

I view with great delight the release of *Miracle Invasion*. Cycles of awakening are always needed, whether in a local congregation, a faithful leader, or a believing saint. I pray God will ignite us all through this book about the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.

—JACK HAYFORD, chancellor emeritus, The King’s University;
past president, The Foursquare Church; founding pastor
of The Church on the Way (Van Nuys, CA)

Perhaps you’ve wondered if miracles still happen today or doubted their existence altogether. Maybe you’ve relegated miracles to something that occurs only in faraway lands and in different cultures. If so, then *Miracle Invasion* is a must-read. God is desperate to show you just how big, how wide, and how deep his love for you is. This book will give you eyes to see his kind, thoughtful, wonderful, and yes, miraculous plan for your life.

—SAMUEL RODRIGUEZ, president,
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Miracle Invasion has been written right on time. The Holy Spirit’s power to infuse our present, broken world with the exact prescription for restoring life and hope is clearly evidenced in this profound report. I was particularly struck by a statement in the “Introduction,” where Jeff Farmer says, “we were smitten with wonder.” I believe that in this time of global cynicism, fear, and doubt, we must again be shaken to our core by the Lord’s almighty power until we are smitten with wonder!

—GLENN C. BURRIS, Jr., president, The Foursquare Church

Since the day of Pentecost, Holy Spirit-inspired miracles have characterized those who walk in the full gospel message. In a rationalistic age that shows the limits of human imagination and ingenuity, this collection of documented miracles will inspire all of us to a greater walk of faith and expectation.

—DOUGLAS BEACHAM, general superintendent, International
Pentecostal Holiness Church

This book shows God’s miracle hand constantly reaching out to those who call on him. Believers must know we are protected by his Spirit, watching over us and waiting to help us every step of the way. We can trust God; his supernatural provision will see us through.

—CHARLES E. BLAKE, Sr., presiding bishop, Church of God in Christ; senior pastor, West Angeles COGIC (Los Angeles)

In a world enthralled with superheroes and spiritual phenomena, *Miracle Invasion* offers a clear, authenticated picture of the true source of supernatural power for those hungering for something more. Since we are narrative beings who love a story, this book offers solid teaching in a captivating way that will impact all generations and cultures.

—KAY HORNER, executive director,
Awakening America Alliance

Critical to our twenty-first-century gospel witness is the Acts 2:12 inquiry, “What does this mean?” Only as we can give Peter’s reply that “this is that” spoken of by our Lord in his Word do we have a platform for gospel transformation. This timely account of his work among twenty-first-century followers encourages us as laborers to enter his harvest with confident faith that he is the author of miracles!

—DAVID FERGUSON, executive director,
Great Commandment Network

It is wonderful to read scriptural accounts in the early church of unfettered faith, miracles, and manifestations of power. But my cry today is that of Gideon’s: “Where are all the miracles that our fathers told us about?” (Judges 6:13). *Miracle Invasion* contains stories about people whose experiences testify to contemporary miracles like our fathers told us about. May your faith be freshly stimulated.

—RANDALL A. BACH, president, Open Bible Church

I find myself praying for leaders and followers of Jesus to have a “gift of faith” as they face tasks and callings that are overwhelming. I believe with them that God will do that which is above and

beyond what we are asking or thinking. The book *Miracle Invasion* will affirm and inspire those of us who are expecting the above and beyond that God is desiring to do in our lives and ministries. My encouragement is: Read it, live it!

—DAVID WELLS, general superintendent,
Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Filled with true stories of Holy Spirit power and miracles in our generation, this book will stir your heart and increase your faith.

—ROBERT B. FORT, chairman, United Evangelical Churches

After a long journey with Alzheimer's, my dad lay in a catatonic state, having not made a sound for four months. Mom was emotionally, physically, and spiritually depleted. However, Dad miraculously revived and preached one final sermon. He declared to Mom, "You know what, honey? God still answers prayer." If, like my mother, you need your hope restored, read *Miracle Invasion*, and you will be convinced that miracles still happen today!

—ALTON GARRISON, assistant general superintendent,
Assemblies of God USA

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are still in operation today! *Miracle Invasion* will increase your faith and give you an expectancy of what the Holy Spirit can do in your church, community, family, and ministry.

