man who has to his credit satellites and an array of missiles, including two that can carry nuclear warheads, Kalam leads a frugal lifestyle and lives in a sparsely- furnished two roomed house.**

**He devotes plenty of time to reading literature in Tamil – his mother tongue. (obviously he is a convert to Islam as Tamil is his mother tongue – as I am a convert to Christianity and my mother tongue is Tamil). He is a poet and can recite Muslim**

prayers and Hindu religious scriptures with equal finesse. He is also a vegetarian, a teetotaler and a fan of classical Indian music. In thinking he is modern.

Kalam told The Times of India newspaper in a rare interview on Sunday: "We must think and act like a nation of a billion people and not like that of a million people. Dream, dream, dream. Conduct these dreams into thought, and then transform them into action. Do things yourself. Do not indulge in short-cuts by importing equipment".

India's ability to produce satellites, missiles and now nuclear weapons without hardly any outside help has stunned the world. On Sunday, Kalam did not hide his contempt for western sanctions in the wake of Indian nuclear tests.

"We were refused a super computer some time back (by the United States). Today we have it," he said. Similarly, cryogenic space technology was denied (by Russia). It will be ready in a few years. "Nobody can throttle us technologically. Once a challenge is given, we do the job" – Ziana-AFP.

#### **WHERE ARE WE IN ZIMBABWE NOW - 2006-07-19**

Mugabe is too busy running around "putting out fires" in his party - is how one person put it.

I don't have to quote statistics because at the time of writing they change every day, even twice a day like the price of some foodstuffs, even daily bread. 2006 Guinness Book of Records states that Zimbabwe has the highest inflation rate of any country not at war. A loaf of bread at that time cost 8650 Z\$. Six months and more later it is more than doubled.

The parallel market money exchange – well the Reserve Bank is trying to catch up with it but no doubt is being outwitted by cleverer people than the Governor of the Reserve Bank. Zim exchange rate is creeping up to 10,000%.

**Listen earnestly and you'll hear the "Zimbabwe Drums"**

The drums are calling old man, and they're louder by the day  
 They are calling you to judgement and now's the time to pay,  
 For the wrongs you've done your country and the trust you have betrayed  
 So hear those drumbeats swelling, hear well and be afraid  
 You came to power on waves of hope that you would make your mark,  
 In a land that shone in Africa like diamonds in the dark  
 In simple faith the people put their trust within your care  
 And were repaid by the Fifth Brigade and the CIO and fear  
 Twenty years of motorcades and lavish trips abroad,

**A nation's heritage is lost through patronage and fraud. The chefs grow fat while people starve and famine stalks our homes,  
On idle farms the weeds grow rank and cover cattle bones.  
The youth are taught your slogans and even as they sing  
The drums of change are beating for the truth is seeping in  
The demagogue has feet of clay and lies will not sustain  
The shattered land that once seemed free and will be so again.  
Too late to blame the drought, the Brits, the whites or the MDC  
For all know where the finger points with cold finality.**

**So hear the drums, old man, and listen to them well,  
They foretell of your end days and they have much to tell.  
For he who sows the seeds of hate will reap the grapes of wrath,  
So tremble in your bed at night, at the end of your sorry path.  
Anonymous. Zimbabwe Independent.**

**There are two Shona idioms which basically say one and the same thing. The one says: Chikuriri chine chacowo. The other says : Gone ana gone wakewo. What they both mean, loosely translated, is that 'every hero has his own conqueror in turn'. End**

**The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress" – anon**

**The phobia and paranoia of plots and coups is an ever lingering festering sore for the ruling party – more so these days in 2006 and into 2007 causing the jitters to ruling hierarchy to the whole inner circle of ZANUPF.**

**The following is a report on the visit of my friend and former church visitor - Archbishop Pius Ncube -**

**DISSIDENT MAKES HIS VOICE HEARD. By Tony Freemantle of 'The Houston Chronicle' 27<sup>th</sup> Sept 2006**

**Archbishop Pius Ncube is a powerful critic of a ruler who he says has brought his nation to the brink of collapse.**

**It is Archbishop Pius Ncube's fervently held belief that the precipitous decline of his native Zimbabwe from one of sub-Sahara Africa's most prosperous countries a basket case can be traced to one man's stubborn, suicidal desire to stay in power. There was, therefore, little reason for optimism Monday when Ncube learned that the man, Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's 82-year-old president, planned to extend his rule another four years before holding elections. But it did not surprise him. Nor did it surprise him that Mugabe's police were reportedly beating trade union protesters Monday.**

