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ONE LIFE

The Narrow Path

By Sylvia Suhr

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## Reviews

While many people in the world invest so much time and effort in building their lives around comfort and luxury, the author believes that.

"Comfortable is scary!"

Sylvia is inspirational; the book is motivational!

You will get to read unheard facts and feel genuine love for another human being just by reading this phenomenal book.

We need to read more books of this kind.

One sentence to summarize my thoughts:

Everyone, regardless of religious belief, age, gender identity, race, colour, or nationality, must read this book.

Pastella

<https://ourfaithhopelove.com/>

I first met Sylvia in 1991 at Careforce Church in Mt Evelyn Victoria.

She was still living in Healesville at the time with her three children. We became friends through the single parent ministry at the church. One Sunday, Sylvia decided she would invite all the single parents that were free to a Sunday roast lunch.

A lot of single parents are at a loose end on a Sunday after church and that was me and my four children, that day.

I was so impressed by this woman who clearly had not much in the way of material goods; opening her home and not only providing an expensive meal but fellowship, availability and a simple but powerful example of what Jesus was all about.

In those early years we shared many family meals, sleepovers, prayer times and general sharing in each other's lives.

One memory I have is of Sylvia regularly arriving early in the morning before the children were up and we would pray for an hour and recite scripture promises. This was a special time.

A couple of years passed and she was off to YWAM and Yass, joining the Eagles Nest where her missionary adventures began.

Sylvia is at her heart an evangelist. This is what makes her heart soar.

I have followed her journey over the last 27 years as she has spread the love for Jesus wherever she goes.

We have remained firm friends over the years. I am in awe of our God and His faithfulness expressed through the life of this woman who had the conviction of her faith to step out and take Jesus at his word.

All praise to Jesus. Colleen Mauger Bairnsdale Victoria

## Introduction

Who would believe that someone like me would be able to touch the lives of so many people?

I was an ordinary girl, coming from very humble beginnings but growing up to live a life of unexpected and remarkable experiences.

I was born in an industrial town in the middle of England with tall chimneys and terraced-type houses in long rows. All the houses had clean-curtained windows competing for “best dressed.”

My life was a journey to discover through life’s hardships and joys who I really am through many amazing experiences. These adventures brought to life the dreams that lay dormant on my journey of self-discovery.

Through this interesting journey, I have found total healing and freedom to be the person I always knew lived inside of me. As I

grew in confidence and inner strength, I found I was able to bring encouragement and hope to so many people I met in many places around the world.

For the past 21 years I have travelled many times to Africa and Asia, visiting many remote villages and living amongst the people, sometimes for several years. As the team and I went out we have been able to rescue orphans from devastating situations and help them to discover their potential through a loving environment and good schooling.

Many of these children are now in high school and university and hope to become doctors, nurses, engineers and entrepreneurs in business and other fields.

I have walked for miles and ridden on the back of bicycles and motorcycles to provide medical supplies, money and food for people in extreme difficulty.



In the Philippines I lived in the area of Smokey Mountain, which was a rubbish tip where people would build houses out of cardboard and any scrap materials lying around.

All this is because my life was transformed when I surrendered to God to do His will.

God has provided for me in many miraculous ways that I could never have imagined.

So, here is my story...

## Chapter 1

### ONE LIFE

My life began as Sylvia Webb, in the industrial town of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England, in 1944, just after the end of the Second World War. The town of Stoke-on-Trent is home to The Potteries where the finest bone china in the world is made.

I was born the last of six children, four boys and two girls. The dialect we spoke was called “Pottery.”

Even at an early age I found the local accent to be a common form of English, so my friend and I would try to speak proper English. Even then I wanted things to be different to what I saw around me. I hoped that there was something better, something other than a life of struggles and poverty.

Our mother was a lovely, gentle lady who inspired me from my early days to talk to people and be friendly even though her own life was one of many hardships. Our home had very few

luxuries and she tirelessly worked for us children, raising us on her own as she worked to provide the essentials to survive.

Our father was very seldom around; he had a wandering eye that led him to other homes. This left my mother alone to raise us. Still, she tried her hardest to instil in us values that would last outside of the industrial poverty that was her own lot in life. Working in the Potteries she survived and looked after us.

I remember we would help her paint the rose leaves on the china bowls she painted from home. Mother loved to paint and was a very talented artist and later worked at the famous Beswick's factory. Regardless of her circumstances in life she was a person of great encouragement. Showing me by her actions how to look after the needs of others, always putting others first. I appreciated her input into my life; I am grateful for the values she instilled in us in our childhood.

I remember times when we would ride on the double-Decker bus and she would have me stand to give an adult my seat and then she would praise me and make me feel important, it was at those times when I felt loved and noticed. Her soft heart always had room for animals. We had six cats which used to sleep with us at night, most of the time they either were having kittens, or they were looking after their babies. Mum said you could tell a lot about a person by the way they treated animals.

I loved all my family, but my brother George is the one I remember the most. He was great fun to be around; his energy livened up the dusty, industrial town. He was mischievous and full of life. I remember how he would make a parachute out of a handkerchief and tie it to a cat. He would then drop it from the third-floor window of our house for fun. Just as well there was a tree for the cat to land in. The cats adored him and even after their little adventures through the day, I remember that I would see the cats lying in bed with George, they would be

sucking under his arms for comfort as they slept in bed with him at night. They were all secure and content.

He would try anything for adventure. One time he stuck a fork in a light socket to see what would happen. Somehow, he managed to survive his ordeals and later became an auto electrician. He was my best friend until he met my girlfriend from school, she was also named Sylvia. They had a stormy relationship but later married and she became Sylvia Webb.

I was out in the yard one day with my brother Roy and we saw a bee. He said to me, 'Look Sylvia there's a fly. See if you can catch it" I did catch it and it stung me, which made them laugh at me. I felt like boys were there just to torment me. Having four brothers wasn't easy.

My father was an excellent pianist as were all his many brothers, and he spent most of his evenings playing the piano in the pubs. I believe he too was a friendly person; he was also

well liked. My sister was seven years older than I and she treated me like a doll.

She had a lot of input into my life in my early years until she got to her teens when her interests turned to boys.

As a young child in a single parent family, the post-war recession meant that we had very little food on our table. Many staple foods like butter and sugar were rationed and very scarce. We lived in a big three-storey house which my brothers told me was haunted. I didn't usually go to bed alone; I slept in a big double bed with two of my brothers. Our mother managed to get heavy coats from jumble sales and threw them over us at nights to keep us warmer. When we woke on winter mornings there was ice on the inside of our windows. There was a room at the top of the stairs on the third floor; my brothers said Mrs. Elliot had died there. If I had to go upstairs, I would run past that room as fast as I could.

I remember the joy of Guy Fawkes Night and collecting “A penny for the guy”. The guy was created like a scarecrow, stuffed with straw or whatever else we could find that would burn. We would put our guy in a pram, stand on the street corners and collect money, calling out, “Penny for the guy”. Then on bonfire night, November the fifth, we would burn him on top of a big bonfire. We had fireworks and sparklers and would roast potatoes on a stick in the fire.

I remember one bonfire night when a firework landed in my clothes down my back, so I ran home screaming. I never did like fireworks after that.

There were good times and bad as in all families.

We had many special times together as a family. In the evenings we would play cards and board games with mum.

There was no television in those days so we would often listen to stories on the radio together like “Journey into Space” and

“Quatermas”, these were serials, eagerly we would wait for the next exciting episode together huddled up next to the radio. My father’s mother lived with us until I was around eight years old, I remember her as a ‘dragon lady’. She didn’t like girls and I being the youngest she gave me the impression that girls were inferior to boys. I suppose that made me quite competitive with my brothers. I learned to ride a big boy’s bicycle by the time I was seven and would put one of my legs through the crossbar to ride it. I wasn’t to be beaten by my brothers.

Our house was two doors away from a church and even as a young child I remember wanting to go inside but my Mum told me that I wasn’t dressed well enough to go in there. I could hear people singing hymns even as I played in the sand pit at home and was drawn to God from an early age, but I didn’t recognise that until later in life. I attended St James School which was a high Anglican Church school and remember singing the old hymns and being taught from the bible.