—SHANNON TRUELOVE, overseer/bishop,
International Pentecostal Church of Christ

MIRACLE INVASION

Amazing true
stories of the
Holy Spirit's gifts
at work today

Dean Merrill

BroadStreet
PUBLISHERS

BroadStreet Publishing® Group, LLC
Savage, Minnesota USA
BroadStreetPublishing.com

MIRACLE INVASION:

Amazing true stories of the Holy Spirit's gifts at work today

Copyright © 2018 Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America

ISBN-13: 978-1-4245-5608-3 (softcover)

ISBN-13: 978-1-4245-5609-0 (e-book)

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without permission in writing from the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc. Used by permission of Biblica, Inc. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked MEV are taken from the Modern English Version (MEV). Copyright © 2014 by Military Bible Association. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scriptures marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked WEB are taken from the World English Bible, public domain. Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version, public domain.

Stock or custom editions of BroadStreet Publishing titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, ministry, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email info@broadstreetpublishing.com.

Cover design by Chris Garborg at garborgdesign.com
Typesetting by Katherine Lloyd at theDESKonline.com

Printed in the United States of America

18 19 20 21 22 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

	Setting the Stage	1
1	Up from a Watery Grave	13
2	Subway and Walmart	19
3	A Higher Code	24
4	Instantly	27
5	Detour?	30
6	Just Teenagers	33
7	The Lunch that Multiplied	41
8	The Long Tug-of-War	44
9	On the Edge of Disaster	47
10	Faith to Give	50
11	Doomed in the Womb	56
12	Northern Test	64
13	Hard Case	67
14	Casting Out Darkness	74
15	Makeover in the Mall	78
16	Modern-Day Lazarus	83
17	A Church in a Boxing Ring?	88
18	Messenger at the Rest Stop	93
19	Divine Arrest	97
20	'Twas Blind, But Now	100
21	The Message Gets Through	103

22	Wheelchair No More	106
23	Double Trouble, Double Portion	115
24	A Promise Kept	122
25	When “No” Became “Yes”	127
26	A Miracle for Mom	132
27	Showdown at the Altar	136
28	Just Taking a Walk	139
29	Time to Uproot	142
30	“Wake Up, Mija!”	147
31	The Spiritual Rookie	151
32	Not Too Cold to Believe	158
33	Heartbreak, Then Healing	163
34	Multilevel Freedom	166
35	Cancer, Begone	169
36	Audacious	172
37	Where Least Expected	174
38	Advance Notice	178
39	River of the Spirit	181
	What Can We Conclude?	186
	Index of Gifts	188
	Sources	190
	Notes	196

SETTING THE STAGE

*Foreword by Jeff Farmer, president,
Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America*

Mother's Thanksgiving table was picture-perfect. Her lavish centerpiece glowed with hues of autumn color. Great-grandmother's antique silverware flanked our beautiful Lenox china. The turkey, encompassed by a moat of green parsley and laced with lavender plums, was golden brown. The mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, and sweet potatoes were hot and ready to serve.

Everyone was there: Mom and Dad, my older sister, my younger brother ... and of course, me. Nothing could ruin this moment. Nothing, that is, until Dad tried to sit down. For six months he had suffered with disabling back pain. Every morning he slipped into a steel brace hoping to mollify the chronic suffering. He couldn't even drive a car unless his custom-made board seat was placed on the cushion beneath the steering wheel.

This unforgettable holiday was the first time I saw a grown man cry. As Dad started to sit, he got stuck in a partially seated position. The pain was so severe he couldn't finish sitting down; yet he couldn't stand back up. His desperate cry frightened us all. By the time we got Dad into bed, Thanksgiving was pretty much ruined.

Afterward, the rest of us ate the delicious meal and prepared for dessert when Mom shouted, "Oops! I forgot the whipped cream for the pumpkin pie!" She promptly elected me to rush to

the QuikTrip just two blocks away. It would be open on this holiday. With the Cool Whip in hand, I paid the clerk, got back into my tan and white '55 Chevy, and drove home.

Miracles Today?

A miracle healing for my dad was not on the radar, and far out of range for our family's worldview back then in the midsixties. My life was pretty much defined by girls, grades, and sports. All of my needs were cared for by my parents, and the closest I came to the supernatural was Clark Kent leaping tall buildings and flying faster than speeding bullets.

