

## **“A Glimpse of Eternity”**

### The Ian McCormack Story

*(The soundtrack of a video recording taped in 1988)*

My name is Ian McCormack. I was born in New Zealand and I'm 32 years old. I would like to share with you how the Lord touched my life. It is almost seven years ago now, so I would just like to share with you how God has changed my life and how the Lord Jesus Christ became real to me through a personal experience and encounter with the God of eternity.

I would just like to read a few scriptures before I start:

a) 1 John 1:5-8

“This is the message we have heard from Him and declare to you: God is light; in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and we do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin”.

b) Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it”.

c) John 10:9-16

“I am the gate; whoever enters through Me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I am a good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know My sheep and My sheep know Me – just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep”.

d) John 9:5

“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world”.

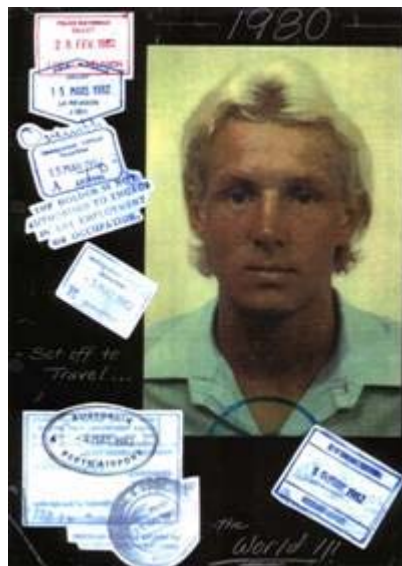
e) John 14:6

“Jesus answered, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”.

I was raised in New Zealand. My parents were teachers, and as a young man I traveled around many parts of New Zealand. I was educated in Lincoln University, and finished a degree in agriculture down there. I worked for two years as a farm consultant in New Zealand Dairy Board in Hamilton.

I loved farming and enjoyed farm life. As a real outdoor person, I loved going out, the weekends, diving and surfing, tramping and all kinds of sport. I just loved it and enjoyed all kinds of outdoor living. I enjoyed working on farms and working with nature.

In early 1980, my best friend and I decided to travel overseas. We decided that we will go for maybe one or two years, we were quite adventurous at heart. We left New Zealand and we went across to Australia. We hitched from Sydney up to Brisbane and across to Darwin, and then into Bali. We went right through Indonesia, Java, Singapore, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. It's amazing, as we traveled through Asia we were continually questioned and asked by the people: "Are you Christian?". I was quite taken aback because I was brought up in a Christian family, a Christian home.



*Fig. 1 Ian's passport photo and stamps*

I was raised an Anglican. At the age of fourteen, at communion, I had never really sensed any presence of God. I used to pray as a child and go to Sunday school, and youth group, and I was in the choir and all that stuff, yet, I haven't really developed or had an experience with God, a personal experience with Him.

I remember coming out of the church on that day, the day of the confirmation, after taking communion for the first time in the church. I was quite disillusioned, I was quite taken aback. I thought: "Well, nothing seemed to have happened". I remember coming out of the church, asking my mother: "Does God speak? I pray every day. Does he really speak? Have you ever heard God speak to you?". My mother had turned to me and said: "Well, God does speak and He is real". And I said: "Well, when did you hear Him?". And she had shared how she had cried out at a time of tragedy, and the Lord had answered her, and she has had a personal relationship with Him. I said: "Well, I have not had any tragedy and things seem to be OK in my life, how come I don't seem to hear God?". My Mom said: "Well, often it take a tragedy to humble us. Man, by nature, seems to be quite proud". I

thought: “Well, I'm not that kind of a person, I'm not proud”, but when I reflect, I was very proud. My mother than said: “Look Ian, I'm not going to force you to come to church, but remember this one thing: whatever you do in life, wherever you go, no matter how far you think you have gone away from God, remember this one thing, if nothing else. That if you are in trouble, and in need, cry out to God from your heart and He will hear you. He will really hear you and forgive you”.

I remember those words. They have stuck to my mind and so I have found that, rather than to be a hypocrite, I wouldn't go back to church because I never really had an experience with God. It was basically just religion to me. And so, we went through Asia and people used to ask me: “Are you a Christian, Ian?”. I had to really think about the answer, because I wasn't really a Christian, because I didn't really believe in God. I knew about Him, but I didn't really believe in Him. I was quite confronted by the reality of their faith and their different beliefs. What shocked me, was seeing them bow down and worship idols, because I could see that they have been made with the human hands.

So deep in my heart I was going: “Well, why? Why do they bow down to something that they have actually made with their own hands?”. It was quite confusing to me, and so I used to hang on to a little bit of a scripture I have remembered in the Old Testament, about the ten commandments, that is:

Deuteronomy 5:7-10 “You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of their fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me”.

Anyhow, I traveled, I surfed, I dived, I went into the jungles, I went into Sri Lanka – an amazing nation. I was able to get on a huge scooter, a 96 foot yacht and sail down to Mauritius, a small island in the Indian Ocean. It took us 26 days. I arrived there and for almost two months lived there, I lived with the local divers. They taught me how to dive during the day on the reef, and also to dive at night. I ran out of money and the people that were there said: “Well, South Africa is a good place. You can earn good money there”. And so I went across to South Africa and worked there for 8-10 months.



*Fig. 2 Tamarin Bay where Ian stayed*

My brother wrote to me, while I was in South Africa, and said: “Please come to my wedding in New Zealand”. I thought about it and felt I must return to New Zealand for my brother's wedding. So I got on a plane from Durban, and flew back to Mauritius. Of course,

all my friends came over and said: " Oh, come diving with us". So I went surfing and diving. And then they said: "Well, let's go night diving". I had a few more days, it was about a week before I was about to leave. They came to me one night and said: "Ian, let's go night diving again". So I walked out, like I normally do, out onto my veranda. I looked out to see the ocean and the weather, and I saw a huge electrical storm out at sea. I turned to my friend Simon, a black guy, and said: "You know are you sure? Have you seen the storm?". And he said: "Don't worry, it's going to miss us, it will miss us". I was afraid that it might bring too much surf onto the reef and it might be too dangerous. He said: "It will be OK, we are going about five miles down the coast to a very, very beautiful part of the reef to dive tonight. You will be really amazed how beautiful it is, this coral reef. Come down with us". So I thought about it, and in the end, he talked me into it.



*Fig. 3 Surf break in Mauritius*

I got all me gear, it was about eleven at night. I jumped in the boat and off we went. We just rowed down, we rowed all the way down the coast. We were about half a mile off the actual island. We were diving on the outer part of the reef. We just dropped straight away, very, very steeply, and we dived in.