Sometimes I was picked to read the bible lesson on the stage in front of about 500 children when I was ten. I must have been good at reading out loud; I think this was also preparation for what was to come later.

When I was eight, we moved house to a new council estate in a place called Bentilee. I was to spend the next seven years there and finish my school years. This was a difficult time for me as I didn't have a very good self image and so I found it hard to make friends and 'wagged' school a lot. My dad was back home with the family by this time and often I would come back home after my dad had left in the mornings. I found myself longing to be loved and cared for by a man. I wished so much that my dad would take notice of me, but he never did, except to correct me for doing something wrong. I tried so much to please him and used to make cakes and clean the house just for him so he might notice me and say something nice. By the time I was fifteen my dad was dead, I grieved that I had never had a

relationship with him. I visited his grave every day for a few weeks, mourning the loss.

This led me into a lifestyle of looking for a male to love me. I had many boyfriends who took advantage of the fact that I was looking for love. The boundaries in our family were very relaxed. At this time my eldest brother stepped in and took me to live with him and his wife where the boundaries were much more defined. I gave my brother's wife a hard time because I was not used to being restricted but they loved me and persevered to see my life changed. I left school at fifteen and got a job at a pottery factory like most of the locals did. While I was working there some Americans took over the factory and we were no longer allowed to wear slacks at work, I objected to this new rule and chose to leave the job rather than submit to them. The standard of work was not as good as before and now there are very few pottery factories left there.

I had ten different jobs in the first year before I got a job in a dog grooming salon called "Poodles'n Pals. The owner of the business had done her training in one of the big kennels in America and she was very proficient at clipping and grooming dogs. I loved working with animals, so I continued to work at this profession on and off for the next thirty-five years.

At seventeen I bought my own car which was a Morris Minor 1952 model. I had a boyfriend who was much older than me, he taught me to drive and soon I had my license and was what I called "cab happy".

I remember the day I got my driving license; I picked up some friends and we went for a drive on the M6 motorway and suddenly we saw steam coming from under the bonnet. I stopped at a petrol station and discovered I had no money. My brother had to drive quite a long way to pay for the repairs and I was so embarrassed that I decided to stay closer to home in future.

When I was eighteen, out of the blue, I decided to go to church. The rest of my family had been christened so I went to the church which was a high Anglican church, much like a Catholic church and I had the minister christen me. I remember coming out of the church afterwards with an icicle where he had put the water. I then started to go to church each Sunday, I taught Sunday school there. This was a time in my life when I could have continued to live a life of dignity and served God to become what He wanted me to be, but that wasn't to be. I don't remember the gospel ever being preached at church, but I do now know that God wanted to draw me into relationship with Himself.

At that time, I was working at a petrol station on the new M6 Motorway when I met Bernard who worked on the breakdowns. We started to see each other regularly and soon I began to miss church and forgot about God. I was persuaded by

him that God did not exist. I spent the next twenty years in darkness with no thought about God and His plans for my life.

I married Bernard even though my family didn't approve, they could see things in him which I couldn't because I was blinded by what I called love. More and more I became separated from my family, I ignored God and went my own way. Within a year we had a new baby boy. Inexperienced as I was, I tried to be a good mother and knit little jumpers and suits for him. Tony had to go into hospital to have an operation when he was 4 weeks old.

I remember crying as I sat next to him in hospital when he had tubes coming from his nose after the operation. He recovered well and grew to be a beautiful baby.

## Chapter 2

### AUSTRALIA

We had been married for two years and our baby was eighteen months old. We decided to immigrate to Australia and start life together in a new land. We sold everything we had and were soon on our way to make a new life. The journey took us to Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, then on to Cape Town where we stopped for a day and went by cable car to the top of Table Mountain. What a beautiful view of the ocean, it was there I had my first glimpse of Africa. Then we continued to Fremantle in Australia and then to Melbourne where we settled to begin our new life together. The year was 1968 and I was 24.

The government charged ten pounds for people to emigrate, we travelled on a Greek ship called the Ellenis, we lived in luxury for the journey which took about a month, we were

called "Ten Pound Poms". It was there I had my first taste of pumpkin and spinach, hard to imagine now.

When we arrived in Melbourne, we were sent to a camp that had been used as an army barracks and I felt like a prisoner of war, I cried and we asked friends if we could stay with them until we got our own house, they agreed, and we had our own rented place within a few weeks.

My husband got a job as a tyre fitter, then I worked at a dog grooming salon and had Tony cared for while we worked. We were reasonably happy, and I loved Australia.

I had some tests done and found that I needed to have an operation which was rather scary, so I was in hospital for a few weeks.

When I returned from hospital I haemorrhaged and had to go back into hospital.

I became a little suspicious of Ben at this time when I found a pair of someone else's underwear in my house on returning from hospital, but I chose to ignore it to keep our relationship together.

It's amazing what some people will do to keep the peace, and I was a peacekeeper like my mother. Little did I know this had been going on for a long time and continued for many years with many other women.

In 1975 I was 31 and my son was around seven years of age, much to my surprise I found that I was pregnant again and this helped to temporarily restore a very shaky marriage. We now had a beautiful baby girl. I continued to work in my own dog grooming business and was able to look after the children and run the business as well.

NEW PARTNER - NEW LIFE



Eighteen months later and after fourteen years together my marriage had fallen apart again and I was no longer willing to stay with my husband while he continued having affairs, so I escaped with a friend and went to live with him along with my children and my few pets. So, after a brief time of being a single mum I entered another relationship. My new partner treated me well for some time. He was a man who had never been married, he loved animals, we seemed to have a few things in common.

It had been about ten years since I had seen my family. I knew I needed to see my mum again. So, I set off for England with my two-year-old girl, I left my son with my partner. Mum was very old and sick. She had had a couple of strokes and was being cared for by her second husband, Bob.

I am so glad I was able to see Mum again, even for a few weeks, it was a special time in which my family came together again.

I returned to Australia and found my son had become very rebellious and I struggled to help him adjust to my new partner, he became very difficult to handle so I found it necessary to place him in a foster home where the boundaries were more consistent and secure.

## DARWIN

My partner had been running his own trucking business and had become very much in debt, so we decided to move to Darwin in the Northern Territory where he was to work in the mines and hopefully make his fortune. We travelled for about three weeks by car to get there which was a great holiday through Queensland to Cairns and then made our way through the outback of Australia. When we arrived in Darwin we got married. Soon after I found that I was having another baby. We spent a year in Darwin which was probably the worst year of my life.

The terrible heat of 40 degrees every day was beyond explanation and being in a caravan and pregnant made matters worse. You know, if we think another person is going to make us happy, we will be sadly disappointed.

My baby girl was delivered by caesarean section because of complications. She was a beautiful healthy baby. When she was six weeks old, we drove back to Melbourne and settled into another home and continued our interesting lifestyle.

## BACK TO MELBOURNE

We smoked and drank and had parties. I continued to work and found a lovely lady we called Auntie Thelma who was blind yet very capable to look after the children, she was such a great influence on our lives. I became pregnant again with my fourth baby but had a miscarriage at three months. We moved house again and I bought another dog grooming business called Milady's Poodle Boutique, I buried myself in the business and

continued in the lifestyle of drinking and smoking with my husband.

I was now thirty-eight and it had been about twenty years since I had been to church or even thought about God and it seemed that around this time, I started to look for my purpose in living. I no longer wanted to live the kind of lifestyle we lived and my love for my husband grew cold.

Soon I became pregnant again and had a beautiful baby boy. Strangely now I wanted to give up the business and be a wife and mother, I longed to care for this new baby and spend time with my children.

## SINGLE AND ALONE

I sold the business and soon after that my husband left me.

I was all alone! No family. No real friends I could talk to.

I went to social security who provided me with an allowance for the children and myself. So, I became a single mum with three children. I thought my husband would come back but he had moved back in with his mother and seemed to be enjoying his bachelor lifestyle. I cried myself to sleep most nights for a long time hoping he would come back. I thought that I would never recover.

