

30.7.23 pm Pat and Wilf Uquhart Testimony

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Date: 30 July 2023

[0 : 00] Isn't it lovely to sing these wonderful hymns? What a wonderful place heaven is going to be, where we will be singing these hymns and psalms endlessly.

I hope my voice lasts up a bit better than it is here. We plan to break our testimonies into two halves, to share up to the point where we came to know the Lord, then to change over, and then to come back and share how God called us into what we are now doing.

On the 14th of June, 1958, I tried to commit suicide. And it came about this way.

I had been out on my postal delivery and returning. The inspector told me to go and see the, what do you call him, the second in command under the postmaster.

And going up the stairs, I wondered, what on earth have I done this time? Because he never asked to see anyone unless you had really done something you shouldn't have done. So I knocked on the door, went in, and he said, Mr. Urquhart, I want you to go off duty immediately.

[1 : 22] I want you to go to your aunt's house in Hilton. Get going. Cycling up the road, I was trying to work out, what is this all about?

And when I got to my aunt's house and went in, I knew there was something dreadfully wrong. And she told me that that particular morning, my mum and dad, my brother and auntie, were travelling between Fort Augustus and Fort William through the village of Lagan.

And if you know it, you know it's cut in two by the Caledonian Canal. My brother was driving, and as he came through the village, he saw a bus parked at the side of the road.

Assuming, we think, that it was stopped to pick up or let off passengers, he pulled out and overtook the bus to discover it was standing in front of the gates of the Caledonian Canal, which were closed. The car hit the gates, burst them open, and fell into 27 feet of black water. And ironically, the boat going through was a Royal Naval Divers Training ship, and there were divers on board in full uniform.

[2 : 45] And they went down, but they couldn't find the car. 27 feet deep, black water because of the size of the canal, not that very wide, and it took them, I don't know how long, to find the car, but when they did, all four were drowned.

That's why I tried to commit suicide, because my life disintegrated, and I didn't know what to do. And had my uncle not been with me, if you know Inverness, it's cut in two halves by the River Ness, and this was the 14th of June. June generally is the month when the River Ness is in spade, and it was, and I had planned to jump over the side of the bridge into the water.

To end it all, there seemed no future. But strangely, my uncle knew there was something working inside me, and I said to him, look, it's all right, I know where I'm going, I can see the house I live in, on the other side of the river.

He said, I'm coming with you. If he hadn't, I wouldn't be here. And when I went back to work afterwards, it was, I won't talk about the funeral, because I can't.

[4 : 23] But when I went back to work, I was contacted by a guy that I didn't particularly like. He was a bit of a wimp, and I didn't take to him at all.

And he said, well, you know the YMCA? And I said, I'm a postman. Of course I know the YMCA. It's in Bank Street. He said, would you like to go down? I said, why would I want to? He said, well, look, they've got table tennis, they've got snooker, they've got billiards, they've got umpteen different sports.

Come on, why not come? You'd enjoy it. But I had nothing else to do. Up to this point, I had gone to the cinema every night of the week, bar Sunday. And it held nothing for me after the accident.

So I went with him, and I saw something that night that I needed to see. I saw happy people, youngsters, who obviously knew the Lord, but I didn't know anything about this, knowing the Lord.

I must cut down. I'm going on too long. But one night, I went into the YMCA, and there was nobody there. A big building, and I thought, this is odd.

[5 : 39] How can this great big muckle building be wide open, and there's nobody there? So I went from this room to that room, to that room, to that room, and eventually barged into this last room.

And that's where they all were. And they were sitting, listening to a gentleman preaching from the Bible. I didn't know what he was preaching.

I didn't know enough about the Bible to know anything about the gospel. But that night, I heard the gospel, and I discovered that even for someone like me, there was hope.

And I talked to the gentleman who spoke, a very paka gentleman. He was a brigadier general in the British Army in India.

