

## **Personal Experience:**

### **Developing a new way of looking at life is a difficult process.**

Most of these lessons have been learned from hard-earned experience. Learning to view the world differently not because I wanted to, but to survive and understand, I had to. Much that happened during this time period was the result of God so re-ordering my world He had to speak in so many different kinds of ways just to get my attention. You see I had a problem, which many of us have of course, but mine was called performance orientation. What that does to a person is make them work so hard they just burn out. And burn out I did. I had been pastoring a youth church at the time. There were about 250 kids involved. Half of these were in our 10 home groups. Let's just say these were not your average kids. At least 50% were from broken homes, a good portion were off the streets of Vancouver. I had a good laugh one day when the local paper ran an article about pan handlers moving into Abbotsford. {Oh no! The invasion has begun!} These of course being some of my kids from God Rock, our youth church. They were definitely an eclectic bunch; some out of the New Age movement, some with gay parents. One teen had a mother who was a lesbian witch. Many were sexually abused. For 'normal' people to deal with having a bad day is to go home and watch TV and to try to forget about it. To many troubled youth dealing with a bad day is slicing your wrists. Let's just say it was hard, really hard. After one girl, coming out of a hard scene, was raped and ended up in the psyche ward and the other brother in jail, I began to lose hope. I began to wonder if they were really getting better. If God really cared or if I could really help at all.

### **Things can always get worse.**

We had a big name prophetic guy come to our church for a conference. It was great, the presence of God was really strong! However it was the meeting with the leadership team that was interesting. I remember the staff meeting the day before. The head Pastor, Gareth, had just shared how his wife had had a strange but yet strongly compelling dream the night before. In the dream she was in the Southern States at night. She saw a woman on a bridge, the woman turned to her and said. "Help me, I'm trapped in Birmingham Alabama!" It didn't make a lot of sense but suddenly I was fighting back the tears!!! What was going on? It really bothered me that I should get so emotional about such a strange thing.

That evening we had our meeting with the prophetic fellow and this is basically what he had to say; that we as a church had a chance to go down in history, either having been used of God in a mighty way, or missing it, like Birmingham Alabama. AAAAHHHHH!!! He then went on to say that the enemy was going to hit us with everything he had for the next 18 months and that we needed to work on intimacy with our spouses and with the Lord.

Let's just say that after that meeting people wanted out of leadership quick. But life goes on, you just get on with your life and put the word on the shelf, try and forget about it. You can't let a prophetic word run your life, if God is in it He will surely bring it to pass in His own good time.

Things suddenly began to change, it seemed like the presence of God was lifting, especially at God Rock. When your dealing with people who are so messed up and need all the help they can get the lifting of the presence of God is a horrible thing. To the youth at God Rock it felt like they could no longer trust the Lord with their issues. Not having a strong foundation of the father's love, they began to overly rely on the home group leaders, many of whom were in their teens as well. We had had such rapid growth, we were overwhelmed and were trying to raise up and disciple home Group leaders as fast as we could.

Two months had gone by since the ugly prophetic word, Christmas had come and gone, it was time to prepare for the New Year. I still remember the first God Rock service of the New Year, the heat had been turned off and none of the chairs set up. If you weren't dressed warm enough for sledding you weren't dressed warm enough to be in the building! No one could stay in the building and there was nowhere for them to sit if they did. Now there is foreshadowing for you! What a way to begin the New Year.

Time went on and things went from bad to worse, to make a long story short at least three people had been in the psyche ward by May. Then, within two weeks all the home groups collapsed. Ten home groups in two weeks! One adult leader majorly burned out and had to go on anti-depressants, another fell heavily into the drug scene. Another leadership couple had their van stolen and their daughter, who was also a leader had a cancer scare. The lists of disasters went on and on.

In the end of spring we had a leadership meeting to see who would come back next September to help... three out of twenty five leader, God Rock was dead...the dream was over, I was devastated. These were the people I had been training, some of them for years, and they were walking away. It was with good reason mind you; who wanted to be a part of that party! But it destroyed me. All the people I had helped were getting worse, all the leaders I had invested in were walking away. It was too much for me, I began to crack.