About this time the children started to attend a Good News club after school, I noticed the people who ran the club were kind and really cared about the kids. I was still searching for the meaning of life and investigated things like the New Age, Spiritualism, meditation and witchcraft. I believe that God allowed me to investigate these things so that I would know that they are not the way to lasting peace and happiness. This has enabled me to minister to many people involved in these deceptions and I have no fear of being around people involved in other religions or cults. Perfect love casts out all fear and I

know that I am loved by a perfect God who accepts me unconditionally.

## SALVATION

I was working in a cafe where many of the people involved in witchcraft spent their time. A lady came into the cafe and ordered a cappuccino.

She had a slim figure and dark hair and I felt drawn to her. She was to have a lasting effect on my life. I sat with her at the table and listened to what she had to say. I could see that she was kind of “Lit up” She truly believed what she was telling me. She talked of things like being “Born again” and having a personal relationship with God. I was challenged by her and surprised at her boldness and confidence as she told me, “You must be born again to see the kingdom of God” Like Nicodemus in John chapter 3, I was unable to understand this concept, because like him I was not spiritually awakened yet.

She challenged me to go to church at a nearby place and I said “Ok.” I went to the church she suggested the next Sunday even though it was a long way from where I lived. I was amazed to find many people singing with their hands raised to God. They sang in a language I had never heard and seemed to be lost in what I now know as worship.

I left the church thinking they were crazy. I determined not to go back. I do believe that something must have happened as I spent that short time in the church in the presence of God. God knew I was searching. Like in the story of the prodigal son, our heavenly Father waits for the right time. Then He receives us not as a servant but as His precious child.

I had joined an aerobics group at a local church hall and one day found myself walking into a small room called a “Cry room”, I didn’t really understand why they would need a room for crying but I went inside anyway and found lots of books.

The books were about the bible. As I was looking around a group of people arrived and gathered in a group to start bible study. I commented that I didn't realize that people could study the bible. The leader suggested I go up to his house and chat with his wife and she would be able to answer my questions. I met his wife Alison and we sat down to talk. I found myself opening up to her about my life as a single mum and the struggles I was having. She listened and as I was leaving, she invited me to come back and visit again. I remember her telling me, "Just give your life to Jesus" I said, "It can't be that easy" But it was!

The next time I visited her she led me to surrender my life to Jesus, then I began my new life as a Christian. I had no idea what this meant and went into the church every morning for the next few days just waiting for something to happen, soon I realised that salvation is a free gift from God, we need to just receive that gift and become a new person.



I decided to go and visit the lady I had met in the cafe. When I arrived at her home, I was amazed to find her dancing around the room and singing in a strange language. She was full of joy, and I was rather embarrassed. She told me that I could do this too, but I didn't know if I really wanted to be that enthusiastic. Anyway, she prayed with me and I left her home still amazed at this encounter. The next day I was out driving with my children in my car and I suddenly began to sing in a strange language and realized that I was singing in tongues. I was now saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit. What joy!

I continued to go to church and attend a discipleship class for twelve weeks which helped me to understand more about what was happening to me.

They taught about repentance, salvation, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, water baptism, tithing, evangelism and discipleship.

After a few weeks I was baptized in water at a little spa in a friends back garden. I remember them asking me what song I would like to be played at my baptism and without thinking I said, "Amazing Grace."

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see.

From this time on I was a radical Christian. Every opportunity I had I would talk to people about Jesus and how He had changed my life and I found myself lighting up like Shirley, the lady who had come into the cafe.

I still had the task of raising my children alone but now I had Jesus and wanted so much to learn more about God and the plan He had for my life.

It was about this time that my eldest son came back to live with us. He started to attend church and got a job. It seemed that he

might be able to get his life in order. He had difficulty in forgiving his father for things he had done to him as a child and seemed to carry a lot of bitterness and resentment. He heard the gospel at church but chose not to respond to the salvation call. Soon he was back into a lifestyle of sin and he left home to live with a girl he had met. Around this time the house we were staying in needed repair, so we had to move out. I was not able to take the younger children with me, so they went to stay with their dad, so my eldest daughter and I left to stay at a refuge called Somerled in a small country town in Victoria called Marysville.

## Chapter 3

### GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

I had given my life to Jesus, but this was a special time in my life where I was able to get to know God in a more personal way.

I went for early morning walks in the beautiful rainforest and talked and sang to God.

I remember one day I was walking in an area I had not been to before and I walked for about five hours just talking to God and enjoying the countryside.

Suddenly I realised I was lost! I had the impression that there would be a fallen tree around the next bend and sure enough it was there, I knew I was safe and sensed that I could never be lost again because God knows everything, because He lives inside me. So, after walking for about five hours, I emerged tired but amazed at the grace of God.

One day I received a telegram to say that my mum in England had died. I cried for a few hours then God reminded me of a song we had been singing the night before. It was based on a scripture in 1 John 5.14

*This is the confidence that we have in Him that if we ask anything according to His will. He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

I had sent a letter to my mum a few weeks before telling her about how Jesus had saved me and changed my life. I believe my mum will be waiting for me in heaven. My sister wrote to me and commented how strange that I would send a letter like that just at that time. God is faithful!

Marysville is the place where I began to teach scripture in the school. I was so nervous the first time I entered the classroom for my first lesson with five year old's. The teacher was a

Catholic lady and supportive, I think she realised how difficult it was for me to step out and take on this mission. Over the following weeks I became more confident and started to enjoy going each week and teaching the children the simplicity of just trusting Jesus. I continued teaching scripture for the next seven years in Victoria and then again later when I moved interstate. This was a very important part of my preparation for public speaking.

I missed my two younger children while they were away from me but had no way of visiting them for a few months. I managed to get a car when I had been there for around six months and then I was able to drive for three hours to visit them.

Each time I left him, my one-year-old boy would scream as he watched me drive away and I would be broken hearted and have to stop the car and pull myself together.

I found a way to bring my two other children to Marysville, then we rented a house in town for another year. We prayed and God provided everything we needed for our home; we had a family altar where we would pray every night as a family. We wrote out a list of what we needed and ticked each thing off the list as God miraculously provided.

It seemed that there were quite a few churches in town but very few people there were open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, I could only find three people in town who were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

It was in Marysville I met Heather; she was such a talented lady. She was a hairdresser; she was also a single mum and was a leader in the guides and had a singles group called Segula. I joined the group, and we had around fifteen singles involved.

We would put on plays, dinner parties, games nights and have such great fun together. Often Heather and I would sing

together; she would play the guitar. Heather died a few years later of cancer, I found this difficult to understand and my faith was shaken for a while. My time in Marysville was a special time in my life when the three children and I started to put the pieces back together and start a new life.

We lived in the house in Marysville for about a year and then moved a little closer to civilization to Healesville into a government house.

## HEALESVILLE

We lived in Healesville for about seven years and I was able to go to a Pentecostal church and home groups. I started to build a dog grooming business again and bought a caravan which I had fitted out with benches and cages. The extra money enabled me to have the children go to a Christian school and I could still be home for them before and after school.



I had a friend named Jimmy who lent me his TV and video player with lots of videos of Kenneth Copeland, Jimmy Swaggart and Joyce Meyer so I spent many hours watching them and building my faith for the miraculous.

I decided to go to the Bible college of Victoria part time and study the word of God and learn more about godly principals.

I was attending a church in Lilydale called Mount Evelyn Christian Fellowship and trained at the bible college there for a year.

My children all went to a Christian school in Lilydale and so it seemed more practical for us to move there and so we moved again.

Lilydale is a larger town, so I was now nearer to friends and church and had more fellowship. We rented a little farmhouse and had chickens, goats, dogs and cats, my youngest daughter loved horses and was able to learn how to ride. Sharon had

joined Youth with a Mission, which is an organisation for training people for missions here in Australia and overseas, she was bringing books home like “Is that you God?” By Lauren Cunningham.