*Fig. 4 Simon*

I went up the reef, and my friends went down the reef this particular night. Normally, we stick together, but we got separated. I went up the reef looking for a crayfish and I saw something in the water that looked like a squid I went up, and I actually went out and

grabbed it. I had my gloves on and it squeezed through my fingers like a jellyfish. I looked at it float away and I thought: "That's a weird looking jellyfish, very very weird". It was an unusual looking jellyfish, fully transparent. In my mind I thought: "I have never seen that type of jellyfish before". But I just ignored it and kept going.



*Fig. 5 Box Jellyfish*

As I was diving along, something stung me. I wasn't looking and something stung my arm. The only part of my body that wasn't covered by a wet suit were my forearms, and something brushed past me and stung me, an incredible shock. This was such a shock, it just about knocked me out in the water. With my underwater flashlight I tried to find out where it was. I couldn't see what had hit me, so I looked down at my arm to see whether there was any blood or what it was. Whether something had bit me, or whether I cut myself on the reef. There was nothing.

By now it seemed like it wasn't too bad. The pain seemed to be numbing out a bit, and so I left it and thought: "Well, I will get a crayfish and I will go back and ask the boys at the boat what it was". I didn't want to get paranoid – a diver should never get really upset. So, as I was diving down to get a crayfish I saw the same jellyfish that I have seen a few minutes ago, two of them coming towards me, just slowly pulsating towards me. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the tentacles brush past my arm. As they touched it, the same electrical current shock went through my arm, and it just about knocked me out in the water. I suddenly realized what it was that had hit me. I know from my life-saving experience, I was a surf lifesaver, that certain jellyfish are incredibly poisonous. I thought: "I have just been stung by something that has got an incredible sting in it". I have never been hit with such a powerful sting. As a child I used to have a hay fever. When you have hay fever allergies, most allergies are such that, if I got a bee bite my arm or my leg would just swell up like a balloon. So, I was very, very allergic to any kind of a sting.

I was now pretty worried. I now had two separate stings from these jellyfish. I swam to the surface, lifted my head to try and look for the boat, and swam across the surface. I put my arm behind my back to try and get it out of the water, so it wouldn't be stung again. I was swimming along like that, when I felt something go over my back again. It stung me again and I thought: "Oh, no!". I have been stung by a third one. By this time I put my head back into the water and I thought: "I wonder where I am?". Just to keep an eye on the reef, I lifted my face down where the reef should have been, and to my horror, my flashlight beam just went straight down. Beneath me where hundred, virtually thousands of these jellyfish. It was like a soup. I lifted my flashlight up and I could see them all around my face. I thought: "If one of these hits my face, I don't think I will ever get back to the boat". So I put the flashlight really close up to my face and swam.

I got back to the boat and ask the young boy there what was in the water that was so dangerous. The young boy didn't notice, he wasn't a diver. He just shook his head and



pointed to Simon, the guy who was the experienced diver. I saw him, I got back into the water and swam over to him. I could see him underwater, so I flashed my light into his face to get his attention and to show him to go up. He came up to the surface and I told him I want to go out. I want to get out and talk to him. I then put my face back into the water, and to my horror, there was a jellyfish right next to my face, and it was swimming towards me. I then had to choose, does it hit my face or do I take it on my arm? So, I lifted my arm and – another sting. I pushed that jellyfish away, this poor arm has had so many stings. I got out onto the reef and I stood there in my flippers and I looked. My arm was literally swollen like a balloon. Across the top of the skin were like heat blisters, like burn blisters. As though you burnt them on the stove, right across where tentacles had been dragged.

I was looking at it as my friend Simon, the black diver, was walking across the reef in his flippers towards me. He was wondering what on earth has got me so freaked out. He looked at my arm and then he looked at me, and he asked: “How many?”. I went: “Four”. He said: “One and you die”, and he put his flashlight up on his face and I could see the seriousness. I then said: “Well, what am I doing with four of them in my arm?”. He was panicking and I was panicking. He said: “You have got to go to the hospital”, but that was 15-20 miles away, the middle of the night and I was half a mile off the reef. I was hearing him say: “Go”, and I was almost paralysed standing there. He was trying to get me into the water, back into the water, so that I could get back to the boat. He lowered me back into the water and helped me over towards the boat. As he was dragging me I realized that my arm was paralysed, I couldn't lift it. It was just dragging in the water and as they were dragging me into the boat, I was hit by another one. I thought in my heart, I thought: “What have I done to deserve this?”. Then I got a flash of my sin, I knew suddenly what I have done wrong. It was like a payback, you know the feeling? You don't get away with nothing. I basically got a flash of what I have done wrong. I thought: “Well, perhaps that's why I have got this”.

They put me into the boat and they lifted it over the coral reef. They lifted it up and lifted the whole boat over the reef. It was ripping the bottom. It was a wooden boat, and this was their livelihood, so for them to do this, I knew that it was very, very serious. They lifted the boat over into the lagoon and took off. They were swimming trying to push the boat to get it going. I said: “Come with me”, and they said: “No, it's too heavy, only Paul, the young one will take you ashore”. So this young kid was just pushing and racing.



*Fig. 6 Wooden boat in Mauritius*

I was finding it very difficult to breath in my right lung. I could feel the poison going through my bloodstream, and punch something under my arm. With my wet suit on, my lung was being constricted, so I undid my wet suit with my left arm and took it off. I put on my pants

while I could still move and then just sat there, dripping with perspiration. It was just pouring off me and I was getting very dry in my mouth. I could feel the poison moving and it was like something hit my kidneys. I felt this sharp pain hit me in the back, and I thought: "This poison is moving real quick". I was trying not to move. I was trying not to panic. I was half way ashore, I could feel it (the poison) literally going down. I could feel it pulsating and moving through my blood system.

I didn't know which way my blood went until that night. I can tell you, I got real interested which way my blood went, because I could feel the poison numbing out the whole of my right leg. I had enough sense to know that, if it got down that leg and got up to my heart or my brain, then I was not going to be there anymore. The amount of poison was just paralysing me and as I was coming to shore, I started to blur a little in my eyes, I started to find it difficult to focus.

We hit the shore and the boy said: "Come, let's get out of here". So I stood up to go, to get out, and my right leg just crumbled underneath me. I fell right onto the crayfish, right onto the whole lot, right to the bottom of the boat. The young boy stood back a bit shocked, then he told me to put my arm around his neck. So, I put my arm around his neck and grabbed the arm that was paralysed, and just held on. He dragged me out of the boat and then up to the beach, which was pretty hard on cold sand. He then got me up onto the main road.