### **And the Lord took that crack in my defenses and walked through it.**

The next day I went for a drive, the longest drive in history. I took the huge 12 person youth tent and I went all the way to Long Beach on Vancouver Island, all and all a twelve hour trip. It wasn't like I had actually planned to go to the island, I just wanted the most remote place I could find, a place of rest for my soul, a place to lick my wounds. I drove until the sense of loss seemed far away, I drove until I felt better, little did I know that meant driving until I ran out of road, finally stopping at the pacific ocean.

The only way I could get any peace on this drive was by asking God to forgive me for anything that came to mind... judging people, being angry, pride etc.. I found a place to set up my tent...had a little time to walk the beach and went to bed.

I awoke in the morning to the strangest noise. It sounded as if there was a bear outside my tent. But no....it was...flying...flying around my tent, which was amazing because it was a pretty big tent! Since I had just woken up I thought I was imagining it but no, it wasn't a dragon fly, it was loud like a bear! Suddenly a verse went through my mind, Isaiah 6:6-7. I quickly dug my bible out of my back-pack and looked it up.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with tongs from the alter. And he touched my mouth with it and said: Behold, this has touched your lips; Your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is purged."

Isaiah 6:6-7

I remember sitting there stunned. I hadn't felt the presence of God through any of this and it really hadn't taken much time to happen. However I knew God had just given me a piece of the puzzle as to why my life and career were going the way they were. I somehow knew that this didn't have anything to do with a lot of what I had been praying about the night before, it was about how I lived my life. I knew that the Lord would lead me as time went by and show me the sin that I couldn't see.

### **Just to make the point again.**

When you have lost everything it does seem to be easier to hear. I had had a successful ministry. I had grown a youth church from nothing to 250 in 5 years. I could reach kids few seemed to be able to reach. I was speaking at conferences and we were starting a youth church in downtown Vancouver. On paper it looked wonderful. But paper houses fall very easily. I hadn't built this house on the Rock. Oh it looked sound enough but the season of testing was on and during the refining everything based on mixed motives is burned up. Don't get me wrong the Lord is gracious and compassionate. But when the time comes, He knows how to play hardball as well.

I worked hard. As a matter of fact I was proud of my work ethic. And what it had accomplished. *I had done it.* {Never say that}. This is what the Lord was after, my fierce independence, my need to succeed to prove my worth. To let nobody beat me. To believe and fix everyone that God would let me. It didn't work. Now I was left holding the ashes of all the years of effort with only, 'I had been forgiven,' but not even knowing for what.

## **The Power of a Paradigm Shift**

The Great Author's tool of foreshadowing had struck, it was time for a paradigm shift, time for a brand new worldview. The puzzle pieces to God's mystery were on their way and soon the big picture that I could not see would emerge, God would turn this life crisis into a wellspring of hope.

It's important to keep in mind Peter's vision in Acts 10. Peter had no idea what was going on, the vision he had just had went against everything he held true as a Jew, Peter needed a paradigm shift to understand what God was trying to tell him. It wasn't until God gave more information that things began to make sense. As God gave more information to Peter, Peter began to understand what the Lord was saying; in other words Peter put the puzzle together. Jesus established a new worldview in Peter by giving Peter puzzle pieces of confirmation along the way; all the events that happened to Peter on his journey to and with Cornelius added up to the big picture, the Gentiles were in the kingdom of God. {more on this in the next section}

How well I remember the next puzzling event from God, the next puzzle piece in the big picture God was trying to help me see. I was out walking in Sumas Prairie crying out to God. I remember thinking how unfair it all was when the Lord gave me a picture of this metal-toothed monster...and I hated it! I knew it had something to do with God Rock, something to do with how it functioned but I didn't understand. I knew intuitively that a part of the God Rock structure was that metal-toothed monster and it should not have been there. I just had no clue what it was!

The next clue, or puzzle piece, came when a bunch of people were praying for me. I saw a picture of me rolling this huge bolder up a hill. I was straining with all my might. The Lord let me know He never asked me to roll that bolder up that hill. I didn't get it.