## YWAM CANBERRA

I read this book and was inspired to join YWAM and so we sold everything we had and caught the train to Yass to go to YWAM Canberra. The hardest thing was to find homes for the dogs. The children didn't want to go but I knew we had to make a fresh start again and I wanted to go for God full time and do missions.

We lived on the base at YWAM and the two children went to school there.

My oldest daughter was at the YWAM base in Melbourne.

My younger daughter was a very talented artist, she would draw horses every spare moment she had. She also loved to be

around horses, this was her passion. One day she came home and asked me if I would buy one of the horses from the local riding stable, I said I would pray about it. She said, “I mean it mum!”

So, we prayed, and God gave us ten reasons why we should buy the horse for her, so Timmy was hers and they were the best of friends for many years. She is now a very talented equine artist.

The discipleship course went for three months and then we were to do an outreach overseas for three months to prepare us for further missions.

We couldn't go on the outreach as the children were not prepared to go and so we stayed on base and I worked on staff for another nine months, working in children's ministry and in the kitchen.

We then went on to live at Mountain Trails in Wee Jasper which is a horse-riding camp for young people. We rented a house there and I worked on staff as an assistant cook and housekeeper for Gary and Ruth who were a great support to me. I home schooled the youngest child and the other caught the bus into Yass town to the High school which was an hour's drive from there.

This was a special time for us as a family, we grew vegetables and went on walks together and we got a big black dog named Jed.

## YASS

Our next move was into the town of Yass. We were led to a great church in Yass called "Eagles Nest Christian Centre", the Pastor and his wife have been great friends to me and my family for many years now and I value so much their input into my life.

We moved to a small farmhouse, so we were united as a family again.

By now both the younger children were at Yass High school Where the standard of education was not as good as the private schools they had been to, so they found school boring.

We moved again into town and the children were able to mix with others and they became quite rebellious. I remember grounding my boy, I told him if he went out, I would take his dog to the pound. He went out and I did as I had said. I think he didn't expect me to follow through and he was very upset.

"Let your yes be yes and your no be no"

This was a very difficult time for me as I had wanted so much for the kids to grow up with good moral principles, but they were not able to make a stand and of course sin is enjoyable for a time or people wouldn't want to do those things.

## A NEW HOUSE

We moved to a new house which was provided by the government for people on low incomes. It was a nice house about fifteen minutes' walk into town, we had Aboriginals living next door, they were friendly and good neighbours generally.

The only difficult time was when they had parties which went late into the night and very noisy. I remember talking to my neighbour and telling him that I prayed and stationed angels to protect my home. He said he knew that was true as he had seen an angel on my doorstep. I like the indigenous people, and it helped me to understand more about people from other cultures and backgrounds.

I had various jobs in town like working in the kitchen at a retirement village, professional cleaning of offices, schools, cleaning the police station and the courthouse.

Our church ran a Christian bookshop in town which I helped manage for about eighteen months. This was a great opportunity to get to know people from all the different denominations in Yass and gave me lots of time to minister to many locals and people passing through the town. I spent lots of time listening to Christian music, reading and in prayer. I enjoyed helping to run the business and decided to do a small business management course at the local Tafe College.

The bookshop closed and I started a business called “Angels on Assignment.” I spent a lot of days cleaning houses for working people, I liked doing this and it enabled my daughter to work with me. She became a very proficient cleaner too. I ran the business for quite some time and then decided I didn’t want to clean houses anymore, so I gave up the business and worked as a cook at a local aged care home.

MISSIONS

Our pastor often went on mission trips to the Philippines and so I decided to join them on a mission. This was with Australian Philippines Mission. It was a miracle crusade which involved preaching the gospel with signs and wonders following. A group of twenty-five of us went from different parts of New South Wales. We had six weeks of training before we left and learned how to share a simple testimony of how we were saved and preach a clear simple gospel message. This has proved to be valuable to me for future missions. We were away for ten days, it was a life changing experience for us all. We saw thousands give their lives to Christ as we preached the gospel and many miracles happened as we prayed for the lame, the deaf and blind. I remember praying for an old lady, her eyes were glazed over and grey in colour. Before my eyes I saw that her eyes were changing colour and she said through an interpreter that she could see clearly. Deaf ears opened as we



laid hands on each one in turn. There were shouts of joy as people were able to walk again, many after years of being lame.

The wonderful thing about missions like this is that we see how people can receive salvation and healing by simple faith in God to do what He says He will do. I love the lifestyle of these indigenous people and their simple faith. They have a wonderful closeness with their families, so they are grateful for simple things.

## AFRICA

We had a speaker come to church with his wife.

They talked about a mission they were going to lead which was to Kenya, they were going for two weeks to preach the gospel and teach at a bible school. I felt something move in my spirit and started to pray about joining them. By this time all my children had left home and I was living in a three-bedroom home by myself.

God led me by reading some scriptures confirming this and started to make plans to go.

I was so excited to be free at last to do what God has called me to do, World Missions.

I had no money for the mission to Kenya, God led me to the scripture in Matthew about people who leave homes and family and so I took a big step of faith and sold all my possessions again and paid for my ticket to Kenya. God said to me:

“Many of my children in Africa are dying with no arms to hold them”

Little did I know that I would be holding many of these babies and my heart would be broken for them so many times.

When I met the rest of the team in Sydney, I informed the leaders that I felt that I was not to return at the same time as the team but to stay on longer and continue to follow up the

leaders and work amongst the people there. With the team we had a great time preaching and teaching. Many were saved and healed at the crusades, we taught at the bible school at the place where we were staying. I remember how the rain would stop just before a crusade and begin again as soon as we were finished praying for people. They would run to their homes which were often miles away laughing and full of joy. Many of the children aged from six years were mothers to the babies and carried them on their back. The parents would be out working to earn enough for them to eat that night.

Things that we would take for granted like nappies were seldom seen and toilet paper was just for the rich and the Wazungus (White people)

There were no toilets except for a few pit latrines which were holes dug in the ground with a makeshift shed around them.

It was during this time that God birthed in me a great love for Africa and its people. I asked God to break my heart with the things that break His heart, He certainly did that.

As the team left for home, I realised why God had called me to stay.

I worked with a Pastor, he was a tall man and full of zeal for God. We spent many days walking the villages in his area and visiting the families. He would interpret for me as I preached the gospel in the homes, we saw so many people saved that he built a church there. I preached in a different church every week in Anglican churches. My messages were about salvation, being filled with the Holy Spirit and operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Teaching people how to walk as Jesus walked and advance the kingdom of God. Many were saved and the pastors continued to disciple the people after I left.

I visited many of the schools and as I preached the gospel as many as five hundred children would raise their hands to receive Jesus.

I went to stay for a week in a village a few miles from where I was staying. Most of my transportation was walking or on the back of a bicycle which they called a boda boda. I slept in a little mud hut and lived like the local people. We ate Ugali which is a cake made from Maize meal with Sekuma weki (kale) which is a green vegetable, the name means push quick, it can be eaten about three weeks after germination.

We ate chicken, freshly killed with bread and black tea.

Hundreds of people received Jesus as we went from house to house in the villages in that area. I am amazed how God can take us to the most remote places on this earth and we find people who are hungry for the word of God and ready and willing to receive Jesus.

I am also amazed that God can use a person like me to carry the presence of God and transform so many lives with the good news of the gospel.

I found many orphans in this area and grandparents who had been left to look after as many as ten to fifteen children after the parents had died from HIV/AIDS or malaria.

Many of the people have diseases that we can treat very easily in the western world but because of the lack of funding and medical attention millions die in Africa.

I remember visiting some grandparents who had just lost their daughter and her husband to HIV/AIDS; they had recently been saved and were caring for a young family. There was a little boy of about two years of age, I had seen him a few weeks before and he was sick and so we paid for treatment at the local clinic. I went into the hot, dark hut and saw the little boy wrapped up in blankets in the back of the hut, by now he was

the size of a six-month-old baby. I carried him out and unwrapped him, he was wet with sweat. We gave him some water and told the people to take him back to the clinic which they did but he died soon after. I discovered that this is the practice in many places, after the parents have died from HIV/AIDS they expect that the baby also has the disease and so they stop caring for the child and leave them in the hut to die.