Very prim and proper. Stood as straight as a ramrod. And he said, Has God spoken to you tonight? And I said, I think so. He said, You need to get right with God.

[6 : 41] And I said, Not yet. What do you mean, not yet? I said, Well, I'm going to go home, and I'm going to talk to God at home. Not here. He said, You should do it here. And I said, No.

So I went home to my digs, shared a room with another five or six apprentices, pulled the blankets up over my head in bed, and in total darkness, I prayed, and I said, Lord, save me from my sin.

I was in total darkness under the blankets, and suddenly there was a brilliant light. The light wasn't on in the room at all.

The room was in total darkness, and yet underneath the blankets, it was just blindingly bright. And I, who knew nothing about the scripture, thought, Ah, the light of the gospel has broken into your heart.

And you know it did. It was fabulous. And you know, after 67 years, it's never changed. I was an ordinary kind of student, an ordinary kind of person.

[7 : 58] I grew up in Perth. Well, yes, grew up in Perth. And people from Perth, when they went for tertiary education, they would probably go to Edinburgh, not Glasgow, as people here all go to Glasgow.

Edinburgh is far superior. But anyway, I did, and I had been going to church. I was a Sunday school teacher. I played the, because I was doing higher music, I used to play the organ, and get paid for it.

And you know, because it was practice. You paid for it. Yeah. Yeah. It was, that was okay. Especially for me, with nothing.

But anyway, I did all of these things, and I was, you know, Dad was an elder, and yeah. So Mum and Dad said to me, when I, before I was going away, they said, well, you should really join the church.

It was Church of Scotland. You should really join the church. So I thought, okay, I don't know what that means, but I'll do it. There wasn't a very good minister at the time, but I went to a class. Didn't understand much of what you were saying.

[9 : 07] I, I went through it all, and I joined the church. I remember Mum saying to me afterwards, how do you feel? I said, what do you mean, what do I feel? I just feel the same as I did before, because it wasn't real.

Then I went to Murray House College of Education in Edinburgh, the very best primary school teaching college. It was better than Jordan Hill. It was better than, well, all right, I'm, I'm slightly biased.

Only, only slightly. I'm, I'm silly to be frivolous, but I went there, and that was of the Lord, because I'd wanted to do music, because I did music, I like music, and Dad said to me, if music is your hobby, and you take it as your job, it will stop being your hobby.

So, because of that, I went to Murray House, and because of that, I became a Christian, and more than that, I became a teacher, because that was very, very appropriate, later on.

So, anyway, I went up to East Suffolk Road, and, eh, hostels, what were they called, the East Suffolk Halls of Residence, in Edinburgh, down Ewington, several of them, and there's a lot of Christians there, and they had, see you there, and they, you know, when I arrived, you know, they befriended me, and they were smashing girls.

[10 : 33] You know, I thought, wow, what have they got? Because I don't have it. You know, they were really, they were, really, really lovely people, and so they said to me, are you a Christian?

I said, aha, I said, yeah, I'm a Christian, and they must have known, I wasn't a Christian. Anyway, they went along, and I did, took part, and all these things, and all the rest of it, and that was that whole year, and I had a really great year that year.

I thought it was terrible, really, but I thought it was a Christian, right? At the beginning of second year, went, went again to, down, down to Edinburgh, and they got together, and said, look, we're doing, we're doing an event for new students coming up.

You help us. So I said, okay, I'll help. And they so did that meeting, that all things happened, that made me realise I wasn't a Christian.

They did a trial by jury, and it was just a wee playlet, that I had the part of what I was, and the guilty, and the judgment made was, I was not guilty of being a Christian.

[11 : 43] They were trying people for being a Christian. And I answered all the questions, like I've just said to you, because that was what it was. And the verdict was, not guilty.

I thought, what? I'm not a Christian? I thought I was a Christian. And then they showed something else, and then Anne Legg, Anne Allen as she, Anne Legg as she was, she became Anne Allen. She read from John 14, where it talks that Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. You know, all of that bit. And then Philip says, just, just, just, just show us, show us the Father, and that's enough.