I did go to church, but it was a liberal Protestant congregation. People became Christians, they said, by taking a pastor's class and getting baptized. When my sister decided to join, I agreed to follow. Coming out of the baptismal tank, they gave me a certificate of church membership and told me I was a Christian. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Nineteen sixty-three was the year Mom and Dad had been invited to hear a man named Larry Hammond talk about an amazing physical healing he had experienced. I really don't think Dad would have gone, except that the speaker had a PhD. My father valued education and couldn't reconcile medical science with miracles. So he was curious. Mom, on the other hand, was thirsting for truth ... and for God.

Dr. Hammond's extraordinary testimony of an instantaneous, hospital deathbed healing in response to prayer rocked my parents' world. Dad wanted more information, and that meant connecting with people—lots of people. Our home turned into Grand Central Station, thrusting the Farmer family into a strange world of unfamiliar faces, gospel music instead of sacred hymns, and prayer meetings where people raised their hands in worship and prayed out loud all at the same time.

These exuberant believers talked about miracles as casually as I did about Friday night dances and the latest Elvis hit. To me, their stories sounded strange, even impossible to believe—until that Thanksgiving Day when I walked through the door of our home on Boston Street in Wichita, Kansas, and encountered the living, miracle-working God.

First Miracle

As I entered our home, my dad—the one we had half-dragged and half-carried to bed—was doing jumping jacks and deep knee bends in the kitchen. “I’m healed! I’m healed!” he shouted at the top of his lungs. His face was glowing. Mom was crying.

“What ... what happened?” I asked, picking my jaw up off the floor.

“I was listening to a tape the Coxes gave me,” he explained, referring to the family who had invited us to their church. “The preacher on the tape said, ‘If you’re listening to this message through a taped recording, reach out and touch the recorder as a point of faith. Good! Now, ask God to heal you.’”

Desperate and hopeful, Dad had done just that while I was down the street getting Cool Whip. “It was like a warm heating pad touched my back,” Dad exclaimed. “I felt it! God delivered and healed me. I’m free! The pain is gone.”

We sat down for dessert, overcome with awe. As newcomers to this kind of faith, we were smitten with wonder. That day marked me forever, teaching me an important truth—someone with a personal experience is never at the mercy of someone with an argument! A miracle settles every quarrel over the reality of God and the authenticity of his Word.

More than fifty years have now passed. Since then, I have witnessed more miracles and manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit than I can remember. And every time God displays his power and glory, I am humbled and awed to see beyond the veil.

The Natural and the Spiritual

“What veil?” you ask. I’m talking about the veil that separates the natural from the spiritual. Let me explain.

Jesus told the woman at the well that “God is spirit.”¹ When God created people in the very beginning, he made them in his image and likeness, as spirit beings.² When he fashioned us outwardly, however, he gave us a natural body.³ Therefore, a dynamic tension is ever-present between the spiritual and natural.

Miracles and the other gifts of the Spirit have their origin in the spirit dimension. They are beyond natural—they are *supernatural*. They are spiritual. They are otherworldly because their source of authority and power originates outside of this natural world.

Unless a person is born again by the Spirit of God (by grace through faith in Jesus Christ), he or she does not understand this unseen reality. That is why a skeptic, or anyone who rejects Christ, has trouble admitting that miracles take place. Their natural mind cannot apprehend the things of the Spirit.⁴ In fact, modern-day miracles are foolishness to them.

Opposition and rejection of things of the Spirit go beyond unbelievers, however. Many Christians also struggle with the spirit dimension, often because they have not experienced the power associated with being baptized in the Holy Spirit, as recorded at least four times in the New Testament.⁵

Even some church leaders are afraid of the moving of the Spirit. They are unfamiliar with his person, his works, and his gifts. They are more comfortable in the natural arena and are strangers to the realm of the supernatural. Leaders can control natural events, but the Holy Spirit cannot be controlled, organized, or duplicated. And he is full of surprises!

When the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 followers of Jesus Christ at Pentecost,⁶ he took everyone by surprise. Is it any wonder, then, that his miraculous actions today are still a surprise?