“Many of my children in Africa are dying with no arms to hold them”

I spent two weeks in Kakamega where I went with a team out to the hospital. The wards were filled with people lying on plastic mattresses which smelled of urine and blood. I figured if they didn't go into hospital with a disease, they would surely come out with one. We saw people who were dying with terminal illnesses like TB, Cancer and HIV/AIDS.

Many of the people accepted the gospel message and were healed instantly others we found had recovered and gone home on our next visit. As we preached the gospel in the homes many were saved and healed.

On my last day in Kakamega I had an encounter that had a tremendous effect on me. We visited a children's home that was run by a Catholic organisation. I asked if I could see the babies and the sister in charge took me to a room where there were over thirty babies all under six months of age. Many of the babies were lined up across a bed all in a row, I was reduced to tears as she asked me if I would stay and help look after them. People leave babies on her doorstep because they can't take care of them, they know that she will love them and help find a suitable home for them. She was feeding three babies at a time and a young girl was changing nappies, she said it was a constant job just keeping the babies fed and clean. One of the team I went with saw a baby and felt very much



attached to it. She had recently lost a baby, so she said she wanted to try to get the money together to adopt the baby, this was about 10,000 Kenyan shillings

(Around \$250 AUS) almost impossible for people like these but we prayed that God would make a way. The next day I caught the bus to Nairobi airport and was on my way home to Australia.

## Chapter 4

### HOME AGAIN

I was back in Australia with no money, no job and no home.

I stayed with my Pastor for a while then moved to my daughter's place and got a job with the people I had worked with before as a night caretaker at the aged care home. I really enjoyed the work and had lots of opportunities to minister to the aged and dying.

Soon I had itchy feet again and started to pray about going overseas again. I really wanted to return to Africa and continue with the work there, but I felt led to go back to England and visit my family first.

I left Australia bound for England in December 2002 and found things very different there. The house I had last lived in was no longer there and a motorway went through the heart of the Potteries. My sister still lived in a tiny three-bedroom house

which was packed with furniture so that we had to manoeuvre our way around the house most of the time stepping sideways. They had a big black dog that lived inside and took up a lot of room.

It was good to see my family again as we had not seen each other since about 1977 when I took Sharon there as a two-year-old child. 24 years is a long time, so I found that my family were strangers.

All we had in common were our memories of our childhood and none of them seemed to be interested in God or what I was doing in missions.

I bought a BMW from my brother and within a few weeks I had a job working as a personal carer for the aged and invalids.

I found a good Pentecostal church where I became involved in evangelism and belonged to a cell group where I was asked to share about some of my experiences in Africa.

I moved to Chester and worked as a live- in carer to a mentally disabled lady, the pay was good and I was able to take the lady swimming three times a week and take her shopping.

I found England to be cold spiritually and I was distant from my family, I only stayed there for nine months until I had saved enough money, and so I was able to return to Kenya.

Only one person I know of was saved in all those nine months.

One of the best things that came out of my trip to England was that my brothers were reunited after many years of not speaking to each other because of a disagreement.

## BACK TO KENYA

I was excited to be going back to Kenya, but I didn't realise what was in store for me.

I landed in Nairobi and was met by my host who escorted me to the bus to Kisumu. Then there was another bus to catch to Mbita.

The journey from Nairobi to Mbita took about twelve hours on hot, dusty roads that had potholes and mud tracks most of the way. The buses were loaded to capacity; even the roof was full of building materials and furniture. By the time we arrived we were hot, sweaty and very tired and went straight to bed.

The next morning, I awoke in the home of a family where I was to stay. There was a man and woman and two children. This home had electricity, water and a bathroom and even pay TV which had the Christian channels from Nairobi.

I was introduced to a Pastor of a Pentecostal church who said he had the same vision as I had, which was to preach the gospel and see people come into the blessings of God. To work amongst the orphans and widows and educate the children to

see the next generation live a better life. He said it would be good for us to team up and work together and so I joined him in ministry. The spirit of poverty has affected the people of this land so much that it is very difficult to find anyone who can be trusted with money, this man seemed genuine, and we worked very well together at the beginning. We saw hundreds of people receive the gospel message and many people joined the church. We also had seven home fellowships in different areas which I used to visit each week on the back of a bicycle, we would teach them the word of God. We saw many miracles too, one day the pastor and I were walking together, we saw a man standing over a lady, the man was waving his arms around and very distressed. There was a bicycle by their side which he had been using to transport her to the clinic.

As we came closer, we saw that the woman was unconscious, her eyes were up in her head and fixed. We quickly began to pray for the woman and the pastor commanded the spirit of

death to leave her. I was also praying in tongues and rubbing her face. Suddenly, her eyes began to flicker and she came to life again. They then continued on their way to the clinic. We never saw them again, but we believed that a miracle had taken place, and she was alive. As we walked away, I said, "Did that really happen?" it was like a dream.

#### DACHE VILLAGE

On another occasion the Pastor and I were out walking we went to visit some of the members of the church. As we talked with them, they told us of a group of people nearby that were sick and living in extreme poverty. The problem was that they were involved in witchcraft and would not accept the help of our friend even though she was a nurse. We decided to visit and talk with the people and found the children were very sick. We visited each house and preached the gospel. Sixteen people were saved that day. The next day we returned with medical supplies and even more people were saved and they were now

willing for us to treat the children for worms, malaria and many intestinal problems caused by polluted water from the lake. We discovered that they had no toilet facilities for the twenty four houses and they were using the nearby bushes for their toilets and wash room. We asked how much it would cost to build a latrine and washrooms and they gave us an estimate. We agreed to buy the materials if they would provide the labour. We bought the materials then we found that none of them were willing to do the work unless we paid them, so we talked with them and persuaded them to build but even then, it took around six months to complete. We visited this village each week for about a year, teaching them the word of God but found that it was difficult for them to be committed and we saw little change in their lifestyle.

We worked together amongst the schools and set up programs for the children to grow vegetables for their families from seeds and gardening tools that were provided by a donor in



England. We had very little success because many of the teachers took the seeds home for themselves, also the children found it difficult to be committed to watering by bucket from the lake. There was only one school out of the ten that had any success with the project. This was in 2005 which was a year of drought, we found that the rains that usually come at this time were sparse and much of the produce was lost because of lack of water.

We paid a man to equip each of the schools with water tanks, but he kept the money and never got the job done.

I would visit the schools with a team from the church on the back of a bicycle which was my only means of transport in that area. I was carried for many miles from school to school and village to village preaching the gospel as the team interpreted and they learned how to preach a simple gospel message.

There are funerals almost every day in Mbita, many of them are babies that have died from water borne diseases and malaria.

We were conducting a funeral for a young child of around two years. I could feel the pain of this young mother as she sat beside her dead baby in the hut waiting for the burial which was in a shallow grave outside the hut. I sat beside her and even though there were no words I know that it was good that I could just be there for her.

When the funeral was over and people were eating beans and maize with rice, a young man ran to us and said that there had been another baby die in a nearby village and asked, could we come and visit the parents. We found that they needed money to buy an injection to help preserve the body, they had no money for a coffin or for food for the relatives. Funerals are a big thing in Kenya. Relatives and friends come from miles around to join their families to mourn the loss of loved ones.

Sometimes this can last for days, and someone has to feed the people that attend the funerals.

By this time, I had rented a house, the pastor I worked with and his family lived with me. He brought many of his family to live with us from an area many miles away. I felt unable to bring in the local orphans into our home. When the drought persisted, we were able to get many sacks of maize from the government. We distributed it to the local people to help feed the families. I had very little support financially and it was never enough to go around because of the many needs in Mbita.

Many people look to white people to take care of them, this is an attitude that was developed by earlier missionaries and so it is very difficult to change their mindset to help people to help themselves.

This was my main topic that I preached at church and in the villages each week. God is our provider, so we must look to Him for everything.

Matthew 6: 33 *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and everything else will be added to you”.*

The message is very difficult to get across to the adults who have all their lives been affected by poverty and lack. I believe that if the children can be brought up knowing the goodness of God and live lives of dignity and worth then these children can become the next generation that will bring about change in Kenya.

