

MYSTERIOUS PATHWAYS

BY PETER ROBERTSON

I have believed for quite some time now that one indisputable evidence of the New Birth (John 3.3) is a tremendous and sustained hunger to know and do the will of God; what He requires of us and has so graciously planned for us. As King David testified, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delights in his ways." (Psalm 37:23)

One of the pitfalls I have observed many sincere Christians fail to negotiate is having an over-formed, overly rigid notion of our God-ordained destiny, and also the pathway to it.

In this regard I'm sure it's important to remember constantly that ultimately the Lord Himself is our destination and He is our journey too. "O Lord, it is You who are my portion and cup; it is You yourself who are my prize." (Psalm 16:5) "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way...no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" (John 14:6). The correct destination and the right journey are equally important; you really can't have one without the other. The end never justifies any old means, because to a great extent the end is determined by the means.

To this end, one often overlooked aspect of divine guidance is that He may lead us along paths we do not necessarily understand or appreciate. "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps. Man's steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way." (Proverbs 16:9 and 20:24) If we are not able to really embrace this fact of



Peter Robertson in 1972

spiritual life, then our chances of achieving His objectives and goals for us are severely hampered... and perhaps even in some extreme cases negated!

One of the great prayer movements in the world today is called the "Little Brothers and

Sisters of Jesus". It was founded out of the obedience of one Frenchman, Charles de Foucauld. In the early 1900s he followed God's guidance and went out to live and pray as a hermit in the middle of the Sahara Desert. No one ever joined him for very long. He was considered rather odd by his contemporaries. He was shot dead by one of the tribesmen he was fasting and praying for to receive Jesus' salvation.

Years later in the 1940s, some young people were reading his blood-stained diaries, and as they did the Holy Spirit touched them and inspired them to start to live and pray as Charles had lived and prayed... for the salvation of those who seem impossibly distant from God and His Church. The rest is (as they say) some wonderful history.

During the 1990s the Lord employed me a little to travel all over New Zealand to help fan the flames of revival. It was a very busy (sometimes exhausting) time; constantly on the move and under public scrutiny; incessantly preaching and praying for many people.

But now as I look back on my life I am able to see that a key aspect of His preparation of me for this season of hyper-activity was living in a monastery. Many Christians might view these two vocations (revival preacher and monk) as being gobsmackingly, diametrically opposed. But His shutting me away to a life of perpetual prayer, study, and hard farm work was perfect.

Why? Because that's the way He chose... but also because all Christian ministry has to be birthed out of and sustained by Holy Spirit-inspired prayer.

When I look at a faded photo taken in the monastery during 1972, I see a kid who

genuinely believed he was destined to be a hermit-priest. But God had other plans... and I'm glad. Because now I am able to look at another photo taken much more recently outside the "Red Shed" church in the Bay of Plenty. That was where I shared in 5 months of open-Heaven revival, and I wouldn't have missed that for anything.

Now... here's the mystery of all of this. No monastery... no "Red Shed"! It's very hard (even for me) to imagine two places further apart from a human point of view. And yet, they were inextricably joined by the Spirit of the Lord.



Outside the 'Red Shed' - where heaven opened

If you have a dream to do something

special for God... then by all means cleave to that. But at the same time try your best to live a life of daily surrender and abandonment. Let Him choose your path and always be ready to be surprised and maybe even baffled occasionally. Jesus does know where He wants to take you, and He really does know the perfect pathway to get you there. And best of all, as you walk along His way, He'll change you and train you and prepare you to do His will; His plan for your life.

"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." (Matthew 16:24-25)

"When you were younger, you used to gird yourself, and walk wherever you wished; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will gird you, and bring you where you do not wish to go." (John 21:18)

For more of Peter Robertson's writing see www.revivalstreams.com