Manifestations of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit have their origin in a real spiritual dimension and cannot be analyzed in our intellectual laboratories or voted upon in our church committees. Only the Spirit of God “knows” the things of God.⁷

Many church leaders don’t want surprises during their worship services. So, authentic manifestations of the Spirit have diminished in number, at least in churches of the West. Sadly, we are more comfortable trying to fit God into our dimension of the natural rather than rising in faith to trust his power and glory in the dimension of the spiritual.

Supernatural Action through Gifts of the Spirit

However, the message of Scripture is clear: The miraculous nature of God is to be seen at work through his children. God has provided for supernatural acts and events to take place through his sons and daughters by the gifts of the Spirit.

It is true, some miracles God initiates by himself without any involvement of people: he dispatches an angel to save a life,⁸ ignites a desert bush into a fiery ball without it being consumed,⁹ or strikes down the persecutor of the infant church with a flash of lightning that renders him blind.¹⁰ These are sovereign acts of God, requiring no participation by people—they are miracles.

Other miracles, however, are the result of men, women, and even children stepping out in bold reliance on the Word of God. The Holy Spirit equips and anoints them with a *charisma* (“grace-gift”) and sets in motion a supernatural event that is beyond any power or resource of mankind. The result is not a coincidence of circumstances and is completely unexplainable to the natural mind. That is to say, the miracle is unreasonable.

Paul, the great apostle of the first-century church, provided three gift lists in the Bible.¹¹ These lists describe assorted gifts distributed

to believers through which the Holy Spirit moves to administer the church and usher in the kingdom of God. The testimonies and miracle stories you are about to read in this book spotlight the list found in 1 Corinthians 12 and illustrate that when one of these nine gifts of the Spirit is in operation, it is nothing short of a miracle.

“There are various gifts, but the same Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 12:4 MEV)

“To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Corinthians 12:8–10 MEV)

Before we read these stories, let’s take a brief look into the gifts that will be featured throughout this book. Here, the nine gifts are divided into three categories: revelatory gifts (word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits), power gifts (faith, gifts of healing, and working of miracles), and inspiration gifts (various kinds of tongues, interpretation of tongues, and prophecy). These categories provide deeper insight into the gifts and further explain the faith by which each gift operates. Understanding these differences also allows us to see just how impactful and powerful a miracle can be when two gifts, from two different categories, work in tandem. Included at the end of each gift section are examples from the early church. These examples are excellent resources you can use for further study into the gifts.

Revelatory Gifts

Revelation is the self-disclosure of God—divine enablements to know what God knows. As the Holy Spirit wills, that which God

knows can be revealed to us as a gift of the Spirit. Scripture says, “Now we have received . . . the Spirit who is from God, that we might know” (1 Corinthians 2:12 NKJV). These three gifts provide supernatural understanding to know something presently unknown.

Word of Knowledge

The word of knowledge is a supernatural, Holy Spirit revelation of facts or information known by God. It does not draw upon knowledge acquired by academic study or experience. It is not enhanced human knowledge or natural enlightenment. Rather, it is knowledge miraculously revealed to one of God’s children by the Holy Spirit. For instance, God could reveal the location of a missing person or of something lost. He might reveal the location of an event or the cause of a sickness. The word of knowledge is supernatural insight revealing specific information about a person, place, or thing and may come to the believer through a mental impression, picture, dream, or vision.

Early church example: Peter exposed the lie of how much money Ananias and Sapphira said they received from their land sale (Acts 5:1–11).

Word of Wisdom

The word of wisdom, listed in the Bible first among the nine spiritual gifts, is supernatural revelation by the Spirit of how to rightly apply knowledge. In its highest form, it is an expression of divine purpose of the mind and will of God. The word of wisdom has been employed, for example, to warn of approaching danger or conflict; to make known a divine call to service in the kingdom; to apprise of coming judgment or blessing; to give counsel in problem solving or personal guidance in special circumstances; or to reveal the future. The tandem gifts of the word of knowledge and word of wisdom can have significant impact in building the

church as they supply supernatural understanding of the will and purpose of God. Whereas the information revealed in a word of knowledge relates to the past or present, a word of wisdom usually points to the future.

Early church example: James, the Lord's brother, resolved the Jew/Gentile tension at the Jerusalem Council and set the course for ongoing church expansion (Acts 15:13–21).