### **The plot now begins to thicken.**

We had one ministry trip left to go that we were committed to do. It was away off in Montana, we had met a group from there at a conference and they had wanted us to come and minister to them. That Sunday our team was getting prayer to go when the Lord put me on the floor and spoke to me in my mind. His voice was very loud, as loud as I have ever heard. This is what He said. "I've beaten you." His voice was full of compassion and love but there was no mistaking

the meaning, what had happened at God Rock, it was him! Somehow I also knew that I would get more information as the trip began. I must say that I was stunned by this but all the clues or puzzle pieces given to me by God pointed to the fact that I needed to be forgiven and that I was rolling something I wasn't suppose to be rolling. It was something in the foundation of my ministry that was wrong and damaging. I knew it fit. I knew it was right. I was in the wrong and the Lord had put a stop to something, I just didn't know what it was.

## ***Montana***

The trip began well enough...but I was a desperate man. My world was shattered and I knew that I was being taught something important but I just did not get it. I was beginning to learn and watch for God to speak. The pieces would fit. As the pieces fit together I would soon see the picture of the problem that my eyes couldn't yet focus on. I would have a new paradigm.

We had driven for 12 hours and were in four vehicles, about 20 of us all together. I remember we had just crossed into Montana and everyone wanted to stop. We found the nearest gas station/ cafe and pulled over. It turns out that everything in Montana is also half casino and I didn't want to wait at such a place. I got in my van, told the others that I would meet them at the next rest stop, and left. Not the best thing for the leader to do but I was not in the best way and there were others to watch the troops. For some reason I just had to get to the next rest area. I was driving, and driven to do it. It was a long trip to that rest area, about 25 minutes. I remember Neil, one of the young adults, asking how much farther when the Lord told me it was right around the corner. I still had enough faith at this time to tell Diane, one of the youth leaders on the trip, who was sitting beside me. We drove around the corner there it was, the rest area. I still remember seeing the sign, '**REST AREA,**' and can still feel the impact of the words, as if someone had knocked the breath out of me. A significant moment was occurring, it was time to pay attention, another puzzle piece was about to be added, and this piece would be the one to snap things together so they made sense.

### **Once we had stopped, I was just standing there not knowing what to do.**

I remember Terry, one of my leaders who had had an emotional crash walking up to me and apologizing for that crash {as if it were his fault}. As he spoke I looked over at a huge historical sign, the sign said 'Iron Mountain Mine.' I felt the Lord impress upon me to read this sign, that what had happened at God Rock was on the sign and that it was another trail marker for me on my journey. It's probably important to note that at this point we were still planning to start God Rock up again, to fix the problem and wind up the ministry machine.

### **This is what the sign said;**

Twelve miles from this rest area was Iron mountain mine and in 1897 it pulled out millions of dollars of ore in a year {of what I don't remember any more} However a law was passed that stated that any mine without a secondary escape shaft had to be shut down for safety reasons. The mine was shut, they tried to start it up again but to no avail, all that is left today is collapsed tunnels and old crumbling foundations.

I was stunned by the information. It fit my situation perfectly. What was the Lord saying by this? That we couldn't start again?

I read it over and over and pondered it in my mind just standing there staring. I must have looked quite the confused site now that I think about it.

After pondering it all for a while and in conjunction with the other things the Lord had all ready spoken this was my conclusion;

As the mine was built 12 miles outside of the 'rest area' so was the leadership of God Rock built outside of God's rest. 12 is always the number used in Scripture when referring to leadership and the foundation they give. i.e. 12 apostles, 12 tribes, 12 gates, 12 thrones etc. therefore God Rock had in its foundation ministry for identity, striving, pride...etc. Nothing could be built on this foundation, it wasn't safe. Much of God Rock leadership needed success more than intimacy and relationship with Jesus.

This may seem like a lot of information from one little sign but it was the piece I needed to put the previous puzzle pieces together to form some kind of coherent picture. The boulder was me striving in my own strength, the metal toothed monster the result of my striving. I was now beginning to see what I needed forgiveness for. I was driven to succeed to prove my worth and it was affecting everything I did in the kingdom of God. I didn't know how to rest in God, I didn't know how to receive the love of God for who I was apart from what I did.

By now I had begun to keep track of all these strange physical occurrences. I was waiting to see how they all would connect, to get the big picture. It appeared I was starting to get it. I knew that I could still be wrong, even with what just happened I was completely willing to just crumple up my hypothesis and throw away. God would confirm it if it was him. We continued on our way and I knew that more information would be forth coming.