It must have been nearly twelve o'clock by this stage, and it was a small island. There was nothing happening out there, there were no cars. I was holding on to this young boy, wondering how I was going to get from there to the hospital in such a late time of the night. I felt so weak that I actually sat down on the road. The young boy tried to help me, but in the end he started pointing to the ocean, saying: "My brothers, my brothers are out there. I need to go out there and get them". I said: "No, you just stay here and help me", but in the end he just took off.



*Fig. 7 Riviere Noire, where the boat landed and Ian was left*

As I sat there, I felt incredibly tired and began to lie down on the road. As I lay down on the road, I started staring up at the stars. I thought: "Well, I'll go to sleep", and I was just about to close my eyes and just lie there in the middle of the road, when I heard a clear voice speak to me saying: "Ian, if you close your eyes, you shall never awake again". I shook off the sleepiness and I thought: "What am I doing? You can't go to sleep here, you need to get to a hospital. You need to get antitoxins, you need to get help. If you go to sleep here you may never wake up". So, I tried to stand again but my leg was pretty weak. I was able to hobble down the road and I found a couple of cars there with some Indian drivers next

to a restaurant, just about a hundred meters down the road. I never knew it was there.

I went over to them and begged them to take me to a hospital. The Indians looked at me and said: "How much money you pay us?". If you have lived in Asia, you would know that that's normal, that's not abnormal, but that's normal. You have money, you go. If you don't have money, you go nowhere. I thought: "I haven't got any money", speaking out loud to myself. Then I realized and thought: "You fool, you should never have said that. You should have lied". But I didn't. I just told the truth: "I have no money". The three drivers just laughed and said: "You're drunk, you're crazy". They turned around, lit a smoke and just started to walk off. I then literally heard a clear voice say: "Ian, are you willing to beg for your life?".



*Fig. 8 The petrol station where Ian begged for his life*

I thought: "I sure am and I even know how to do it. I have lived in Africa long enough". It was very easy for me to get down to me knees because one of my legs was paralysed and the other was very wobbly. I was leaning against the car. So, I just went down to my knees, stretched out my hands and I bowed my head not to look at them, and just begged for my life. I was nearly crying because I knew that if I don't get to a hospital soon, I'm not going nowhere. If these guys didn't have love and compassion in their hearts for me, and mercy towards me, I would have died there right in front of them. So I begged and pleaded with them for my life. With my head low, I could see their feet. Two of them just walked away, except one young man. I could see his feet moving in indecision. He could see me going for a long time, as I was pleading for my life. Then, he just came over and picked me up. He helped me up, put me in the car and drove. Half way to the hospital he changed his mind. He said: "Where's my money?". I said: "I'll give you all the money I've got". When your life is at stake, money means nothing, believe me. I said: "If you get me to a hospital and save my life, I'll give you it all". He knew I was just talking, he wanted facts, so half way to the hospital he changed his mind and took me to a tourist hotel, and said: "Oh, I'll drop you here. Just go and get some help there, I'm not going to take you". I said: "No, look, please take me. I'm dying, help". But he just leaned over, undid my seat safety belt, opened the door and said: "Get out". I thought: "Well, I've still got a good arm, so I will try to drag myself towards the hotel entrance", because it was just outside the gate there.

I could see some lights on. I was trying to get there so someone could see me. To my amazement, the security guards, who were doing the rounds, spotted me, in the dirt, dragging myself along. A guy ran over and I looked up to recognize him to be one of my drinking friends. A big black guy called Daniel. A huge, lovable man. I used to drink with him just at the shop. After work, I used to sit with him and talk and enjoy his fellowship. He



ran up, saw me on the ground and said: "What's wrong with you? Are you drunk? Are you stoned? What's wrong with you?". I pulled up my swimsuit to show him my arm and you could see all the blisters and the swelling. He recognized what it was then, he just picked me up in his arms, he is a massive man, and ran. It was like having a huge angel pick me up. He ran past the swimming pool and came up where the bar was. He dropped me in a cane chair, about ten feet away from these Chinamen, who owned the hotel. They were playing poker and drinking. Anyhow, he dropped me there and disappeared into the darkness again. I was almost expecting him to explain, but he didn't, he took off. Then I realized, a black man cannot speak to a Chinese man in these countries, unless he is asked to speak. The pecking order is white, Chinese, Indian, and black. That's how it goes and if you don't know that social order, you don't know what's going on.



*Fig. 9 Ian and Daniel outside the hotel in 1994*

He just dropped me there and I realized I was going to have to try and communicate with these Chinese guys, and tell them I need help. I pulled my shirt up and showed them my blisters and swollen arm. I even spoke a little Chinese, I spoke what I knew to get them to help me. They just laughed. One of the Chinese got up and said: "Oh, white boy, heroin not good for you". He thought I was on drugs, an overdose or something. He was trying to tell me that I was on drugs. I was getting furious and frustrated. I sat there, trying to keep my calm because if you get too excited, the poison moves quicker. Then, my whole body, every muscle of my body, started to twitch and contract. I was literally getting muscular contractions over every single part of my body. Poison was just hitting me. I knew my body was dying right in front of me.

It was incredibly cold, I was shivering. Then, they started putting blankets all over me, trying to keep me warm. I was sitting there, still trying to keep it together, and I was asking them: "Take me to the hospital, please". I could see a car was there. A Chinese just came up to me, put his hand on my shoulder and said: "No. We wait for the ambulance, white boy". The Chinese hate the white, such hatred. So, I just sat there thinking: "I don't think I will ever get there". Just as I was thinking that in my mind, the ambulance arrived, and out of nowhere Daniel arrived with one of his other friends. They put me over their arms and took off. I realized now, that he hasn't wasted his time with these idiots, he had gone straight to the switchboard. His girlfriend was actually on the switchboard and he had rang the hospital himself.



*Fig. 10 Tamarin Bay Hotel*

The ambulance had arrived. It came screaming in with its headlights, did a U-turn in front of the hotel and just took off. If you know anything about the French drivers, you would know that they are one of the craziest drivers in the world, very impatient. The ambulance driver was French and he obviously thought that the black guys were drunk and that it was a false alarm. There was no one out there, in front of the hotel, so he took off. So, here I was half down to the gate, and I could see the ambulance going around the corner. I tried to whistle, but when you are dehydrated you can't whistle. Daniel heard me trying to whistle and he whistled for me. I think the driver must have had the window down because he heard Daniel whistle. The brakes went on and he backed up. He didn't even get out of the ambulance. He just leaned over and opened the door. They dropped me in, threw me back into the cane stretcher and we drove off.

The driver didn't even ask: "Do you want a blanket? How are you? What's wrong with you?", he was just a driver. I was shivering and shaking, wondering: "What on earth is going on?". I tried to keep myself together, trying not to close my eyes. I knew that I have to stay awake until I get some antitoxins. Half way to the hospital, we were climbing a hill and I thought: "That's the worst thing, every bit of the poison in the blood is just going to start rushing to the brain. It is going to kill me". I was struggling. I could feel the poison rush to my head, it was incredible.