And Jesus said to him, have I been so long with you, and still you don't know me, Philip? And I thought, I don't know Jesus, and she brought this up.

Do you know Jesus? I thought, I don't know. I know about Jesus. I know all about Jesus. I can tell you all stuff about him, but I don't know him. And afterwards, I went to Anne, and I said, look, I need to do something.

[12 : 52] So I went away with her, another one of the CU, and we went, and we knelt, found a room, and we knelt in this room, and she explained, and I gave, I was smashing, sorry, I get, you know, I'm very emotional, you know I am, but it's okay, I'm in, it's okay.

It's good, it's good. You know, we're the only people, creatures on earth, that can actually cry. Jesus cried. We've got that facility, so that, anyway, I thought, well, this is just wonderful.

So I came to the Lord, and she said, very good girl she was, she says, right, we've got to go and tell all the others. You've got to tell somebody then. So we went looking for them all, went to this room, they weren't there, went to this room, and eventually found them.

And I'm going to blow again, but they were all praying for me. Oh, went to bed that night, and I thought, this was the 3rd of October, 1963.

I went to bed that night, which is what, I'll be 60, I'll have my, my spiritual birthday, I'll be 60 this year. Eee, 60 years of Christian, wow. That makes me quite well, anyway.

[14 : 09] I just thought, this is not going to last, but it has, and it's wonderful. That's where I am. That's why I am a Christian. By his grace.

When I came to know the Lord, I joined the Inverness YMCA. Maybe you don't know what the YMCA is, but it's the Young Men's Christian Association.

There's also a YWCA, and we had both in Inverness. And I used to attend regularly, and on Sunday evening, we had an after-church rally, eight o'clock, and we had some crackers of speakers came along.

Fabulous people. It was really, really encouraging, and really inspiring. Then we had another class of people who came and spoke, and they were called missionaries, and they were dangerous.

They were dangerous, because they gave out a challenge, and they said, there's work to be done, and we need workers to do it.

[15 : 21] And I began, as a young Christian, to sense that there was a world out there that hadn't heard anything about Jesus, and I had some kind of responsibility, it would seem, to do something about it.

And these missionaries kept coming, and there was one came, and he talked about a country called Upper Volta. Now, I asked you this morning to find it on the map.

Did you find it? Who said yes? Aye, okay. Well, it's actually, Upper Volta's not on the map, because it changed its name to Burkina Faso, the land of upright people, it means.

And this missionary talked about the need in Burkina Faso. God did something, I'm not sure what it was, but he gave me a keen interest in Burkina Faso, and I began to read and read up and study about this obscure country in West Africa.

And then another missionary came to our after church fellowship, and he too spoke about Burkina Faso. And he mentioned the work that he was doing, and the need that he had to have a reliable vehicle.

[16 : 54] And after he went away, we, as a YMCA, got together and got some money together, and put it towards that fund, which went out to Burkina Faso, and he eventually was able to buy this Land Rover, and use it in his work.

And I was sensing more and more that God was laying a burden on my heart for Burkina Faso. And I kept wondering, is all this from God?

Is it from God? Is it from Wilford? Is it some sort of misguided, albeit good intention? If that makes sense.

And then I was reading in 2 Corinthians 5. Ach, no, but I'll do for this too. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come. And then it said, and all this is from God.

[18 : 11] And I thought, wow. All this challenge, all this growing desire inside of me, is not from me, but it's from God.

And I sensed God. Yes, thank you, ma'am. This is my secretary behind. I don't need notes, you see. My notes are behind me.

And I sensed that if I were to go to West Africa, I would need to learn French. I had big enough problems with English. And I needed to go and learn French.

Because it is an ex-French colony. And all governmental business is done in French. So I went to France to learn French. Joined up with Operation Mobilization.

And if I can say it in a free church, I had a ball. It was fabulous. Really, really great. I enjoyed it so much, I would have stayed there.