### **I didn't have to wait to long.**

Montana is really a beautiful state, prairie on both sides of the Rockies, which as a Canadian I found strange as we have all mountains on the West of the Rockies. The mountains and streams are phenomenal, a great place to hear the Lord, think, and to collect my thoughts.

One day I woke up with a picture of the rolling prairie in my mind. Again I heard the Lord speak really loudly in my spirit. So loud it could have been audible. He said, 'Come out in the fields I want to meet with you today.'

So that afternoon I made some time and drove out into the prairie and sat on a rock. I waited. Nothing. I waited longer. Nothing. Oh well, maybe I would come back in the evening and see what would happen.

I went to the next event that happened to be a BBQ at the church. However this church was not your typical set up, it was formerly a driving range. The church had a big field in the back surrounded by wheat fields. (Can you see it coming?) I ate some food and played some hacky-sack until a fellow walked up to me who wanted to talk. He was in his late 40's, had been a Ranger in the Vietnam war and, this I did not know, had a prophetic ministry to the people of the area. He had a word for me. I kindly listened not knowing what to think. This is what he had to say. "The Lord spoke to me about you the other day and these are the things he showed me; I saw a picture of you surfing a set of waves. You were in between sets and a bigger set was about to come in." {Waves in this word represent working with the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit is often compared to water in Scripture. In this word riding the wave meant staying in God's purposes. I had recently been on the Island and had planned to go surfing. I had stood and watched for a

while but it had been awfully cold. So hearing this analogy from a Montana mountain man caught my attention.}

He continued...“I see that you are caught between sets of waves and are in the rip tow right now, you are paddling and paddling to get out. The Lord says to you that **you are striving. You are outside of his area of rest and if you don’t stop right now it’s going to get worse!**”

I was stunned, realizing that here again was another piece of the puzzle and exactly what I thought God had been saying on the sign! I was outside of his area of rest, striving in ministry, striving to be a somebody and have value. I asked him if we could talk, I now had a lot of questions. He said to me, “Sure, lets go for a walk in the fields, I meet God there.” Exactly what the Lord had spoken to me in my room that morning! I think that was the point I began to cry and fell to the ground weeping.

We talked about a lot of things but especially intimacy with God, how anything built outside of his area of rest in not truly built on him because it wasn’t built on abiding with Him. We talked of the trysting place, an old fashioned term about where lovers would go and meet. And once again the picture of what God was doing began to unfold more and more, I was beginning to understand what He was after. Pure relationship based on love and intimacy, not working for Him but primarily being with Him. One of the last things my new friend said was that he believed that a lot of my false paradigms were based on things that had happened while growing up and were fear based, that God was going to uproot these issues and replant me in Him. That sounded great, little did I know that replanting can get hard.

{\*\* It’s important to note here, that the revelation being given was to teach me new theology that was based on relationship to the Lord. I could really get into all that and the lessons learned but that is not the primary reason for this work. Suffice it to say that what I hope people will see here is the process of how revelation is given. The different ways it is given. And how it paints a picture. God gives us a new taste as we are ready and able to receive the next mouthful. The Holy Spirit is the great teacher and His job is to lead us in to truth and freedom. My purpose in telling this is not to describe the truth so much as the process so we can all understand how revelation, especially physical prophetic events flow in our day-to-day world. They do not supersede teaching, or the bible, or having mentors in our lives, or any other way the Lord speaks. But they are one of His relevant story telling tools and one we should be aware of. as He uses on His pallet when He paints the story of our lives and world.\*\*}

### ***Back At Home, Waiting For the Quick Fix***

We arrived back at home and I waited for more information from the Lord on what to do. There were now about thirty young adults left of the 250 wounded wanting help, or least that is how it felt to me needing help myself.

Time went on and strange things began to happen to stuff I owned. My computer kept crashing, first the internet files, then the CD drive, and after that was all fixed the whole thing just crashed. As if this wasn’t enough my car quit working, and at the same time! All this crashing would push me over the edge and I would get angry. It was beginning to seem to me that whatever I put my hand to broke, in ministry and now in the rest of life...I was upset.