I then started seeing a picture of a little boy, a snowy headed boy. It was so big and so clear. Then I saw another flash of an older boy with snowy white hair. I was looking and I thought: "He has got white hair, but older". I was looking and I suddenly realized that I was looking at myself. I was seeing my life go before me. It was a frightening experience. There are parts of your life just flashing before you like a video, clear as crystal. My eyes were wide open and I was totally conscious of what was going on. I looked and I thought: "I have heard about this and I have even read about it. People say, just before they have died they saw their life go before them". And so I saw it and in my heart I was scared. I thought: "I'm too young to die. Why did I go diving for? You stupid idiot. You should have stayed home. You should never have gone diving". I was racing through all the thoughts like: "Why didn't you just stay home, you idiot?", but now I was confronted with potential death, and I knew that I was very close to dying. I could hardly hear my heart beat or my lungs breathe. It was so quiet and so soft.

As I was lying there, I thought: "What happens if I die? Is there anything? Is there anything happening after I die? Where do I go?". Then I saw a vision of my mother, clear as crystal, standing there in my vision. It was as though she was speaking out words: "Ian, no matter how far from God you are, no matter what you have done wrong. If you cry out to God from your heart, He will hear you and he will forgive you". In my heart I said: "Do I believe there is a God? Am I going to pray?". I have almost become an atheist at that stage. I

didn't believe in anybody and yet I was confronted with a vision of my Mom.



*Fig. 11 Ian's mother*

I have talked to Mom about this when I got back to New Zealand. She had been woken up in the early hours in the morning, with a dream of me in an ambulance, nearly dead. She had started praying for me. All the moms and dads that pray, don't stop praying. If God wakes you up, start praying. My mother's prayer broke through right there. Of course, her prayers couldn't save my life, she can't get me to heaven, but I knew that, I knew that I needed to pray. I needed to pray from my heart and I thought: "Well, what do I pray? Who do I pray to? Which God?" There is thousands of them, I have seen them all. Well, I didn't see Buddha or Krishna or some other god or man standing, but I saw my Mom and my Mom follows Jesus Christ. A Christian God.

I have seen all the religions. I have studied them and been there, yet my Mom is a follower of Christ. I thought: "Well, I haven't prayed for years. What do I pray? What do I pray at this point? What do you pray when you are about to die? What do you pray?". I could remember, as a child my mother always used to teach me the Lord's prayer, i.e. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name ... and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one". I thought: "Well, I'll pray that. That's the only prayer I know that is Christian", and so I have tried to pray it from my memory, but I couldn't remember it. It was as though the poison that has rushed into my head had almost stopped me from being able to think. It was closing my mind down, it was a frightening experience. I have relied so much on my mind, on my intellect, and suddenly it had died on me -a mental blank, zero.

I was lying there, realizing that the prayer is not up in my brain, and Mom said: "Pray from your heart". So I said: "God, I don't know where this prayer is. I want to pray, help me". As I said that, part of the prayer literally came from the inner man, from my spirit. The first part of the prayer said: "Forgive us our sins". I thought: "God, I would ask you to forgive my sins, I have done so many things wrong. I know they were wrong, my conscience tells me they were wrong. If you could only forgive all my sins. I have got no idea how you can forgive them, please forgive me of my sins". I meant it, I wanted to just wipe myself clean and start again. I thought: "God, forgive me". As I have done that, I got another part of the prayer: "Forgive everyone who sins against us". I understood that to mean, to forgive those who have hurt me. I thought: "Well, I don't hold grudges. There's heaps of people that have ripped me off or back stabbed me and said bad things against me, and done terrible things to me. I forgive them". Then I heard the voice of God say: "Will you forgive the Indian that pushed you out of the car, and the Chinese that wouldn't take you to the hospital?". I thought: "Hmmm, I've got other plans". Then I thought: "OK, I will forgive them. If you can forgive me, I can forgive them".

The next part of the prayer was: "Your will be done". I understood that as, I have done my own thing for the last twenty odd years. I thought: "God, if I come through this, I don't even know what your will is. I know it is not to do evil, but I have got no idea what your will is. If I come through this, I will find out what your will is for my life and I will do it. I will follow you with all of my heart, if I come through this". Then I got all of the rest of the Lord's prayer. I got the whole of the Lord's prayer, but those three things stood out very, very clearly. I didn't realize it, but that is basically the salvation prayer. From my heart, not from my head, I was saying: "God, forgive me for my wickedness and evil. God, purify me. Lord, I forgive all those that have hurt me. Jesus Christ, Lord, come and I will do your will. Thy will be done, I will follow you". I didn't realize it at the time, but reflecting on it, I prayed a sinners' prayer, a repentance prayer, to the Lord.

I felt an incredible peace come over me in my heart, as I prayed the Lord's prayer. It seemed as though the fear just left me. I felt a real peace in my heart. I was still dying, I knew that, but at least I was at peace about it. I made my peace with my Maker, I knew it. I knew for the first time I have touched God, and I know I was actually hearing Him for the first time. I have never heard Him before, I wasn't actually hearing Him speak to me.

I got into the hospital and they put me in a wheelchair, ran me through and took my blood pressure. It was a second world war hospital, British deserted, and given to the black guys. It still looked like it was built in 1945 too. It was filthy and old, with old equipment. The nurse was looking at me. My eyes were open and she was looking at me probably wondering: "Why are your eyes open, with this kind of blood pressure?". I knew that I was desperately hanging on. I didn't want to die, I didn't want to go anywhere. I wanted to stay in this body, I was fighting with all my strength to stay alive. She then ran with me to the doctors. All it was, was just a railing with, like a shower curtain. She pulled that apart and there were a couple of benches there. There were two Indian doctors sitting there, both of them were half asleep, the young doctor was saying: "What is your name? Where do you live?". In French. "How old are you?". And I could understand him. He was a young guy, so I looked over to the old guy. He was going a little bold, with gray hair. I thought: "Well, he has been around for a few years. He might know how to help me", so I waited.



*Fig. 12 Ian outside the hospital in 1994*

The young boy stopped talking and looked up. I didn't even bother to look at him, I waited for the old man to lift his head up. He looked up and I thought: "I hope I have enough

strength to speak". I looked into his eyes and gave him the heaviest look I could master up. I said: "I am about to die, I need antitoxins right now". He didn't move and I didn't take my eyes off him. He was just staring straight back at me. Then, the nurse came in with a piece of paper. He looked at it, looked at me and jumped. I could see him screw it, saying: "You foolish idiot. Why don't you look at this young boy?". He pushed the ambulance driver out of the way and he grabbed me and started racing me down in the wheelchair, screaming out something behind my back. He ran into this room, with bottles and stuff. In the next minute I was surrounded by nurses and doctors. I was sitting there thinking: "At last, at last something has happened". One nurse just turned my arm over to drip feed. I was just sitting there watching. The doctor was up near my face, saying: "Don't worry, keep awake. We are putting dextrose in for dehydration".