Discerning of Spirits

Discerning of spirits gives supernatural insight into the unseen realm of spirits. There are three kinds of spirits: divine (heavenly), satanic (devilish), and human—not a person's disposition or personality, but the highest part of one's three-part being.¹² By this gift, a believer may know the origin of any spirit(ual) manifestation. This is much more than simply keen perception or psychological insight; rather, this gift often partners with one of the power gifts (working of miracles, faith, gifts of healings) to deliver people who are afflicted, tormented, or oppressed by the Devil. This gift brings hope for liberation, healing, and freedom. It also discloses error and unmasks servants of Satan.

Early church examples: Peter deals with Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9–24), and Paul deals with the false prophet Bar-Jesus/Elymas (Acts 13:6–12) and with the fortune-teller girl in Philippi (Acts 16:16–18).

Power Gifts

In serving the Lord and serving people, it is often insufficient merely to know; we must also be able to do. These three gifts impart supernatural ability to act in obedience to faith. Through the power gifts, the Holy Spirit supernaturally empowers believers to act according to God's purpose. The results are grand, miraculous displays of God's glory and power.

Faith

Distinct from saving faith¹³ or the fruit of the Spirit,¹⁴ the gift of faith is considered by many the greatest of the three power gifts. (Note: the “fruit” of faith/faithfulness is for our character; the “gift” of faith is for releasing God’s power.) Unlike the other gifts that represent miraculous *acts* of the Spirit, the gift of faith is more a *process* of the Spirit. It is a supernatural impartation aligned with the will of God (and often spoken by a servant of God) that shall come to pass in the future. Through this gift the Spirit gives resolve and power to believe for the impossible in the face of difficult circumstances. It often results in a divine deposit of peace and confidence for believers.

Early church example: Paul declares in the midst of a typhoon that no lives would be lost (Acts 27:33–37, 44).

Gifts of Healings

These gifts (plural in the original Greek) are for supernatural healings of diseases and infirmities. Healings through these gifts are by the power of the Holy Spirit without human aid. They do not imply assistance or intervention by medical professionals (physicians, surgeons, and so forth), however grateful we are for them. The Lord Jesus had compassion on the sick and exercised these gifts frequently throughout his public ministry. He also commanded his disciples to “heal the sick.”¹⁵ In Scripture, these gifts operated in various ways—for instance, through a word, by the laying on of hands, by an apostle’s passing shadow, by a piece of fabric, or by anointing with oil.

Early church examples: The lame beggar is healed at the temple gate (Acts 3:1–10); blind Saul of Tarsus receives his sight (Acts 9:10–19); and Aeneas the cripple in Lydda walks again (Acts 9:32–35).

Working of Miracles

A miracle is an event that supersedes known scientific, natural laws, which are temporarily suspended because of a supernatural act of God. “The working of miracles,” according to Bible teacher Fuchsia Pickett in her 2004 trilogy on the Holy Spirit,¹⁶ is literally rendered “operations of supernatural powers” in the Greek. Clearly, all nine gifts of the Spirit are miracles, so what is unique about this gift? It refers exclusively to acts of power and would exclude demonstrations of power identified in the other gifts. A healing miracle, for instance, is a case of the gifts of healing. However, with the working of miracles, the Spirit gives authority to a servant of the Lord to display explosions of God’s supernatural omnipotence (unlimited power) for the purpose of intervening and counteracting earthly and evil forces.

Early church examples: Three different occasions where apostles were released from prison in the middle of the night (Acts 5:19–20; 12:1–10; 16:22–40); two separate stories of apostles resurrecting someone from the dead (Acts 9:36–42; 20:7–12); and Paul surviving being bitten by a poisonous snake (Acts 28:3–6).

Inspiration Gifts

Inspiration gifts are often also called vocal or voice gifts. Whereas revelatory gifts cause us to *know*, and power gifts move us to *do*, gifts of inspiration anoint us to *speak*. The Holy Spirit has designed these gifts as tools to inspire, edify, exhort, and correct. They build the church and inspire people. Each of the inspiration gifts is a display of supernatural utterance.