I went back walking on Sumas prairie again, talking to the Lord trying to understand. I looked up at Sumas Mountain, on the top I could see the radio tower from where I was. I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit, I felt the Lord tell me to go up there. I had a lot of faith. Usually I think I would have doubted that voice but the way I had been hearing the Lord I had faith and I was on my way. I knew where Centennial Trail began on that side of the hill and up I went. I was singing to the Lord I felt this was it. It was over! God had given me the information I needed and this was going to be the end of it and things could get back to normal. Hallelujah! I was happy. I hiked along in a great mood singing to the Lord when suddenly I came to a clear cut. I was standing on the crossroad of two logging roads, both overgrown. The path was gone, there was no way to reach the towers on this path! I looked through the trees searching. It began to rain. I raised my head to heaven and shouted at the top of my lungs, "you can't get there from here!" I was angry.

I began to descend the way I had come. A verse went through my mind at that point, something about following the ancient paths. It was in Jeremiah somewhere near chapter 7. I was too angry to care and I told God so. "How dare you do this to me, I trusted you. I can't get there from here!"

### **I can't get there from here.**

Out of my mouth came the truth I needed so desperately to hear but still not seeing the purpose of this little hike or what it was suppose to teach me. It was once again the physical speaking of the invisible. It was a sign on the path of my journey of life. I thought I had it all figured out. I had interpreted this series of events to be that the radio tower was God communicating and all I had to do was get there. Maybe that was partly right, but God had a different idea, his point was that the way I was doing life, the path I was following could not bring me deeper into the Lord's presence, my path was a dead end. Things needed to change. I needed to learn that my human strength was not going to be enough to get me to the center of God's will. I needed to learn how to fail.

I went to the meeting at church that night despondent. Encouragement came in worship as I had a picture of an Indian parting the trees and revealing a path that was hidden. People were interested in what happened on my hike up the mountain. We were all in the same place, we all wanted to learn what we needed to do to follow the Lord in what he was teaching us. A few people prayed for me and a couple of them even had a picture of someone parting the trees to reveal a hidden path. One thing about revelatory people, as you get to know their character and accuracy over the years, you begin to establish deep trust with these people and as a pastor I had that. It was good to know that people were praying for me.

The next morning my friend Diane came over and God had given her a verse in the night. It was Jeremiah 7: 16

Stand at the crossroads and look;  
Ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah 6: 16

I was stunned! Flabbergasted! It exactly described where I stood on the mountain! It was the verse about the ancient paths I received coming down the mountain that I didn't look up! It was all about finding rest again, just like the Lord had spoken of in Montana! Incredible! God once again used a physical act, my hike up the mountain, to produce faith and awe in me! Amazing!

## **The Root Revealed**

Later in the week I had a meeting with one of the former youth leaders named Donna. She had been telling me about a course she was taking called Life Skills. In this course one of the things they do is play games to cause emotional responses. They would do things like have people sit in a circle and everyone would be given little puzzles of squares they had to put together. All the pieces were mixed up and they needed to be past along to one another until everyone had the right pieces. It was the rules that made putting the puzzles together difficult. The rules were that you couldn't talk or even use gestures, there was to be no communication. If you wanted a piece of the puzzle as it was held in front of you you took it, if not, you didn't. The trouble such a simple puzzle could cause is quite unbelievable. The people who struggled with fear and intimidation would just sit there, those with control issues would ignore the rest of the group and just work on their own. It really hit you where you lived.

As Donna was describing this process to me, God gave me a revelation; this is what he was doing to me, causing events to happen in my life to reveal the state of my heart. God was pushing my buttons! Every time I tried to do something, fix something, or get somewhere it failed, and I got angry! My computer, my car, trying to get up the mountain! I must have turned pale or something because Donna asks me if I was Ok. I told her that I thought that I was beginning to understand the pattern of all the things that have been happening to me. If I couldn't get something to work I would get angry. Donna asked me if I had ever had events happen in my life growing up where I felt like I could never win approval or make the grade and then get angry. I was about to say no when it all came flooding back, my relationship with my Dad. I hadn't really talked to him since high school. Sure small talk, but I basically froze him out of my life. I had worked for his construction company and was only aloud to dig holes; I wasn't trusted and felt that after all my years of effort, I couldn't win his respect. Finally in anger, I had given up trying to win his approval, to show that I was a capable son in his eyes. My efforts could not win the praise and respect I longed for so I stopped trying and in anger froze him out.