Nurses were jabbing needles into my arms. I couldn't feel it, but I could see it. The doctor said: "They are antitoxins to counteract the poison". He was speaking in English, he was basically trained in Oxford. Another nurse was slapping me hand as hard as she could. I thought: "What is she doing?". Another nurse was just standing there with a huge syringe, but nothing happened, no vein came up. I realized what she was doing after. Then, she lifted my skin up and put the needle in, trying to find the vein. She started pushing the stuff in and it just filled up my vein like a small finger, it just blew up like a small balloon. I could see how nervous she was. In my heart I was thinking: "Be careful!". And the doctor was saying: "Don't worry, don't worry". She left the needle piece in the vein and another nurse passed another one, so she slammed another one in. It just blew the vein up. The nurse looked at the doctor and asked: "Another one?", and the doctor said: "Yes, another one". Then she pulled the needle out and the other nurse, that had just given me antitoxins, was trying to massage it in, but the vein was just rolling off her thumb. She couldn't actually get it to the blood, it was just rolling off. It wasn't moving. I thought: "My heart is obviously not pumping hard enough for my blood to be moving around. My vein is collapsing".

I had studied and understood the basic physiology and anatomy. I understood what was going on, but I couldn't do anything about it. I just knew that I was slipping into a coma. I was totally paralyzed and my heart was literally moving into a point, where it was not working anymore. I had no idea that what I have been actually being stung by, which is actually called a box jellyfish, or a sea wasp, has the second deadliest venom known to man. One sting has killed up to sixty people over the last twenty years, in Darwin alone. I found all this out after I got out of the hospital. I had enough toxin in me to kill me five times over, and normally the person dies within 15 minutes of the initial sting. I didn't just have them (the stings) on top of my muscles, but I had them right on top of my vein.

So, I was still sitting there in my wheelchair and the doctor was still looking me in the eye. He was saying: "Don't be afraid", and in his eye I could see paranoia and fear. I thought: "Mate, you are more afraid than me". I tried to speak, but I didn't seem to be able to. I was thinking: "Have you got anymore? Maybe I am immune to your drugs? Maybe I have taken too much dope over the years and I am immune to it?". Anyhow, they lifted me up, put me in a bed with my drip feed, and I lay there. The doctor stood over me with a sponge, which he put on my head. It was as though the drip feed was putting all the liquid back into my body and I was starting to have perspiration come back. Then, he walked off for a few minutes. As I lay there, I could feel the perspiration dripping into my eyes and starting to blur my vision. It was like tears coming into my eyes. In my heart I was thinking: "I have got to keep me eyes open. Doctor, come back and wipe my head". He didn't seem to be coming back, so I tried to speak, but there was no movement, my lips would not move. I was freaked out. I thought: "Tilt your head, so at least you will see over one eye", but my head wouldn't move.

Suddenly, I just sighed. It was a sigh of relief and I knew that something had just



happened. The battle was over. The battle for staying alive was over. I knew I have gone somewhere. It wasn't like closing my eyes and going to sleep. I knew I have gone somewhere. I have been having the floating away feeling for, what seemed like twenty minutes. I have been hanging on to this body with everything, I wasn't going to float away nowhere. I didn't want to float away anywhere and yet, when I closed my eyes I was just floating, I was gone. The Bible says that when a man dies, in Ecclesiastes, King Solomon actually said this, the spirit returns to God who gave it. The dust returns to dust, the body returns to dust. Well, I knew my spirit had left me. I had gone somewhere, and I didn't know I was dead.

It seems I have arrived in a huge place like a void of pitch darkness. I felt like I was standing up, and I was woken up from a bad dream in someone's house. Not my own house. I thought: "Where is everyone gone? Who turned the lights off?". I was looking around, trying to orientate myself to this new surrounding. I was trying to look for something that would make out to be real. I was trying to find the light switch and I couldn't seem to find it. I was trying to touch something, I was moving, but there was nothing there. I couldn't even bump into anything. I thought: "I can't even see my hand in front of my face". I lifted my hand up to try and see how much I can see. I went to where my face is and thought: "I missed my face. No, where is it?". It was a frightening experience. I thought: "Where is my arm? Where is my ...?". And I knew right then, that me, Ian McCormack, was standing there, but I had no body. I had the sensation and the feeling that I had a body, but I had nothing physical to touch. It is the most frightening experience to know that you, who you really are inside, are really a spirit, you're a spiritual being. God said: "I am a spirit. I have created you in my image". God is a spirit, he is a spiritual being, an invisible spiritual being and we are created in His image. I suddenly realized that I was a spiritual being. My physical body had died, but I was very much alive and very much aware that I have got what used to be a head, arms and legs, but I could no longer touch them. In my heart I was thinking: "Where on earth am I?".

As I was standing there in the darkness looking around, I sensed the most incredible coldness and fear coming over my spirit. I don't know if you ever felt that. You just feel as though there is someone looking at you. You sense someone in the darkness looking at you, but you can't see them! Your spirit would be threatened. You might be at home alone and there is something in the house and you know something is there. You can't see it, but you can feel it. I knew there was something around me. I became more aware that there were, it seemed like other people, moving around me. They were in the same predicament as me and yet, I was picking up, literally: "Shut up son, don't move. Don't disturb our peace, shut up. You deserve to be here". I was hearing different impressions, voices speaking around me in this darkness. I thought: "Where on earth am I? This seems like hell. I was feeling like, you know, don't move don't talk, don't breathe. This must be hell. This must be hell. What's going on?". In my heart I was terrified.

People have this picture of hell, of party time and great enjoyment. I used to think that too. I used to think: "Well, you can do all the things that you are not supposed to do, are not allowed to do and go and do them. God is not fun, he just wants you to be miserable". Trash, absolute trash. That place is the most frightening place. The people there cannot do anything that their wicked hearts want to do, and there is no boasting. They soon realize that there is nothing down there to talk about. Nothing. They know that judgment day is coming. There is no relationship to time. They can't tell what time it is. They can't tell whether they have been there ten minutes, ten months, or ten years. Why? Because they've got no relationship to time. It is a frightening place. The Bible says that there are two kingdoms. The kingdom of darkness, which is ruled by Satan and the kingdom of light. Jude tells us that hell was actually prepared for angels that have disobeyed God, not for man. It was placed for disobedient angels, never for man. It is the most frightening, the

most scary and the most terrifying place I have ever been at, and I know that I would never wish, for even my worst enemy, to go to hell. If they knew where they were going, they would never, ever, ever want to go there.