[19 : 14] But God's call was to go to Burkina Faso. And I was called into training in the WEC College in Glasgow.

And that was a challenge in itself. Because we had, I don't know, about 10 or 12 different subjects that we had to study. And some of them I liked.

Some of them I could have done without. Some of them I detested. So that was just the way it was. But when it came to the study of the scriptures, I loved it.

It was wonderful, fabulous. And more and more, it was being confirmed to me that I should get trained. And I went into the WEC Missionary Training College in Glasgow and spent two years there.

And I met a certain young lady, Miss McCraw, who came from Stanley. And I came from Inverness. And when we went home, we went home on the same train.

[20 : 21] Because it went from Glasgow to Perth to Inverness. And we got to know each other really quite well. And things began to tick.

And bells began to ring. And we began to sense that God was drawing us together. And eventually he did.

But before that, I went out to Burkina Faso as a single missionary. It would have been about 1972, I think. And the first thing that I discovered was that I was going to be driving a certain Land Rover to which we had given our money to buy it.

And here was me driving this Land Rover. I thought, how ironic is this? Absolutely wonderful. Wonderful. God gives us far more than we deserve.

And it was just wonderful to be part of what God was doing there. And after two and a half years, I fell victim to hepatitis.

[21 : 32] Possibly the only person in the world who thanked God for hepatitis. Because I had to come home. And when I came home, who did I meet? But my secretary behind me here.

And, well, things really got going then. I'm not going to go into all of that. She might go into that. But God drew us together. And we went back to Burkina Faso in 1976.

and we lived through some wonderful moments. And we lived through some moments which are, I hesitate to use the word, but it's H-E-L-L-I-S-H.

They were dreadful. But even in those awful moments, God was there. God was always there. Things were not easy.

If you get called into God's purposes and plans, don't expect it to be easy and simple and a straight run. There will be problems. There will be difficulties.

[22 : 36] But let me assure you of this. You will never, ever be alone. God will always be there. Man. Well, I left you when I had just become a Christian.

And a great crowd of us from the CU said that in the summer we would go to somewhere called Kilcraggan for a WEC holiday conference.

So I think it was a wee bit like Keswick. Okay, we've just had Keswick. Keswick's number three starts today, isn't it? Yesterday, I think it is. It's the third week, isn't it? I think it's, yeah, it's the third. Anyway, so we went and oh, it was, I, when I went, when I went to Kilcraggan I thought, this is amazing. Everybody here is a Christian. It was just smashing.

We had Bible readings every morning and we had all kinds of activities. You climbed the cobbler, you went doing the water on a boat and you did, you played volleyball, you did everything.

[23 : 40] And also every evening you had a missionary meeting and a missionary speaking. And the singing was just great. It was almost as good as here. I was smashing singing tonight.

But you know, the thing is, what they all kept saying was that, you know, we are, we come to the Lord and we are his children, but we have a job to do.

It's not just, oh, isn't it great to be a Christian? What did Jesus say in Matthew 28? He said, lo, I'm with you always.

Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel. They're linked. We take the bit, Jesus is with us always, isn't that great? God, but if you read what it says, and I'll be able to read where it is because I wrote it down but probably I can't find it, but it's the end of Matthew, of course, but then there's the bit in Acts.

but the end of Matthew says, wait till I read it because memory is terrible, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Jesus after the resurrection, right, because all authority has been given to him, go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

[25 : 17] Now we're very good at saying, oh, Jesus promised always to be with me, but why is he always with us? Because we've to go, right?

And then the next bit is in Acts, because after the resurrection and when Jesus came again, he said to his disciples, they came together and he was just about to, he was taken up in the first book, you heard how Jesus had begun to do and teach and all of that and all that he did, but when Jesus was crucified, he ordered them not to wait after he was risen again, don't depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father.