The revelation of this stunned me! I hadn't given these issues any thought for years...but here they were. I had tried to earn my fathers approval by my efforts and here the Lord was working on me because I was doing the same thing with him and modeling that unknowingly in His kingdom to all those I led!

This extra emotional burden was all it took, I began to collapse and slid into burn out. I cried all the time and became emotionally unhinged at anything. I could no longer look anyone in the eye or even think coherently. I became the biggest failure in the world...in my own eyes.

It is hard to describe the next season of time. I remember going to see my doctor about how I was doing. He walked into the office and I started crying. I remember the staff guys at church were going somewhere and I was supposed to go. Something happened about money. A small thing, I couldn't take it, I ran to my car and drove off. Things like that. It's hard to lose everything that western culture tells you makes a man.

God however was incredibly faithful, and proved his character to me over and over.

## ***Healing of the Old Paradigm Begins***

I went to counseling with a wonderful Christian brother at Elijah House Canada. I learned I had a lot of father issues to deal with and that they were affecting my view of God and how I thought He viewed me. I remember at one point I wrote a letter to my dad. To tell him how I felt. I had no intention of mailing it, it was more for me, to be honest and not be afraid to be real. I remember just working it all through when, the next day, my dad called me! It was wonderful, without me even asking we talked about all the things that were issues, the very things I had written in my letter. I even found out things about his childhood I never knew. Without even knowing it my dad had responded to my letter as if he had read it. I began to believe the Lord may want to heal me after all.

Another incredible event happened, maybe even more incredible than my meeting with my dad, this event was how the Lord provided. As you can imagine in the state I was in I was next to socially useless. I was afraid for our family, where would the money come from? I remember telling my kids that I would have some time off, what would they like to do? “We want to go to Disneyland!” Was the resounding answer. {As my heart sank to my feet} “Well, lets ask God to provide the money,” so we all prayed and left it with the Lord. The next week I was going through the mail and in an envelope I found a check for \$5000. Once again I began to cry. For this reason; here I was burnt out, completely useless for anything by man’s standards. I had nothing left for God. I would even get the shakes trying to go to church. Church was a realm of absolute failure and despair to me. And yet with nothing to give, with no strength or word of praise on my tongue, the Lord supplied my needs, not only my needs but also my kid’s desires. I remember asking my kids if they remembered what they had asked God for.

“Sure,” they said, “We asked God for money to go to Disneyland.

“Well,” I calmly stated, fighting back the tears, “Here is the money you prayed for, it came today.” The look on their faces I’ll never forget. Intimacy with the Father and trust in His goodness began anew for them, and for me, right then. At my lowest point, when I had nothing to give the church or even emotional strength to give to God or my family, when everything I thought manhood was was stripped from me, I met the father; and it turned out all he really wanted was to be my friend.

I wish I could say school was over and life was going to get back to normal, that favor of God was going to return, but things seldom go as we have planned. Upon my return to staff at the church the head pastor went through burnout as well and took time off. In fact it wasn’t long before all of us were seeking more mature brothers to speak into our lives. I see now that this was God’s plan. To teach us not to be so goal oriented. To be relationally oriented, to find mentors, to slow down. To allow God to be our friend as well as Lord.

## **The Continuing Story; The Journey and the Lesson**

During this next chapter of my life and the life of my church, the Great Author once again began to spin his tale using physical events as foreshadowing, as signs, only this time we were all listening and wondering where He was going and how we were to follow.

It was a beautiful day. A good day for a walk on the prairie, so that is what Gareth and I decided to do. Our prophet friend who had been at our church 18 months earlier was coming back and I think we were all a little nervous. As we walked along and talked about our last year an eagle suddenly appeared and dove into the creek beside us. Without even making a splash it pulled a fish out of the water and flew away. Gareth turned to me and asked me what I thought that meant. I said that I guess we would find out.

Our meeting with the prophetic fellow was tough, He told us we weren't out of the woods yet, asked us if we had heard of the dark night of the soul. Also lots of stuff about fathering and needing mentors.