I realized I was there and I had no idea how you get out of hell. I prayed just before I died and said: "God, forgive me of my sins". I cried out to God and said: "God, why am I here? I have asked your forgiveness, why am I here? I have turned my heart to you, why am I here?". Then, this brilliant light shone upon me and literally drew me out of the darkness. The Bible says that light had shone into darkness. Those walking in darkness have seen a great light. I saw this incredible light and I was literally taken up into the presence of this light. Just drawn up. I was so happy in my heart that I was leaving this pit of darkness, but the only way I could leave was because I repented before I died. You cannot repent when you get down there, you can only repent before you die. You cannot pray your way out of hell and no one on earth can pray you out of hell, no one, you have to pray yourself. The Bible teaches that. No one can pray for the dead, departed souls, and get them out of hell. They have had to have repented to get out of hell. I believe that God wants me to share that.

I went up into, what looked like an opening, or a passage way, a narrow passage way. The Bible says that narrow is the way that leads to the Kingdom of God. Few are those who find it. Many find the broad road that leads to destruction. I found a narrow passage way and I was taken up into it. I looked to the end of that passage way, or tunnel, and I could see the source of the universe. It looked, literally, like the source of all power, of all light. There was an incredible intensity and you could look right into it. As I looked, I was literally drawn like a moth to the fire. I was just drawn into that light and as I was drawn towards the light, waves of light started coming off, emanating of this source. The first wave that hit me was total comfort and warmth. I let out a sigh of relief in my spirit.

As I got closer down into the tunnel, a wave of intense light came down towards me. It hit me and I felt total peace from head to toe. At school I used to read poetry, from Keats to Shakespeare, to try and get peace of mind. I have tried alcohol, education, sport, relationships with women, and drugs. I have tried everything to find peace in my life and I have never found it. If I had it, it was glimpses, fleeting seconds, fleeting minutes, sometimes fleeting hours of peace and contentment. Yet now, I had total and complete peace and in my heart I thought: "This is incredible, this light, this pure white light has got emotion coming off. I can feel peace and I can feel it". As I got closer I thought: "I am in the light, I wonder what I look like?". I couldn't see my body out in the darkness, maybe I could see what I looked like here. So I looked, and I saw an arm of light. It was freaky, honestly speaking, but it was the same light that was coming off the source in the distance. I was literally a form of light.

I came closer and a wave of joy hit me. I had incredible joy dwell up within me and excitement. I thought: "Wherever I'm going, this is fantastic". My mind couldn't even conceive where I was going. I cannot precisely communicate what I saw. I was now at the end of the tunnel, standing upright before the source of all light and power. The whole of my eyesight was taken up with this incredible light. The thoughts that came into my mind were 'aura', and the next one was 'glory'. I thought: "This is just glorious". Jesus Christ died and then rose from the dead and descended into heaven. He was seated at the right hand of the Father and is glorified. He is surrounded by unapproachable light and glorified. He is the King of glory, the Prince of peace, the Lord of lords, the King of all kings.

I saw, what I believe, was the glory of the Lord. The Old Testament says that Moses went up onto the mountain Sinai for forty days and he saw the glory of the Lord. He came down and his face shone. His face shone with the glory of the Lord and he had to put a veil on,

otherwise people would have been scared. He had seen the glory of God, the light of God. I saw incredible light and glory. I stood there and in my heart I thought: "Is this just a force, which the Buddhists or Hindu say: the force be with you, or is this truly a person living in there? Is there a person in there?". As I thought that in my heart, it was as though I instantly heard a reply: 'Ilan, do you wish to return?', which answered the first question: yes, there is a person in there, and the second one: "Do you want to go back?". I thought: "Where on earth am I?". I looked back and there was a tunnel leading back into the darkness. I thought: "Where am I? I thought I was back in my bed in the hospital. I thought this was a little bit of a dream. Is this real? Am I, Ilan, actually standing here? Is this real?". Then, the Lord spoke again: "Do you wish to return?". I thought: "I think so, I want to go back to where I was. I want to go back, I don't know where I am, just send me home. I want to go back to the hospital bed". Then he spoke again, he said: "If you wish to return, you must see in a new light". The moment I heard the words "see" and "a new light", something clicked.

I remember being given a scripture that said: "Jesus is the light of the world". In another scripture, 1 John 1:5 it says that "God is light and there is no darkness in Him". I meditated upon these. Somebody gave me a Christmas card with those scriptures: "Jesus Christ is the light of the world. God is light, there is no darkness in Him". I have just come from the darkness and there was no darkness here. I thought: "This is God. He is light. You must be God. What am I doing, a filthy young sinner, standing in front of you? How can I stand in front of You?". I suddenly realized that He could see everything. My life was an open book, He could see everything. I realized that I must be transparent, because everything I thought He could understand. I wasn't speaking to Him, I was just feeling it, thinking it. I thought: "He can see exactly what is going on, exactly what has happened". I wanted to literally back off, find some rock and crawl under it. I wanted to back away from His presence.

As I was about to back away, waves of light hit me. Waves, and waves, and waves. They were pure, unadulterated, clean, uninhibited, undeserved love. I could feel love. I haven't felt love for a long time. The last time I felt love was when I was at home. When I got out into the big wide world, I soon found out that there is not too much love out there. I had not seen too much love. I have seen things that I thought were love, like sex. That wasn't love, that just burns you up. That is just a raging fire inside you, uncontrollable passion and desire. I have never known pure love. Then, this incredible love came upon me, and I thought: "I don't deserve it. Look at me, You know my life, I don't deserve being loved", and I got more, until I shut up. I got love, just waves and waves of love. I then, just recovered from all that and I thought: "I wonder if I can see you. If you can love me, I would love to see who you are. If I can see you, face to face, I will know the truth. I will never have to ask another man, woman or child the meaning of life, I'll know the truth. Can I?". There was no voice saying I couldn't, so I stepped through. I put my foot forward and stepped through the light.

As I stepped through, I could start to make out that a man was standing there. I broke through the light and in the center of it was a man. He was standing with bare feet and dazzling white robes. I lifted my head and as I lifted it up, I could see that around His face was intense radiance. The Revelation talks about eyes of fire, flames of fire. The face was radiant. It was so radiant that you couldn't make out the physical features, but you could see the form of a man. I was trying to get close enough to see the face. I used to say: "If I could see God, I would believe". I was seeing Him and I was believing. As I was trying to penetrate to see His face, He stepped aside. Literally, He stepped onto one side and all the glory and light that surrounded Him moved with Him.

