

My Testimony by Warren French

It's been quite some time ago when I got converted. I was the youngest of six children. The eldest one died about at about three weeks old. My father died when I was ten months old, so two of my brothers went away in a home, but I do thank God for a loving, praying Christian mother.

I was in hospital for quite a time around the age of five. They rushed me in with appendicitis. They couldn't wait for an ambulance; the doctor sent his gardener to drive me in his car to the hospital, and when I got to the hospital I prayed that God would bring me through the operation, although I was only young, because my mother taught me how to pray.

Actually, when I was young you would never believe it I was very nervous and very shy. I can honestly say, I'm 'Shy Mary Helen', because when I was young we used to go and see different relatives, and I used to hide behind the chair that my mother was sitting in. I was very shy. It's true; you may not believe it now.

The Lord has done great things within my life. I mean, because of being in hospital when I was young, I missed at least a most important year of my schooling, so when I was fourteen, through certain people who had an interest in my education, I went to a boarding school, and that was at Fairford in Gloucestershire.

I lived in the village of Uley near Dursley south of Stroud, Gloucestershire, about thirty five miles away from the school at Fairford.

And I can see how the Lord had his hand on me, I mean, I have lost my mother, I lost my two oldest brothers. I've still got my brother Peter and my sister, but all through my life I can thank God for what He's done in my life.

When I was about three years of age I went to Sunday School in the village just down the road.

Pastor Ernie Gigg and his wife, of the church at Cam came up the valley to Uley to hold meetings each Wednesday night with a crowd of people for years.

From around the age of seven, I went to these Pentecostal meetings with my brother Peter who's fifteen months older than me. They preached salvation and deliverance.

And I can remember one Saturday night my brother went out with a Christian brother to a meeting. Then while I was sitting downstairs at home, all of a sudden the spirit of God came on me, and I went upstairs, I laid on my bed and I cried and I cried and I cried, and so on the Sunday night I was determined to go to Cam where they were conducting a rally, so my brother and I cycled there. As soon as the altar call was given I was out the front, and it was Pastor Les Smith who counselled me and led me to the Lord. This was in May of 1950, and I can't remember the exact date but I do remember it was about two months before my thirteenth birthday.

And I do thank God for what He's done for me, that He kept me, though I stumbled many times, though sometimes the way seemed rough and weary.

I mean, at the age of around sixteen or seventeen, I used to go with some young people who came from Hockley Pentecostal Church in Birmingham, to the Assemblies of God church in Stonehouse. They gave up a week of their holiday to go there and work with the children, and they also went into the pubs. We used to call it 'pub raiding'. Also they held open-air meetings, and on the night they held a children's meeting followed by a meeting for the grown-ups.

The first year I used to leave that church and cycle home, eight and a half miles through country with hardly any light, but the second year they suggested I stayed there instead of cycling back and forth. The sisters went to the member's homes, but the young brothers stayed in a room at the back of the church, so I stayed there for the next two years running.

They had a love and zeal for Christ, they were genuine, very encouraging and very helpful. And that's the way I came up here to Birmingham. I came up here to live and then I met Jean, then when I was twenty-three we got married.

When I was nineteen years old I had a motorbike accident. A young girl of about five years of age ran out in front of me. She was running to her dad on the other side of the road. Her name was Jennifer and suffered injuries to her head which were so serious that they had to wait for five days for things to settle down before they could treat her. They didn't think that she would live, but thanks to many Christians praying she made a full recovery, which was a miracle. Her dad told the police that I was in no way to blame for the accident, in which I myself suffered a badly broken leg.

But all through my Christian experience I can see the hand of God.

Before we got married I was ill, I was bent over, I had blood coming from my body, from the back passage, and I was terribly weak. I was like that for about four months or more.

I went down to my father-in-law, that would be, and on the Christmas Day he said to me, "I know you don't drink." and he puts whisky in my tea.

And three doctors at the practice didn't know what was wrong with me.

The one said to my landlady who was a Christian, her husband was a elder at the church at Kingstanding. He said, "That lad's putting it on." and she said, "Doctor, I know that lad isn't putting it on."

And many times I used to pray for God to take me home. I was that ill I was bent over like an old man of ninety.

And one day Mrs. Robinson had gone to do some work for a lady that she did each day, and brother Robert came in and he saw how I was, and the prayer of faith and of love and compassion came on that man, and he prayed for me in their living room, and from that time onward I gradually got better.

He did plan at one time that he said, "Look, being as you're so ill I can't see you living much longer." They were going to take me down home for me to see my mother and brother and sister, but my brother, my elder brother came up, and I went down for about a fortnight, but God healed me.

And not long ago I went to Good Hope, I had two exploratory operations and they found nothing wrong with my bowels whatsoever. The Lord healed me, and I give God the praise and the glory. He did such great things for us.

Our backs, Jean and I, have been against the wall time and time again, but God has brought us through. He's a great, wonderful and a mighty God, and He's faithful, He is true, and He's been with us all the way, and I thank Him for His love, for saving me. Amen.