### **We all had our view of what was said and what it all meant.**

Suffice it to say after the horrible year we had just had we were expecting a clean bill of health. To not be out of the woods was tough. I remember Gareth going to a lake in the interior to think it all through. When he came back we got together and he told me about his trip. "You know, a strange thing happened one day as I was walking along the shore of lake." He said. "I was walking on the beach and I saw an eagle, it dived into the lake to get a fish, it missed the fish, went straight into the water and had to swim ashore. That eagle totally missed it." Yes and that, with the previous eagle event summed up our meeting with the prophetic fellow, we had missed it. Eagles are more common here in Canada, but I have never seen one catch a fish or ever heard of one missing a fish and having to swim to shore. Once again I knew that God was giving us puzzle pieces, our paradigm was still out. We needed more information to make the turn and position ourselves properly before God. The information was soon forth coming.

### **I remember it all too well.**

The sun was streaming through the windows at church. I was reading my bible as I listened to Gareth preaching the Sunday morning message. He was talking about the difference between power and authority in the Kingdom of God. How you had to give up power to get authority. He used the example of Saul and Samuel. He preached, "Samuel had power, he was a judge of Israel, he could of tried to hold onto that power in Israel, to retain governmental status. But he freely gave it up, following the Lord was more important to him. However in giving up the power the people respected him and trusted him all the more. They saw his integrity, his honesty, and his commitment to God. He had won the right to speak into peoples lives." He continued, "Saul however did the opposite. He coveted power and what the people thought of him. It drove him so much he was willing to kill to keep it. In the end he had no authority in the people's lives for they no longer respected him. And then the statement I will never forget,

### **"You need to give up power to gain authority."**

Right then the bank of lights above the stage went out. I saw it, made note of it, didn't feel the Lord's presence strong or anything so I wrote it down. Strange to go out on the sentence you have to give up power for authority.

My wife had been home that service, the kids had been sick that day. As I told her about the morning and got to the part about giving up power for authority our lights in the house went out, came back on, went out again, and finally came on. Now I was feeling spooked, twice on the same sentence? What are the odds of that! Time to pay attention! Class was in.

Next on the list of church meetings was a home group leaders meeting in the sanctuary. I was just talking to the leaders about giving up power to get authority when the bank of lights above

me went out again, on the same sentence! The third time this has happened on the same sentence! We all kind of laughed but I was really spooked now, the odds were now insane of this just being fluke chance. Also there was nothing else on that breaker to take power but a few lights. In all my years at the church they have never gone off, and they never went off again.

### **We went through a difficult period to say the least.**

I have heard it said that tension isn't a sign of trouble it is a sign of something happening. We had a lot happening. We were all on the same journey but definitely not on the same spot on the trail. The change in paradigm had all started way back when God Rock closed. We had an understanding now how performance driven we were, how time to 'do' for God was more a priority than to 'be' with God. But what do you do for all the people who need home groups and care and all the crisis stuff when you're in a massive transition and you don't know where to go? We had to learn to lay down control. To really listen to each other, to not care how it looked but to follow what we thought God was saying even if to the western eye it looked foolish to not care what the people thought; to give up power to win authority with God. It was a struggle and there was a lot of miscommunication between us. I think it went on for months. The reason I mention this is that we not only had communication problems with each other but everywhere. My computer wouldn't hook up to the Internet. Then the D drive got erased. {Twice} The network of computers at the church crashed. The phone line, line #1, the main one at the church went dead. One of the staffers digital read-out on the car went fritzzy and began to read everything wrong. It all pictured exactly what was happening in staff at the church, miscommunication.

I guess as things go it went as well as it could have. It was time to move on. I had felt it coming for a while but had no idea what to do or where to go, in fact the church went through a huge transition after that, many coming, many going. But a parting in love, knowing the timing was the Lord, and that is the main thing.

A funny thing happened on the day that I resigned as a pastor at the church. The antennae on my car broke off, and I was ecstatic! To many a vehicle represents their ministry or what is going on in their life. If they see a vehicle in a dream or picture a lot of times that is what it symbolizes. We can see this in our local colloquialisms as well. If someone asks us how we are doing we often say things like, "I'm just going around in circles." Or how about, "I'm stuck in the mud." Or maybe even, "I just can't seem to get out of first gear today." These are a few of many common expressions that are symbolic of how we compare our lives to vehicles and how they are operating. I believe God just picks up on that idiom and uses it as a tool to show us, how we are doing, where we are going, etc. We will discuss this type of phenomena in greater detail later.