And this is what he said, when he was ascending, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, here, for you, this is Jerusalem. Tarber, Harris is your Jerusalem. You will be my witnesses in Judea, in Jerusalem, in Judea, that's Scotland, if you like, Samaria, well, they're the baddies, so do we say that's England?

No, of course we don't, but you know, the people you're not maybe, you know, all of that, and to the ends of the earth, right?

[26 : 50] so that is what our job, in fact, in Matthew 24, it actually says, if I can find it, Matthew 24, Wolf, help me here, what is it, 24, what?

24, yes, here we are, 24, verse 14, Jesus is talking about the destruction of the temple and the signs at the end of the age in Matthew 24, and he says, you'll be delivered up to tribulation, you'll be put to death, you'll be hated by all nations for my namesake, and then many will fall away and betray one another, so on and so forth, and there'll be false witnesses, but then this is the verse that really spoke to me, and the gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come, so my call, if you like, was at Kilcraggan, was the fact that this was taught, this was taught, the whole world needs to know about Jesus, and there will be some from every tribe, tribe and every people group, everybody in the world,

Jesus died for all of them, all of them, every single people group, and WEC, because it was a WEC training college, WEC's whole purpose is, the strap line that they have now is reaching the unreached, people who can't go to church because there is no church, people who can't read God's word, because we don't have God's word, so that was what was in my call, and I remember at Kilcraggan going up the back, just wondering was this me, was this for me, and I went up the back at Kilcraggan, you know what it was like in the summer, see what I'm doing, I was eaten alive by midges, I remember being up there, you know, and I just, I know this, that, Will says this is bad what I did, but this is what I did, because we weren't married then, but I opened my Bible up there, I had taped my

Bible up me, and I just opened it, said Lord speak to me, and you know what he said, it was from Proverbs 3, obey my commands, and I thought that's it, but you kind of know the kind of person I am now, so I just enjoyed that, but I went home and I said, mum and dad, I'm sorry I'm going to be a missionary, I've got to go and train right away, got to go, I'm not finishing, I'm not finishing my teaching, I've got to go now, and my dad was a wise man, and he says, well, finish your training, I had a year to go still, because that was at the beginning of the second year, and I'd gone to the end, so there was a year to go, and in those days you had to do your parchment before you were fully trained as a teacher, so that was for three years, he says, if you still want to go, in three years, you can go, that was hard, but it was good, and it was wise, because in that time, I became a primary teacher, went, got a good school in Edinburgh, super teacher, and I had a teaching practice there, she was just a wonderful lady, and I got a job there, this was a lady from Anne Doonan in Skye, she was a Skiyannach, Glen Rittle, yes, Mary Lorimer, and Mary Lorimer did not allow a child to leave the infant department without being able to read and write, now that's amazing, but that's what she did, and that's what I learnt, I had P1s, my 21st birthday, I had 45 little five year olds in the classroom, but in those days, don't get alarmed, you young teachers, because in those days they came in and sat down, you know, and they all stayed sitting down, so I mean, how would you manage 45 just on your own, no way these days, but then, but they were, that first day they were mostly crying, and I was a student as well,

[31 : 21] I just didn't know what to do, but that year I learnt, and that's what meant that when the Lord called me to be a missionary, to go to MTC college, and all of that, when I went to college, that was something that eventually when I was called to Burkina Faso, that that was it, it was the fact that we had, I had been trained in how to do this, and when we were called to Burkina Faso, it was part of this whole thing of being, just God had a place for us, and I don't know what to go about the call, have I?