Various Kinds of Tongues

This gift does not refer to the tongue(s) or prayer language(s) given to a believer at the initial baptism in the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ When uttering a prayer language, a person is speaking to God, not people,

and therefore the tongue does not require interpretation. On the other hand, the gift of the Spirit referenced in 1 Corinthians 12 is given for the edification of the church and must be interpreted in the language of those present.¹⁸ The gift of speaking in tongues is a supernatural utterance, prompted by the Spirit, in a language never learned by the speaker. It is not understood by the speaker and in most cases is not understood by the hearer. Jesus acknowledged this gift as for “those who believe.”¹⁹ Edification is always the test for this gift’s proper use.²⁰

Early church example: Instructions to the Corinthian church on speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:26–27).

Interpretation of Tongues

Interpretation of tongues is the follow-up interpretation of an utterance in tongues in a public service. The interpreter does not understand the exact words of the tongue spoken, and hence is not *translating* what was said, but rather *interprets* by the Spirit what God is communicating in the message. The interpreter is to explain thoroughly what was spoken in tongues, not translate. This explains why sometimes the interpretation is longer or shorter than the message in tongues. The interpretation is just as much a miracle as the tongues themselves. Those who speak in other tongues are admonished to pray for the ability to interpret,²¹ so the church may be edified if no other interpreter is present. The one possessing this gift makes utterances of tongues understandable in the common language of those present.

Early church example: Instructions to the Corinthian church on interpreting tongues (1 Corinthians 14:26–28).

Prophecy

Scripture specifically commands us to “desire”²² this gift and states plainly that everyone may prophesy.²³ Prophecy is an

in-the-moment, unrehearsed, divinely inspired, supernatural, anointed message. Many Christians unfortunately fail to distinguish between the office of the prophet²⁴ and the gift of prophecy. Both are referred to as gifts in Scripture, but the office is an ongoing gift of Christ to his church, and the spiritual endowment is a gift of the Spirit to an individual. To give an utterance with prophetic anointing is altogether different than giving an educated prediction. Prophecy is for the purpose of edification, exhortation, and comfort.²⁵ It is a Spirit-empowered declaration that could include prediction of the future (foretelling) as well as proclamation of divine purpose (forth-telling). All true prophecy exalts Jesus and edifies the church.

Early church examples: Agabus prophesied on several occasions (Acts 11:27–28; 21:10–11) and instructions to the Roman church (Romans 12:6), the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 14:29–32, 39), and the Thessalonian church (1 Thessalonians 5:19–22) regarding the gift of prophecy.

With this foundation of the gifts in mind, and a grasp of the Holy Spirit's design by which they operate, we can now embrace them and rejoice in the following true, credible, authentic examples of the gifts of the Spirit ministering in *our* time across *our* continent.

These are amazing true stories of God at work today. Our colleagues, neighbors, and friends were eyewitnesses to these miracles. They will inspire you and give you hope in the midst of your own difficult circumstances. And I pray they will encourage you to step out in faith and obey the Spirit's promptings when he anoints *you* to know, to do, and to say.



chapter 4

INSTANTLY

Of all the possible complications from diabetes—nerve pain, kidney problems, congestive heart failure, depression—perhaps the most devastating is blindness caused by bleeding in the retinas.

Andrea Anderson is a sweet, soft-spoken grandmother in Sarnia, Ontario, who tried her best to cope with her diabetes, until eventually, “Twelve years ago, I was having trouble seeing to the side,” she relates. “So I went to the doctor about this.

“They gave me a test—and the next thing I knew, the doctor was saying I was legally blind!

“I was shocked. Within a week and a half, I had lost the sight in both eyes. I couldn’t see the difference between light and darkness. There was nothing there—couldn’t watch TV, couldn’t tell the color of my clothing, or anything.”

Plunged into a world of darkness, she made all the adjustments she could think of. Both the Red Cross and the March of Dimes lent their assistance. Friends picked her up for church. CNIB (Canadian National Institute for the Blind) taught her how to use a cane and also provided her with a “talking DAISY”

machine that plays books from CDs. They sent a new CD on loan every month; the very first one provided was the Bible, which she was allowed to keep. Still, it was a grim existence day after day, month after month, year upon year.