Directly behind Him there was the same shape of a tunnel and, like a transparent glass in

front of me. I was now standing there looking up upon a brand new planet with green grass. It was like a new world opening up before me. I was soaking it in. I saw blue skies, and a river. Also mountains, hills, and trees. I thought: "I have been looking for this. It makes New Zealand look a little run down". I was just soaking it all in. Everything in me was going: "This is home. This is where I belong, this is paradise". And everything in me wanted to just leap through. I think if I would have leaped through and stood on the grass, it would have almost sprung into place. The same light and glory that was upon the Lord, was upon His creation. I have read since, in 2 Peter chapter 3 and also in other places of the Bible, a verse in which the Lord says that this world will be judged and destroyed a second time. The first time was by the flood. The second judgment, the final judgment, will be with fire. The Lord has made a new Earth and a new Heaven for those who love Him. If you want to know what heaven is like, New Zealand is very much like heaven. That is why for most New Zealanders it is difficult to understand hell and heaven. Simply because they live in the closest place you can get to heaven on this earth, and I have traveled to many, many countries.

I was looking at something better than New Zealand, it was perfect. In my heart I just wanted to step through and stay. As I was about to move, the Lord stepped before me. The Bible says that Jesus is the door. If you go through Him, you will go in and out and find green pastures. He is the door to life. John chapter 10 and John chapter 14 say that He is the way, the truth and the life. No man comes, He is the only way. There is only one narrow passage way that leads into His kingdom, and only a few find it. Most find the expressway or the highway into hell. I came to the door and the Lord stood in front of me and said: "Ian, choose, do you wish to return now?". That was hard, what was there to return for? You don't have to go to hell to find out about hell. You just have to stay around on earth long enough and eventually you will know about hell. I was thinking: "I'm not married, no kids, no ties. I experienced all that the world could offer", and it was all nothing, dust, nothing. In my heart I thought: "I am going through, forget coming back". Then, at the last thought I turned over my shoulder, just to reflect and say goodbye.

As I looked back I saw a vision of my mother. She was standing a few feet away from me. I thought: "That is the only person that I am really going to miss on this earth. That is the only person that I am really going to miss on this earth. That is the only person that is close and I have known true love and acceptance from". She is a lovely and gentle woman. Then, I thought: "If I go through and she has to bury another member of her family, her older son, it could cripple her faith in God and it could destroy her". I thought: "If I go through it will be selfish". While I would enjoy paradise and heaven, my mother would think that I have gone to hell, knowing that I was not walking with the Lord and knowing that I had no faith in Him. She would have no idea that I have had a death-bed prayer and I have repented of my sins and received Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. She would have had no idea that I was going to heaven. She would have just got a dead body in a box from Mauritius. I thought: "God, there is only one person I want to go back for and that is my mother. I want to tell her that what she believes is true, that there is a living God. That there is heaven and hell. That there is a door and Jesus Christ is that door, standing there. That we can only come through Him".

As I looked back, I saw behind her my father, my brothers and sister, and my friends. There was a multitude of people behind them and in my heart I realized that God is showing me that there is a lot of other people that don't know also. They will never know, unless I was able to share it with them. I thought: "God, I have come here once. I don't even really know how I got there, but I can certainly find out and I am coming back again. If I have come here once, I know I can come here again. I will make sure I will come back".

I share this with you because I wish none of you to go to hell, the Lord wishes you not to

go. If He can love me, and I have done lots of things wrong, He can love any person. I said: "God, how do I return?" Through this tunnel, through darkness and back into my body? How can I go back? I don't even know how I got there", and the Lord said: "If you return, you must see things in a new light". I understood that I must see through His eyes, through the eyes of eternity. I thought: "I want to go there, I want to bring the presence of God to earth, the love of God to earth. How do I go back? I don't know how to go back".

The Lord said: "Ian, tilt your head and open your eye. Now, open your eye and see", and I had one eye open. The first thing I saw was the doctor and he was doing something with my foot. I thought: "What on earth is he doing with my foot? He is treating me like a piece of dead meat". He seemed to be totally oblivious to the fact that I was there, he was totally oblivious that I was seeing him. I was staring at him with amazement thinking: "What happened? Where have I been?". Suddenly he looked, he just turned and fixated upon my one eye. Terror and amazement was over him. I thought: "This guy thinks I'm dead. I'm not dead I'm alive". He just stared and both his eyes just focused on my one eye as though trying to see whether I was alive or dead. He kept staring, frozen in that state. I remember thinking: "I wonder if I have got the strength to tilt me head the other way", so I tried to tilt me head the other way and it moved. I leaned over and I felt the liquid drain from my left eye. I opened my eyes and to my amazement, at the doorway were heads of all the doctors and the nurses. All of them just crowded at the doorway. All their faces showed an expression of horror and amazement. I thought: "They think I'm dead too, but I'm alive. What happened?".

As I lay there, I had to struggle with thoughts like: "If I did die, where did I go? Was that hell I went to? Was that heaven? Was that Jesus I saw? Was that God?". I literally thought: "If that is true, if what I saw was really a death experience, then my entire life must change. No longer can I live the way I have been living. I must change my life". I had to battle in my heart to really believe and to understand that it really happened. I was struggling, trying to decide whether it was real. Everything seemed to say it was. I have literally gone and I have come back again. I lay there in amazement and eventually I came to a decision, acknowledging that yes, it must have happened. The doctor came and he was incredibly amazed. He was looking at me, shaking his head and fiddled around with the drip feed bottle. I was still paralysed, I lay there still totally paralysed.

It looked like I have been dead for quite a long time, nearly 15 minutes. I know from life-saving that after six minutes of death, if a person is resuscitated and brought back to life, then she/he will be paralysed for the rest of her/his life. I lay there thinking: "I don't want to be paralysed and just lie here all my life", so I prayed and from my heart I cried out. In my heart I said: "God, if I have come back and did die, then give me my movement back". I could feel warmth and power coming back into the upper part of my body and I started to get my movement back. My lower part was totally paralysed and I kept praying. Then, my lower part of my body started to move. It was incredible. I couldn't feel any pain, the doctors asked me: "Can you feel anything?", but I still felt no pain. In the early hours of the morning, still praying, still believing God for a miracle, I started to feel pain. The first time I felt it was when the doctor was changing the needle. It was the third or the fourth bottle of drip feed and I actually felt pain as he inserted the needle into my vein. That was the first time I felt pain. Just before daylight, I also felt pain in the lower part of my feet. My whole body had movement and I could feel pain. I lay back on my bed and I thought: "Well, shall I close my eyes?". I was terrified to close my eyes again, in case I went off somewhere. As I lay there, I closed one eye at a time and didn't go anywhere. Eventually, I closed my eyes for a couple of seconds and then I woke up in a fright, thinking: "Oh, I'm still here". I remember, about eight o'clock that morning I closed my eyes and fell into deep, deep sleep. I was exhausted. I knew I had been healed.