Will I go quickly about the way we got together? Have I got five minutes? Four minutes, sorry. Well I went to the college, Wilf was at the college, you heard about the train and all of this, and anyway, we went to the college, I, we didn't, didn't kind of link up at that time, but then you had hepatitis and came home, and meanwhile WEC had sent me to Senegal to teach French, because I'd learnt French, I thought I was going to Africa, but I didn't know why, so I went there to learn French, and I came back and I was at headquarters, and you know, it was a bit, it was, I didn't want to be there, I hated the year in Senegal, because I was teaching children, MKs, in other words, children of missionaries, were super, but over the fence, there were all these little Africans, and I just longed to be with them, because these lovely kids that were there, they knew Jesus, but these ones didn't, and that was just about the worst year of my life, I think, came back to Bull's Road, I was there, not knowing what to do, didn't know, so I taught, I did some admin, actually, believe it or not, I wasn't very good at it, I wasn't, anyway, no stories, but we were there, and Wolf came back, and I was sitting in this prayer meeting, looking at the map, the whole of Africa, and I said, Lord, please, show me where to go, and I heard an audible voice, you are going to Upper Walter with Wolf, what do you do then?

Well, mum said, you don't sort of approach men, you know, you don't, I didn't, I couldn't go up and say, hey, have you heard you? so, I prayed, and he prayed, well, he didn't, I don't know if he, but anyway, it worked out in an odd way that it worked out that we were able to get together, and we had this time of, was this really of God, and we had this word again that Wolf had, and I had a word, and I forget what it was, oh yes, from Daily Light, a quaint, we set a time of ten days that we were to find out if this was of God, so at the end of, we were to have ten days of no communication, no phone calls, you didn't have texts or anything, but you had letters in your phone calls, none of that, no communication for ten days, we'd wait upon the Lord, we decided we'd read the book of Esther just because it had ten chapters, and, and, that was good, but no great word, so we're reading and reading, and of course mum in the midst of all this, she says, why are you not hearing much from Wilf these days, you know, she was kind of, you know, I said, no it's alright mum, it's just, we're waiting for a sign, so anyway, we went and went, now the tenth day I read in Daily Light, top of Daily Light, if you know Daily Light, it's fine, if you don't know it, it's a wee book with what Wilf calls Bible bingo, but I think it's inspired, and it says, acquaint now thyself with him, and peace and good will come to you, is that right?

[35 : 34] Yeah. I thought, acquaint now thyself with him, now obviously it's talking about the Lord, but for me, is this of God, acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, and good shall come to

you, Wilf usually says, and good's been coming to you ever since.

And so, I had the answer. Wilf, meanwhile, was reading, and he read this bit, that he's quoted already for other things as well, but this, this is of God, all things are of God.

So he came down, we thought, what do we do now? Because we were members of WEC, and we had to sort of put it past them, we had to go down to Bull's Road, to the headquarters, and just check it all out, we got down there, I won't tell you the funny story about that, about the proposal that was the fastest proposal ever, I think he was driving and he got faster and faster and faster, I think we must have been going about eating as an hour, and he eventually said, will you marry me? And I said, yes! Slow down, slow down. We got to headquarters, and we met the director, he came out, and he met it, and he says, where's the ring?

and he says, I said, well, we said, well, go to Slough and buy one. Now, I've got my ring on today, and if you actually look very hard, you will see there's a very tiny darling, because we didn't have any money.

[37 : 08] Weckers, Mishrae's never have any work, well, I'll stop there. I think we're finished, because it's just gone, nine o'clock, but we're not special, we're ordinary, and what God did with us, in us, and through us, he can do with anyone who is willing to be used.

God's got a plan for you, God's got a purpose for you, I don't know what it is, but God knows what it is, and it's for you to find out, and if you ask God, he will, in his own time, and in his own way, he will show you what that plan is, and it will be to do with something concerning sharing the gospel.

I can guarantee you that, because it needs to be shared, and you can have part in sharing it. Thank you, we have loved being with you, it's been super, I'm sorry about all the catering that you've done for us, it's made us dreadfully fat, but we've loved it, but nonetheless, please, if we ever come again, cock honey on the cakes, but no, it's been lovely being with you, and we just pray that God will bless you, encourage you, build you up, use the man who stands here regularly to do that, and that you will find what it is, especially you younger people, what it is that God has got for you, because he has something.

Amen. Amen.