After I had been there for about six months, I had an email from a young girl I had known for some time through the internet, she came from Ohio and was keen to come and join me in the mission.

She arrived and we had some amazing adventures together.

Each day we would go walking and just sharing the simple gospel message, we found that nine out of ten people would respond and accept Jesus, many were healed from their sicknesses.

We went to an Island nearby called Mfangano by engine boat.

I said if I wasn't saved there is no way I would ride on the boats there. The boats are packed to capacity with people and their luggage and supplies for the Island.

On one of these trips a young girl of about eight years of age boarded the boat with a young baby. The baby was very sick, and I asked if I could hold it. As I took the baby, I could see it was near death and so we prayed for the baby. Suddenly it stopped breathing and became stiff and rigid. We continued to gather around the baby and pray, we were all amazed as it came back to life again, Praise God! We were told by the pilot of the boat that many people sent the sick babies with young

children to the clinic in the hope that they would give them free treatment as the parents had no money. We arrived at the Island and found that many of the people were Seventh day Adventists and believed in God but had not heard the gospel or received salvation. As many people received Christ we left with a hope of returning to continue to minister to the people there.

## GHERA

We visited an area we called Ghera which was about an hour's walk from the town of Mbita. We discovered that there were around a hundred acres of land that had been the property of a man who had three wives. He had died and left the widows and around thirty children with very little means of support. They had a few cattle and sheep and grew some vegetables. They belonged to a cult called Roho and believed in God but had never heard the gospel message. As we visited from hut to hut many were open to the gospel message and received Jesus.

We went into one hut and found a young lad of about fifteen; he was sweating profusely and shivering. We could see that he had Malaria, so we asked if we could pray for him. After we had prayed, we took him outside and sponged him down with water and gave him some water to drink. Within fifteen minutes the boy was up and walking around totally healed. Praise God!

We entered another hut, where we could just about make out in the darkness a man in a bed. He was very sick, his body was skin and bone, the smell in the hut was overpowering and my young friend had to go outside and was very sick. The man was named Samuel, he was an educated man and spoke good English. He said his wife was in hospital and his three children were outside. We prayed for him and promised to come back the next day with some food supplies. We did that and found his wife was out of hospital and there with him also. We prayed for her and the rest of the family and continued to visit and

take food to them. Within a few days the wife had died, so Samuel was left to try to look after the children. Samuel went back to live with his mother who cared for him and over a period of weeks he started to get well. People in Africa don't talk much about HIV/AIDS, but the disease is widespread especially in this area where polygamy (more than one wife) is practiced. Samuel lived for another six months or so and was having treatment at a nearby town.

## PRARI GOES HOME

Soon came the time for my friend to leave and her boyfriend came to join us for her last month with us. We continued to go into the villages and ministered in the churches and schools.

Now I was alone again, I really missed having another white person with me. Samuel the man who had HIV/AIDS soon found that he could no longer afford the treatment he needed, he died leaving three small children for his mother to care for. I



remember crying at his funeral and wishing I could have helped more. We continued to visit this community each week teaching them the word of God and helping them to grow in faith.

My vision is to help build communities which will take hundreds of orphans and bring them up in a loving secure environment. We can then help change the next generation into people who will be of godly character, able to care for themselves and help others to live a life of dignity.

After my friend left, I separated my ministry from that of the pastor I was working with. We found that we had conflicting interests and motives, so I had to move away from Mbita for a while for my safety. Many of the men in Kenya have the idea that they own women and often they will kill their wives rather than let them leave.

So, I did some traveling into Uganda with a Pharmacist I had met in Mbita. His wife was a nurse, and he had 2 sweet little girls.

On my return from Uganda, I was able to renew my visa for another three months and return to Mbita. When I went back, I tried to get my belongings back but was unable to do that for some time.

I stayed at the YWAM base and took some time out to seek advice and spend some time in prayer. I was feeling very disillusioned about continuing with the vision God had given me for Mbita but wanted so much to help the people who are really suffering.

I found that the Pastor had emailed the donors and told them things about me that were not true and so the funding for projects was stopped. I needed to get back to Australia, my money had all run out and I had no ticket to get back home.

The pastor would not let me collect my possessions and so I decided to talk to the leader at the Youth With a Mission base and he helped me to collect my belongings.

The Pastor now behaved like he wanted to help me and acted as though he was sorry, but I knew I could not trust him again.

So, I took some of my belongings and caught the bus back to Nairobi.

My daughter bought me an air ticket back to Australia but by now my visa had run out and I was an illegal immigrant.

So, I couldn't stay in the country but could not get out without a visa because I feared I would be arrested at the airport.

I went to see the pastor of a church in Nairobi; he had a member of his church who worked in immigration. This man helped me to renew my visa, and so I was able to leave Kenya and return home to Australia. I am constantly reminded that

we serve an amazing God who is always faithful no matter  
what the situation.

## Chapter 5

### BACK TO AUSTRALIA

When I came home, I stayed with my daughter and her partner and my grandson who was aged six. It was so good to see my family and friends again after almost three years away. Almost immediately I was able to receive a pension and so I didn't need to work. I decided to do some voluntary driving in the community and bought a car, a red Toyota Corolla which was old but very reliable. I found it very difficult to adjust to life in the Western world again, I felt like I was living in limbo, I longed to be back in Africa, living a simple life and preaching the gospel. I find that Westerners are less inclined to respond to the gospel message than people who know that they really need God.

There was never a time in Africa that I had to convince people that God exists, not so here in Australia. I see so many people

here who think they have it all but are living in spiritual poverty.

I used to say to the Africans, “You people think you have nothing but have everything when you have Jesus. Many westerners think they have everything but have nothing.”

I still struggle with the fact that we have so much but are not satisfied, many people are not grateful as they live their lives looking for something else to make them happy. The effects of living amongst the people who have nothing makes me realise how much we need to become what Christ has called us to be and totally surrender everything to Him.

Because I was finding it difficult living out of town, I looked for a place of my own in town to stay and found a little unit that was inexpensive and self-contained. The unit was in a retirement village, I lived amongst people who were my

seniors, this was interesting as they saw me as one of their children, they were very kind and I was comfortable there.

Comfortable is scary!

I looked for ways to return to Africa and talked to people on the internet and prayed that God would guide me to where I could continue to preach the gospel and see souls won for Christ.

I met a young pastor on the internet who lived and ministered in Manila in the Philippines and he invited me to come and work with him there amongst the people in the slums of Smokey Mountain. So, I decided to go for three months to work at the rubbish dumps there.

## MANILA

Because I had been to the Philippines before I imagined that things would be like the last time I went. In many ways it was similar, hundreds of people were saved and many were healed.

The pastor, his wife and I ministered together, we were a very united team.

As we preached it was hard to see where one finished preaching and another started because we were so in tune spiritually.

Pastor and I went to minister to a group of senior citizens, there were about forty people. We preached a simple gospel message and found that everyone responded, Pastor led them in prayer to receive Jesus. We then ministered to the sick we found that God opened the ears of the deaf; many had pain in their body which left as we prayed for them one by one. God is faithful to His word!

We visited lots of people who lived in shacks at the rubbish dump and prayed for their needs. Many accepted the salvation message and we saw people's lives transformed by the power of God as we shared the love of God with each one. We were



able to set up a program for nutritional feeding for a group of children and many of the children benefited from this. A lot of them had worms which they expelled within a few days on a nutritional program and so their bodies were able to take in the nourishment from the daily supplement with milk.

Pastor had already started helping people to set up small businesses by micro finances from a donor in England and we saw many of them start to build a business and see God in action to bring them out of poverty. The pastor also got a loan and began a small business from his home at Smokey Mountain and soon he and his wife were very busy.

After the first month ministry slowed down because of the hot weather which was unbearable during the day and so we spent many hours in prayer and fasting. By the end of two months, I decided that my work there was finished, so it would be good for me to return to Australia, so we said our goodbyes and I was on my way home again.