*Fig. 13 The hospital window*

I slept the entire day and I woke up in the late afternoon. I noticed that my drip feed had been removed and there was a piece of bread next to my bed. As I rolled over to look, I looked out of the window and saw Simon and another friend standing there, looking at me. He was pale, freaked out and paranoid. I think seeing me alive must have shaken him. They stepped in through the window and started asking me what has happened. I had tried to share with them a little about what had happened. I said: "I nearly died, I think I must have died. I don't know what is going on", but I couldn't explain too much to them. They just looked at me and said: "Well, are you OK now?", and I said: "I'm feeling OK". Then, they said: "We will take you home, we will take you out of this place. We will look after you". So, against my will they picked me up and took me out of my bed. I tried to say: "No, no, leave me. The doctors seem to know what they are doing", but they put me over their arms and started taking me out through the ward.

The doctors and the nurses came running up and grabbed them, saying: "No, leave the man here. We must look after him". And they said: "Get out of here you curry munchers, you wogs", and pushed them out of the way. I was thinking: "Leave me alone. They know what they are doing. They saved my life, I think they helped save my life". But they just kept walking. We got into a taxi. The same taxi that they have come to the hospital with and they drove me home. They then carried me into my house, put me into my bed and went off to have a party to celebrate that I was OK.



*Fig. 14 The bungalow's back room where Ian slept*

As I lay there that night, I felt quite a lot of spiritual oppression and darkness that had come against me, yet I clung onto the Lord. I clung onto Jesus and to everything I knew. I was praying. I found myself praying everyday.

I flew out back to Australia and I found that my whole life was changing. I didn't want to get into parties, I didn't want to drink or smoke. I didn't want to chase women. Even my desire to surf was taken from me, which was incredible because surfing had been one of my greatest loves. I remember spending a bit of time in Australia with my brother. Then, I took off from Sydney back to New Zealand. As I was flying to New Zealand, I was listening to a music group called "Men at work" over my walkman. As I was listening to the group, I thought: "God, what have I become? Everything in my life is changing. I have got no desire for all these things. I see evil and I don't want to get involved with it. I don't want to get involved with the things I have been involved with before. My whole life is changing and I'm praying continually. What must I do? What am I?". I, then, heard a voice speak over the music group I was listening to. The voice said: "You are a reborn Christian". I quickly took my headphones off and looked behind me to see who has spoken to me. There was no one behind me and so, I thought: "I am hearing: born again Christian, a new born Christian. What is that?". I remember sitting on the plane, I actually took my dark glasses out and I put them on, thinking the whole way through to Auckland about what a new born Christian meant. It seems like it. I'm doing all the things a Christian does. The only thing I haven't done is to go to church."

I remember flying into New Zealand, where I met my parents at the airport. I remember telling them that I was a reborn Christian, not fully knowing what it meant. My parents were quite amazed about the change in my life. My father especially, was quite amazed that I have become a Christian. We got home and I gave all the gifts out, after which I went to sleep. My mother had left my bedroom, and after two years of traveling, I found it identical to what I left it. I went to sleep and I woke up in the middle of the night with a bit of a fright. I remember praying and I thought: "God, what am I supposed to do next?", and He said: "Ian, you need to read the Bible". I said: "Well, I haven't got a Bible". So I got up and walked out, and I saw my father there. My father asked: "Why are you awake? What can I do?". I remember asking him for his Bible. He gave me his Old Testament and I went back to my room and I read it.

I remember when I opened up to Genesis, chapter one. The first verse says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth", and in verse two it says: "Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters". I thought: "Wow, God has got a spirit. And darkness, that's evil. I have seen the darkness before. In verse three, it said: "And God said: 'Let there be light'. And there was light". I thought: "That's right. I have seen the light. I have seen that light, it's good. It is incredibly good". The Bible also said that God separated light from the darkness. Again, I thought: "What? I have seen the separation. I have seen the kingdom of darkness. I have seen the kingdom of light and there is a passage way between". I remember starting to weep and thinking: "Four years I went to university, four years I have studied and yet, never, I never read the Bible". I remember crying and I said: "I want to know about you. This word that I am reading, it is the truth. This is God's word". I remember reading right through to the early hours of the morning. I began to read right through the Bible.

For the next six weeks I read the Bible daily. I read the entire Bible, from the very beginning. From Genesis to Revelation. I remember coming to the New Testament and finding that Jesus is the light of the world. In Him we can have forgiveness, in Him we can have total cleansing. We can come to God, the Father, through Jesus. It was incredible to know that my sins had been forgiven. That God heard my death-bed prayer in that

ambulance and this was the name of Christ, the Lord's prayer, that saved my life, that those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. As I cried from my heart, asking God for forgiveness, He had heard me and saved me from the pit. I haven't wept for twelve years, yet I just cried and cried as though I have been storing up all my tears, all my hurt, and it literally poured out. It was like a cleansing. It was incredible healing, an incredible presence of the Lord.

I remember being asked to go to church and I thought: "Well, the last time I went to church, God wasn't there". But God sent me to church. I remember coming into the car park and I saw a light shining out of the church, incredible light. It was the same light I have seen in heaven, I was taken aback. I walked into the church and sensed the presence, the light and the glory of God in the church. I thought: "This is just like heaven. I have seen this light and I can feel the love". I remember the pastor inviting me to come forward for prayer. I went forward and I felt incredible love. He stretched out his hands and said: "Brethren, begin to pray. Begin to pray for these that are coming forward". Then, the brothers and sisters stretched out their hands and I could feel incredible love, literally washing over me. I could feel the acceptance washing over me, an incredible presence of God's love and forgiveness. I thought in my heart: "If only these people knew the evil things I have done, they wouldn't love me. How can they love me? If only they knew what I have done, what I was really like, they wouldn't love me and yet they did". It was so incredible, their love just washed over me. The minister came down and he prayed for me. I literally had the same experiences I had in heaven. The light and love of God just poured down upon me and just, loved me. I thought: "I can experience the light, the presence and the glory of God here in earth".

I found that, as you walk with the Lord, as you literally daily, open your heart up to Him, His presence, His love, His Holy Spirit will surround and fill you. It will embrace you and give you incredible peace and incredible joy. I have been walking with the Lord nearly seven years now. The most incredible thing any man or woman can do, is to know Christ and to walk with Him. I pray that God does touch your heart and that you will open up to His love and surrender your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Amen



*Fig. 15 Ian and Jane, Lisa, Michael and Sarah*