Then Pentecost Sunday 2016 came to her church, Bethel Pentecostal. She will never forget that day. A visiting evangelist from West Virginia, named Ted Shuttlesworth, had been invited to minister. “It was a normal day,” Andrea says; “it’s always exciting and warm and Spirit-filled there. But that day, I don’t know ... it felt a little different.

“At the end of the morning service, Brother Ted asked for an altar call, and I went up. I wanted to pray for my little great-granddaughter, who was in the hospital. I was crying—I cry easily!

“Something led me to go back to church on Sunday night, even though I usually didn’t go then. Brother Ted was going through the aisles, praying for people. All of a sudden, I felt a hand on the back of my head. He stopped and prayed for me.

“He didn’t know me. I’d never spoken to him before.”

Caught on Camera

To see what happened next, watch the video <https://vimeo.com/196310250>, starting at the 2:10 mark. The evangelist’s prayer is short but commanding: “You blinding spirit, I command you to go and report to your master, Satan. You’ve failed in your mission to keep this woman blind. I command your eyes now to be healed and to begin to open. *Open*—for the glory of God!”

Within seconds, Andrea is up on her feet and following the speaker to the front of the church, where he puts her through a series of tests. She accurately follows his instructions from three feet away to do what he does: waving one hand back and forth, pointing upward with one finger, then two, then all five fingers, then stretching out her arm to the side, finally running in place.

By this point, the congregation of several hundred are on their feet erupting in praise to God. Andrea breaks down in tears of joy.

In the subsequent video interview, she opens into a wide smile as she reports, “My sight is good—it’s good. I’m blessed. It’s been fully restored.”

Looking out the window, she adds, “I see the snow . . . I see the colors of the leaves, the trees blooming, the flowers coming out . . .

“My doctor was scratching his head. ‘I’m scientific,’ he said. ‘I don’t know what to say.’ He looked again at all the reports of my coming to see him over the years, when I could see nothing. Now he put me through all kinds of tests, and I passed everything.”

Her physician called in another doctor, saying, “This is the lady I was telling you about.” On a return visit to the office, he added, “I’ve told my wife all about you. I’ve been telling other people too.”

This kind of miracle, after more than a decade of documented blindness, is hard to refute. “I still have her white cane in my office at the church,” says her pastor, Tim Gibb. “She obviously has no use for it anymore. This whole incident has been a great encouragement for our church and beyond, as the video has spread. It gives people hope that miracles really do happen.”



chapter 5

DETOUR?

The first few times the Holy Spirit nudges a believer to exercise a spiritual gift, it's only natural to feel hesitant, as in *Really? I'm supposed to do WHAT? That's just "me" thinking up something, right? Or is this truly a God thing?*

Sterling Brackett, a nineteen-year-old college student from Tennessee Tech, was driving his gray Volkswagen Bug east on Interstate 40 toward his parents' place for the weekend when he thought the Lord said, *Get off at the next exit.*

Why? He was eager to get home on a Friday night after a long week of classes. The green signs for the next town of Crossville kept coming, but Sterling ignored them. He thought instead about the warm sights and smells of home that awaited him another forty minutes down the road.

Again, the inner voice spoke, *Well, you can be obedient, or you can be disobedient. What are you going to do?*

Chastised, he took the off-ramp, having no idea what would happen next. Before he reached the stop sign, the next directive seemed to come: *Take a right*, which led into the center of town. He kept driving until, once again, he heard, *Take a left*. He did so, soon to be given another, *Take a right*, which in a few blocks brought him to a stop in front of a mobile home.

Shutting off the engine, Sterling wondered what he should do next. After all, it was already dark. Was this neighborhood even safe? “I was apprehensive,” he recalls, “but I couldn’t escape the strong prompting of the Lord that I should go up to the door—and give them all my money!” This whole episode was getting stranger by the minute.

He knew good and well that all he had in his pocket was a dollar bill and some change. He had intended to use that for a little more gas, to ensure he didn’t run out on the way. *Is this really the Lord*, he wondered, *or am I just going crazy?*

But Lord, I don’t think I’ve got enough gas to get home, he protested.

I own the cattle on a thousand hills, the Lord responded. *And you’re worried about getting home?*

Knocking on the Door

Taking a deep breath, the young student approached the mobile home door. A man in his late twenties opened it, peering out at the stranger on his step.