## MALAWI AND KENYA

After two years back in Australia I was introduced to a Bishop in Malawi and as we got to know each other I decided to visit him for a few weeks on my way back to Kenya.

I was planning to visit the leader of the YWAM base who had helped me so much while I was in Kenya before.

I set a date which was October 30th and started making plans to leave. I very rarely have the money for my missions to overseas countries, but God shows me to just walk by faith, because He always provides.

Close to the time I was to leave I had a phone call from a friend who asked me when I would be going back to Africa? I told him I believed I would be going back on October 30th, and he said he had some money and would like to send me a gift.

I was amazed within a week I received a cheque for just over \$2,000 and this helped so much in buying my air ticket. We serve a God who never fails us when we will just walk by faith trusting in His goodness and faithfulness.

My time in Malawi was so exciting. We visited many remote villages and saw so many people receive salvation and healing.

We went as far as the border of Mozambique to where they grow much of the rice in Malawi. This is the primitive Africa I love so much with mud huts and pit latrines, where children and many of the adults have never seen white people before.

Some of the children run away screaming others have big grins with rows of white teeth and want to touch our skin and feel the difference.

I waved goodbye at the airport to my new friends in Malawi, and we talked of my coming back later for a longer period.

As I flew on to Kenya, I realised how blessed I am to be able to live a life of faith and to experience so many different places and people around the world and introduce so many people to my best friend, Jesus.

It was close to the time of the elections when I arrived in Kenya and there was much excitement as each tribe seemed to support their leaders with a passion.

There were many rallies, it seemed that there might be a new president from the Luo tribe named Ryela Odinga.

I was met at the airport in Nairobi by a friend who took me by bus to Kitale where we visited his orphanage and school called Sylvia Rehema School. It seemed they had named their school after me which was a great honour.

I stayed with a man named Mike who had around 20 children, most of them orphans and I was able to help by buying some of the uniforms for the school children. We had a seminar where I

was able to teach, many were saved and experience the love of God through prayer.

From Kitale I travelled to Kisumu where I was met by my host Ben and taken by bus to Homa Bay. Ben had a car which was quite a luxury for me as I was used to traveling by public transport.

We visited a remote school where Ben's brother was a teacher at Got Kabok. The school was on the border of two districts and so was missing out on funding from the government and the children were poor and very much undernourished. We took lots of pictures and prayed with the children for God to intervene and send help.

After a week we went back and took some supplies of maize and beans, we were able to preach the gospel to the parents of the children and over 100 people accepted salvation. Then we

gave each family some of the maize and beans and prayed that God would touch this community and school.

The reports that I have had are that this is now one of the best schools in the area. All glory to God!

We visited the Homa Bay hospital and preached the gospel to the many patients there and prayed for healing. God healed many of them and many of them received salvation. Praise God!

While I was in Homa Bay I took the opportunity to visit Mbita where I had lived for almost two years and visit some of the people I knew. God gave me the opportunity to meet with the pastor I had worked with, then we were able to meet on good terms and see the purpose of God in all that had happened.

Praise God that we can have opportunities to resolve any issues and disagreements this side of heaven and live in peace with all people.

It was December 30th, and the elections were going on around the country. It seemed that many were being accused of corruption and people said votes were missing and very quickly President Kibaki was sworn in again as the President. Many people were angry, and the police were accused of killing many people who were trying to escape. There were police shooting in the streets and tyres were burning to stop traffic. Many people who were living away from their own homes and tribes were killed mercilessly by angry mobs.

I travelled back from Mbita to Homa Bay on the back of a motor bike which took a couple of hours and then I had to stay hidden until the violence had subsided. I asked God, "Shall I go home?"

He said, "Where is home?" What could I say?

I know my real home is of course in heaven and I am always safe when I am in the centre of the will of God.

So, I stayed and continued to minister in Homa Bay.

Soon I was on my way back to Australia with my many memories of Malawi and Kenya that I would never forget.



## Chapter 6

### MALAWI

I found myself back in Malawi in 2008 and was able to help set up a church and a bible school to help the people there.

Malawi is known as one of the poorest countries in Africa and that was certainly what I found in the villages. The town people seem to enjoy a reasonably good life, and the transport and roads are quite good compared to the rest of Africa that I have seen.

I loved the villages and found the people there very friendly, they made me feel very welcome.

The thing that I have found in most of the countries that I have visited is that it is not that there is not enough money, but people are not trained in money management, so it is difficult to change the way that people think and believe even after they get saved.

Many see the white people as their way to getting finances and so most of my time is taken in teaching people how to trust God for what they need instead of man. Even though many souls were won for the kingdom of God I left there quite disillusioned and discouraged.

When I returned to Australia, I felt that my times of visiting Africa were over, so I settled down again with my daughter and spent a lot of time seeking God and allowing Him to minister to me.

## JOSHUA

It was around this time that I met Joshua on the internet.

He lived in Homa Bay and as I shared with him about my decision not to return to Africa. He was a great encouragement to me and each time we wrote to each other I felt a new

passion to not give up but pursue what God has called me to do in Africa.

Joshua has a wife and 6 children and worked as a voluntary worker overseeing many projects for NGO groups and helped people to be accountable with the money they were given.

As we wrote to each other Joshua shared with me his testimony and his vision and I decided to give Kenya another try. We both felt that it would be good for me to visit him in Homa Bay and see if or how we might work together on the vision God had given to both of us.

The vision God gave me when I first visited Kenya in 2000 was to build a community for orphans and widows and it would be called 'Heaven on Earth' So, I felt I should visit Joshua in November of that year and stay with him and his family at his home in the slums, I find this is the best way to get to know people.

My pastor was about to go on a mission to the Philippines and so I decided to join the team and use the time to refresh and visit the Philippines again.

Dumaguete is a very rich part of the Philippines and is called the motor bike city. It was evident why they call it that.

Thousands of people riding on motor bikes added colour to this city. We had fun ministering together as a team and preaching the gospel in the barangay's (villages) I stayed on after the team had left and helped with following up the new Christians and more evangelism. I enjoyed staying with a family of a pastor there in their home.

I arrived back in Kenya and Joshua was at the airport in Nairobi to meet me. We felt very much connected in the Spirit from the beginning and chatted most of the way to Homa Bay about our families and our expectations and visions.

We arrived in Shouri Ako to find it was in a slum area where there were good opportunities for evangelism. So, the first thing we did was to organise a team to go out and preach the gospel.

We hired a video camera and set out to preach door to door in the community. The people in the area were very open to the simple gospel message we preached and 150 people were recorded as praying for salvation that day. We also prayed for many sick people and saw the power of God in action as many testified that the pain had left their body. One particular lady we found lying on a dirt floor in a tin shed and after we had prayed for her, we returned after a few days to take food.

Eventually we had the house cleaned and bought a new bed for her and organised people to go and make sure that she was properly cared for. We heard that she died recently but at least we know that she received salvation and had some personal care and realised that she was loved.

Joshua had told me about his home village, which I was eager to see so we set out to visit his family in Buche Village. When we arrived there, it had not rained for some time and it looked very dry and barren. The rain clouds were starting to build up as we arrived, so we prepared to visit some of the locals in the village.

The people here live in mud huts and have no electricity or toilet facilities. Paraffin lamps are used for lighting and wood, or charcoal is used for cooking. Water is carried from a hand operated pump in large containers on the heads of the women.

The ploughing is done by bulls, two or four of them are yoked together and controlled by the loud voices and singing of the men. All the bulls and cows have names and respond to their names when called.

The first people we met were Joshua's mother and aunt. They were dressed in some clothes that showed us they belonged to

a local cult, so we knew they were not yet saved. They received the gospel message, so mother removed her head dress after praying for salvation.

We visited many houses and found that most of the people had never heard the gospel message and were eager to receive salvation and hear more about what we were teaching.

The next day the rain poured down and so we were unable to go and visit people. To our surprise many people started to visit the house where we were staying and ask about the message that we had brought, and they all prayed for salvation.