When that prophetic minister came to our church the first time I didn't know these things. It became obvious as time went on. At that first conference, now a year and a half previous, both Gareth and my car's came away with huge dents in them. Someone ran into the side of mine. His I don't know how it happened. As it turned out we both burned out, "crashed," and had to take time away. Also on the day I quit, my antennae, which had been bent, somehow broke off my car. Believe it or not I was ecstatic about it. You see if a car equals ministry then the antennae was me. It had been my job as the prophetic covering or mentor in the church to hear and try to interpret for the church and work with the prophetic people. It had been a huge burden over the last few years to try and plot a course for the church when I could barely find my own. Burdens like this are hard to let go of, especially when you have relationship with so many people after so many years. What if my resigning wasn't the Lord, what if I was supposed to continue to hear for the body, even in such a wrecked emotional state? The antennae coming off the car on the day I resigned gave me peace to know my decision to leave the church and move on was right. I

no longer had to hear for the church. I was released of that duty, and after a few years of great stress it was welcome. It was then that I realized how much watching for physical signs from God had become a part of my life. How, once you understood the language, it was as credible as any of God's other ways of communicating and gave me that wonderful feeling, yes, God is in control.

## **Looking Back, Keeping Track**

You have now read the story of my training in hearing the Lord through the Great Author's of signs, events that foreshadow what the Lord was about to do. I hope you can see and maybe even feel, what the journey has involved. Losing an old paradigm to gain a new one can be a very costly venture. For me I had to give up my security from my education, my Pastoral position, and my seniority in the church. I left many good friends behind. It took losing everything that I had built around me as security to see life through different eyes. I learned to see because I had to survive.

Before we leave this story I would like to lay out for you very clearly all the puzzle pieces that God was giving to our church and to me that came through foreshadowing, or in other words, sign language. It may be good for you to re-read this section keeping these things in mind. Treat these events as puzzle pieces from the Lord. See how they all fit together, see if they all tell the same story, follow the progress of the journey of learning as it comes piece by piece. Go back and reread this section not as a story, but as a puzzle slowly being completed by the emerging pieces. This was the process God used with Peter in Acts 10, this is one of the process God uses to speak to all of us. He gives us a little info at a time, as we can handle and understand.

## **Timeline of Physical signs;**

- #1) -Pastor's vehicles both being dented at first conference with prophetic minister
- #2) -The heat being off and no chairs set up at fist meeting of God rock, the first meeting in January
- #3) -The tent on the island and Isaiah 6:6-7
- #4) -The REST AREA sign
- #5) -The Iron Mountain Mine sign
- #6) -The hike up Sumas Mountain and the cross roads
- #7) -Computer crashes/car problems
- #8) -The two eagle signs
- #9) -The power going out 3 times on the words; you need to give up power to get authority.
- #10)-The crashing of the computer network at the church and the phone line and events surrounding.
- #11)-The antennae finally breaking off the car.

This is not of course a complete list of events that God spoke through. It is however the list of physical events that the Lord spoke through. When re-reading this section to see how all these things fit together to tell the story, watch how they all fit with all the other methods that God used to communicate as well. Together they make a wonderful story designed by the Great Author to reveal his heart and purposes.

## **God's Solution to Man's False Paradigm**

It's amazing how strong our perception of reality is, and how off track it can be. I really had no idea of what the Lord was trying to say to me until many physical prophetic events, signs, had happened. I didn't even understand why God thought it was important to say it. I didn't think I had a problem. I put in 60 + hours a week, I spent all my time thinking about ministry, even when with my family. I learned to view every meeting through the perspective of where that meeting would take my ministry in 5 months. I worked for a few years at half time salary because I believed so strongly that generation x was going to bring revival to the world. I really did. When I could finally see that I was wrong, I crashed. All those hours, all those years put into ministry based on a false paradigm; that my effort could produce the kingdom of God.

Did God try and tell me earlier? I'm sure he did. But in the church I was in and the stream we flowed with we all believed what I believed. It was strange to think otherwise. I had put a pair of glasses on that colored my whole perspective of the world. I saw life through youth revival and that was it. It was what mattered.

This is an excerpt from Murray's book, "If This Were A Dream, What Would It Mean?", Freshwind Press, c2007.

If you would like to purchase this book, [click here](#).

For more information on Samuel's Mantle Prophetic Training School, [click here](#).