Violence, brutal oppression, economic hardship and Mugabe's refusal to share authority are part of daily life in Zimbabwe, he said. Ncube, the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bulawayo, who is arguably Mugabe's most stinging and vocal critic, was in Houston to deliver a speech at the University of St. Thomas. In a wide-ranging interview Monday, Ncube accused Mugabe's government and his ruling Zanu PF party of destroying Zimbabwe's once thriving economy and driving the nation of 12.2 million to the brink of collapse. "When it comes to African dictators like Mugabe, they will break every law, they will smash up everything, everything can go to pieces as long as they remain supreme," Ncube said.

In 1980, when Mugabe led the country to independence from British colonial rule, there was hope that Zimbabwe would set an example to other emerging African democracies. By the 1990s it appeared those hopes were well founded, Ncube said. But faced with growing opposition, Mugabe embarked on a series of disastrous campaigns - seizing land from white farmers and uprooting about 700,000 poor city dwellers and demolishing their houses - that have all but destroyed the economy.

The rate of inflation is about 1,500 percent, 80 percent of the workforce is unemployed, and the urban poverty rate has trebled. "Hunger, illness and desperation stalk our land," Ncube wrote in the text of his speech. Ncube is a slight, unimposing man with wire-rimmed glasses who wears the simple black clothes of a parish priest without a trace of pretence. But he is widely viewed as the Tutu of Zimbabwe, a comparison to South Africa's Archbishop Desmond Tutu who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in combating apartheid. It's a flattering comparison, but not one Ncube sees as cause for celebration. "It's difficult to rejoice in anything of the sort because we are still in an absolute mess," he said. "At least in South Africa, they are over the hump. In Zimbabwe, it is an absolute mess."

In a country where dissent is brutally suppressed, Ncube is as brutally frank. He calls Mugabe evil. He says he is a liar and a cheat, that the word dictator is too good for him, that he is a murderer. The archbishop has received death threats, but so far Mugabe's response to his nemesis has been mostly verbal, calling Ncube an "unholy man" and describing him as satanic. Ncube said he is not sure why he gets away with it. Being a man of the cloth, wearing the white collar of a priest could have something to do with it. "I don't know," he said. "But I'm not speaking because of the collar. I'm speaking because Mugabe is driving the whole nation to ruin and causing so much suffering. Even if I was not a priest, I would still speak up, and perhaps by now they would have got rid of me." Ncube said Mugabe has succeeded so well in stifling opposition to his rule that the only real challenge to it, which emerged in 2000 in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change, or MDC, is in disarray - split along ethnic lines and without good leadership. Mugabe's tolerance of the MDC, Ncube said, dissolved when it began acquiring more power. The white farmers began participating more avidly, and the party was receiving more and more support from the poor in the cities - reasons, he said, Mugabe eventually cracked down on them.



**Paradoxically, the people of Zimbabwe would have been better off if Mugabe had simply banned any form of opposition. "Economically, he would have been much cleverer if he had banned the MDC," Ncube said. "The people would be better off economically right now. But he wanted to appear as if he was a democrat in the eyes of the world. Banning the MDC would have done less harm economically than what he has foolishly done up to now."**

**For now, Ncube said, the situation for ordinary Zimbabweans is so dire, it is literally a case, for many of them, of life and death. "Things must change in Zimbabwe, because as things are, we face death," he said. "There is no way you are going to manage if a loaf of bread right now costs 400,000 Zimbabwe dollars (old currency), in two weeks' time it costs 800,000 in three weeks' time it is 1.6 million. There is no way we can survive if it continues this way." End. Zimnews.**

**Archbishop Ncube, in this writer's estimation stands a Micaiah of our modern day church, at 4000 to one. I Kings 22:8 Scripture: Then the King said to Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man by whom we may enquire of the Lord, but I hate Him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil, he is Micaiah son of Imlah"**

### **THREE CHIMURENGAS**

**Being aware that the Zimbabwe powers that be, the ZANU PF is forever harping about the Chimurenga wars of their ancestors, Nehanda, Kugubi, Mukwati and other lesser ones, I submit that they themselves have so far unleashed three Chimurengas upon their own people. How many more to come we don't know.**

**They have visited their own blacks with Chimurenga 'Gukurahundi', anialating over 20,000 Ndebele souls and then Chimeurenga 'Mindimirefu' where over 6000 women countrywide were rounded up by police and army and sent to holding camps, a positive nightmare and furthermore more recently, Chimurenga Operation Murambatsvina.**