We were in the village for about 6 days and as many as 10 people visited the house each day to receive salvation. One day we had a lady's group of around 25 women come and visit us. Only about four of these ladies said they were saved and so we had a glorious time preaching the gospel and leading the others in prayer for salvation with much rejoicing and singing.

Soon it was time to leave Buche Village, we realised that well over 100 people had prayed for salvation during the week we were there.

It was hard for us to leave the village as it had rained most of the time we were there. They managed to find some gumboots for me, and we set off back through the mud to Homa Bay, tired but so happy that God had once again showed us His amazing grace and favour.

The time I spent with Joshua, his wife and six children were very precious and I knew that he truly is a man of prayer, commitment and faithfulness to God. He has a very special and unique calling on his life. Men like Joshua are few and far between and I love and respect him so much.

Soon it was time for me to leave and go back to Australia.

Joshua took me to Kisumu Airport, and I flew to Nairobi to start the long trip home.



## HOME AGAIN

Back in Australia I stayed with my daughter and her 10-year-old son out in the country. It was good to have an input into their lives and help her son with his schoolwork. We watched movies together and went for long walks with the dog and had picnics together.

I had the use of her car some days and so had some freedom to be in town most days. I tried to get back into the western lifestyle again and when I approached the people at the retirement village, they let me rent a unit and I was able to get a bed and some other furniture. So, back into comfort again. Comfort is scary!

## Chapter 7

### BRINGING HEAVEN ON EARTH

One morning as I was praying, I realised that I wasn't finished with Africa and my travels just yet. I knew that I could not settle down in the western world again as God had put a passion in me for Africa and I knew I had to return and this time it was to be permanent.

So, I started to get rid of my baggage again, giving away most of my things to the second hand shops and to friends.

God showed me that I should go back to Kenya to work alongside Joshua and live in Buche Village. We were to build a church and start a school for the many orphans and vulnerable children living in the Buche area.

I had a friend who was also interested in coming for a short visit and as she prayed God put all the pieces together and we left Australia in April 2010.

Joshua met us at the airport, it was so good to connect with him again and I knew that I would be spending the next year getting to know him better and seeing the vision of Heaven on Earth established according to the plans of God.

We stayed in a hotel in Nairobi overnight and then left by minibus for the long journey to Homa Bay. We took lots of pictures along the way through Rift Valley and my friend was excited to see the land she had been eager to see for so long.

It was late when we arrived in Homa Bay, we had dinner and then off to bed for a good rest after the long journey from Australia.

We were all eager to go to the village and see how things were going there. So, we packed some clothes and set off in a taxi to Buche Village with a car full of people.

My love for Buche grows stronger each time I go there. We were welcomed with the singing of many children as the

village people came to carry our luggage and greet us with open arms and big smiles. I discovered that a man named Ben had built me a pit latrine so that I wouldn't have to use the bushes like the locals, I thank God for that little tin shed.

Chickens were killed and lunch was prepared as we sat and shared with the people and met new families and children.

Everyone wanted to say hello to the Wazungu's (white people) and the house was continually full of people chatting happily in the Luo language. In the evening, we sang songs and taught the word of God until late into the night.

How I love the simplicity of living in the village, no stress, no rushing around, just peace and tranquillity.

Surrounded by cows, bulls, chickens and sheep, life doesn't get much better than this. We spent a week at the village and then it was time for my friend to return to Australia.

So, we started our long journey back to Nairobi and said our goodbyes and then back home to the village. We continued to visit house to house and preach the gospel and many more people received salvation.

We saw a boy of about 10 years carrying sticks on his head that he would use to make charcoal which he would then exchange for food at one of the houses. He didn't speak any English and we discovered that both his parents had died and he was alone.

He received salvation and went on his way. The next morning God said to me, "Go and get him" This was the first time that God had allowed me to have a child and I believed this meant I was here to stay for some time.

We sent for him and asked him if he would like to live with us and he said yes. I asked him his name and he said it was Okello. I asked him if we could change it to Joshua and he agreed. So,

he slowly started to play with the other children and then he disappeared.

The next morning, he returned and brought the charcoal he had made as a gift to us and now he was our child.

Little Joshua now lives in Homa Bay with Joshua and his family and is doing well in school and has adjusted well to the life in town.

We were believing God for a large piece of land to build our community of 'Heaven on Earth' and very soon a neighbour said that he and his brothers had land that they wanted to sell.

We looked at the land and prayed for God to provide the finances to buy it. Within a few days some money had come to our bank account, so we were able to pay some of the money as a deposit for the land and Joshua went to sign the agreement.

Within a few weeks we had finished paying for the land and it was ours. The land is different to most of the land in the area in

that the soil is sandier and will be more productive. There are many rocks and our main house which will be 2 storeys and will be built on a big rock with a beautiful panoramic view.

## NURSERY SCHOOL



Now it was time for us to start the Nursery School that God had told me to start. We had a meeting and recruited some teachers

and found that a local church had offered to let us use their church hut for the classrooms and so over 60 children turned up to join the school. They were aged from 3 to 7 years and most of them had never attended school before as the parents were unable to afford to send them to the local schools and it would have been much too far for them to walk.

Next, we made a list of things we would need and went shopping in Homa Bay town. Exercise books, pencils, blackboards, teaching aids all had to be purchased and the ingredients for the porridge we would give them each day. We bought cooking pots and utensils, and we hired a lady to cook for them. So, our school began!

At our first parents meeting we had the opportunity to preach the gospel to over 50 people and many of them responded to the gospel message and prayed for salvation and healing.



We asked the parents about how they would like to be involved in the school. Many offered to help with cleaning up the land and some said they would give us wood for us to start to build the church. So right away we measured out the land together and cleared the place for our church building which would hold up to 300 people.

I was living with one of Joshua's relatives and she was cooking for me and washing my clothes. We were introduced to one of the children at the school, his name is Felix. He was very thin and undernourished and had malaria. We discovered that he was a total orphan, so we went to visit the family that he was staying with. We knew that we had to take him to live with us when we saw where he was living and met the people he was staying with. Felix is now growing into a fine young man and has a great love for God and compassion for people and animals.

So, we moved into Joshua's house and began to take other orphans to live with us. We had five children staying with us at the village and five with Joshua in Homa Bay.

Our school had 75 children, this number was to increase as we continued to build extra classrooms, the children were all doing well and speaking English at home. The parents were very impressed as many of the parents don't speak English. The children go home singing songs about the love of God and the way to salvation. We know that this is having a big impact in the lives of the people of Buche and in the surrounding villages.

Heaven on Earth Ministries now has its own church building which we meet in regularly.

**FUTURE VISION**

I still love Kenya and the lifestyle; I would have been quite happy to continue to live there indefinitely to finish what I started. Now I am eighty years and believe my time of overseas missions might be over. I am still able to be part of the ministry by passing on finances and encouraging the people to bring people to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

Visit me, donate to Heaven on Earth Ministries, or contact me through my website at:

[www.sylviasdream.com](http://www.sylviasdream.com)

I am living in Australia now, spending some time writing and building websites to market my autobiography and other

books. My children are here in Australia busy with their own families. I intend to finish what I started and see more people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus. I cannot rest until I do what God has birthed in me and help build this community of Heaven on Earth. My desire is to see people restored to a place of dignity and worth.

What are the gifts that God has placed in your heart?

Are there dreams inside lying dormant?

Are there gifts and abilities that He's given to you that have been buried deep inside?

I pray that you will find that determination inside of you to hold on to everything that God has placed in your heart. He will then help you bring it to pass in His time and His way.

Dear reader, it is with sincere gratitude that I would like to thank you for reading my autobiography, One Life the Narrow Path.

I truly hope this book has been a blessing to you in some way.

If you have enjoyed this book, please consider being kind enough to leave a review on Amazon.

If you can share it on Facebook, Twitter or anywhere else I thank you and will gift out a FREE kindle copy of my book.

You can contact me at [sylviasuhr@gmail.com](mailto:sylviasuhr@gmail.com) or friend me on Facebook to keep up with updates and praise reports here <https://www.facebook.com/sylvia.suhr>

## Wading through the mud in Buche Village



## Got Kabok School



## Homa Bay



## Malawi