**It is November, and the rains are here. The victims of Chimurenga Murambatsvina, the grassroots people are still homeless, foodless and eking out a miserable existence all over this land. Shelters are plastic sheeting, cardboard boxes and any bits of tin sheet that can be found. Such is the plight of over 700,000 made homeless by Mugabe's heartless destruction of their homes and meagre income generating businesses – all in the name of 'operation cleanup'.**

**Into 2007, the situation continues to be critical with no relief for the suffering Murambatsvina victims. Diarrhea and malaria is rife in all the makeshift dwellings. Latest surveys indicate that the Harare water system is contaminated with sewerage spills and is unfit for drinking for the whole general city population.**

**OUR ZIMBABWE- by Carly Huck**

This upheaval, this unrest,  
 This time that has been sent to test,  
 My faith, my love, my rational thought,  
 If I let go, will sink to nought.  
 So Father, I ask by me you'll stand,  
 As I stand proud for my land.  
 Let race nor class nor colour decide,  
 Let me stand in the gap of this divide,  
 Help me stand strong, when others fall,  
 Let me stand firm, let me stand tall.  
 Let no man question my will,  
 Even when provoked, let me be still.  
 Give me calm and peace of mind,  
 Uncover my eyes, remove the blind.  
 Father place your mighty hand,  
 To cover the wounds of this broken land.  
 Wash away the blood of war,  
 Open the locked, closed door.  
 Father stand by those who weep,  
 Let us stand for what is right,  
 But not with anger, nor with fight.  
 Be with those brave enough to stand,  
 For what they believe for this land.  
 Be with those who fear,  
 Show them Your presence ever near.  
 And even in our darkest hour,  
 Remind us of your ultimate power.  
 Zimbabwe will be a shining light,  
 Not through power, not through might,  
 But with forgiveness, and without greed,  
 Lord raise strong Godly people to lead.  
 Anew, Zimbabwe will rise again,  
 Without the anguish and the pain.  
 And united, together we will stand,  
 Upon the ground of this our land.

#### **ACTS CHAPTER 29**

I love to preach this sermon the Lord gave me some years ago. I start by asking the congregation to "please open your bibles to the book of Acts, Acts....all about 'some actions of some Apostles'. Pause. You have it? - then turn to chapter 29.

I start observing the people as they turn the pages and I notice the confused looks, some are forming opinions – then finally someone says, "but there's no Chapter 29 – I then say, but my bible has chapter 29 – long pause..... Here is chapter 29, standing

**before you – You see we all, you and I, believers or non believers alike are chapter 29, a continuation from Acts 28 regardless whether we like it or not!**

**Doctor Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke. Turn to the first chapter, and read the first verse. Luke was a trusted physician, a gentile who became a believer in Jesus. Excellency Theophilus was an important official who trusted Luke, and commissioned this educated man to investigate the claims of Jesus and the teachings of the early church.**

**Luke writes, “Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and servants of the Word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most Excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the exact truth about the things that you have been taught”. NASV.**

**By now, let's say about ten years have passed since his first letter, the Gospel of Luke. Now turn with me to the Book of Acts and in the first verses again, Doctor Luke writes to the same person, a sort of an update letter saying –**

**“The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to Heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the Apostles whom He had chosen”. NASV**

**Then he goes on, and in 28 chapters expounds the exploits of the Apostles since the time Jesus saw and called them to be his disciples to the time they saw Jesus ascending to the Father and remembered his last words;**

**“Behold, I am sending the Promise of My Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high”. NKV**

**I believe that command is still for us to this day – to wait on God, after conversion for the promised in-filling of the Holy Spirit as they experienced in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost to be endued with Power from on high.**

**I have accounted for my own experience in obedience to the command in a previous chapter, and I continue writing my chapter 29. Yes, you and I are the continuation of Acts. We are the living epistles that men read and draw conclusions of our faith and walk with our God.**

**How are you writing your chapter? Will it count for eternity? Walk worthy of the calling wherewith you are called that others may see your good works and glorify your God in heaven.**

**The Apostle Paul asked believers in Ephesus “did you receive the Holy Ghost when you believed?” and they said to him “we have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit”.**

**Paul asked them a few more questions and verse 6, and when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied – twelve in all.**

**So, have you been endowed with this power – have you received the Holy Spirit? Your chapter 29 will have more impetus, power and witness as you continue to write to the end of your days.**

**END**