“Sir,” Sterling began, “I was driving on the Interstate, and, um, the Lord directed me to your home. I don’t know why. But he asked me to give you all of my money.

“And frankly, I’m embarrassed, because it’s only this dollar bill and a few coins,” he said, holding out his hand. “But it’s all I have.”

The man did not snicker or shut the door in Sterling’s face. Rather, he immediately began to cry. “Come inside,” he said through his tears.

Sterling walked in and sat down. The man began to explain. “The truth is, my wife is in bed already, and I’ve just put our baby girl to bed without a bottle. I’ve been sitting here feeling like an absolute failure for having nothing to provide. Now I can run

down to the store and buy some milk, so I can wake her up and feed her!”

Both men stared at each other in amazement. The Holy Spirit had known what he was doing all along. The man said, “I realize now how important my family is to God.”

They prayed together and then said goodbye. Sterling continued his homeward journey, arriving safely on just the gas he had. He even made it back to a gas station the following morning—once he, like any college student, had persuaded dear old mom to replenish his wallet.

Years later, news reached Sterling that the couple in the trailer had entered the ministry. Meanwhile, he went on to a lifetime in the Lord’s service, eventually being named the Foursquare Church’s corporate secretary and vice president of corporate affairs at the Los Angeles headquarters. But he’s never forgotten what unfolded that dark Friday night in eastern Tennessee. “I felt almost like a bystander,” he says today. “I just watched the Lord do what he had in mind, for a specific purpose known only to him. All I had to do was follow his leading.”



SOURCES

We wish to thank the following PCCNA groups (listed here alphabetically) for helping us locate the true stories in this book.

Assemblies of God

Formed: 1914

Headquarters: 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 68502

Active mission work in 190 other nations

For more information: www.ag.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 16—First Assembly Church, St. Peter, Missouri

p. 36—Ash Grove Assembly of God, Ash Grove, Missouri

p. 41—Calvary Church, Naperville, Illinois

p. 61—CT Church, Houston, Texas

p. 86—New Hope International Christian Center, Norwalk, California

p. 152—Gateway Christian Center, Tampa, Florida

p. 173—New Season Christian Worship Center/Cantico Nueva, Sacramento, California

Church of God

Formed: 1886

Headquarters: 2490 Keith St., NW, Cleveland, TN 37320

Active mission work in 182 other nations

For more information: www.churchofgod.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 96—Carthage Family Worship Center, Carthage, Missouri

p. 163—Christ the Rock Church of God, Knoxville, Tennessee

See also p. 174—“Where Least Expected”

SOURCES

Church of God in Christ

Formed: 1897

Headquarters: 930 Mason St., Memphis, TN 38126

Active mission work in 60 other nations

For more information: www.cogic.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 44—Sanctuary of Praise Church of God in Christ, Springfield, Missouri

p. 97—West Angeles Church of God in Christ, Los Angeles, California

p. 127—Outreach Church of God in Christ, Bremerton, Washington

p. 131—Greater Heights Church of God in Christ, Tacoma, Washington

See also p. 181—“River of the Spirit”

Church of God of Prophecy

Formed: 1903

Headquarters: PO Box 2910, Cleveland, TN 37320

Active mission work in 134 other nations

For more information: www.cogop.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 103—Church of God of Prophecy, Kingsport, Tennessee

p. 126—Church of God of Prophecy, Douglasville, Georgia

Church of God of the Apostolic Faith

Formed: 1914

Headquarters: 399758 W. 3100 Road, Ramona, OK 74061

Active mission work in 6 other nations

For more information: www.cogaf.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 24—Forerunner House of Prayer, Green Forest, Arkansas

Coastal Church

Formed: 1994

Main address: 1160 West Georgia Street, Vancouver BC V6E 3H7

For more information: www.coastalchurch.org.

See also p. 132—“A Miracle for Mom”

MIRACLE INVASION

Elim Fellowship

Formed: 1924

Headquarters: 1703 Dalton Road, Lima, NY 14485

Active mission work in 30 other nations

For more information: www.elimfellowship.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 144—Lighthouse Community Fellowship, South Butler, New York

Fellowship Network

Formed: 1962

Headquarters: 1000 N. Belt Line Road, Suite 201, Irving, TX 75061

For more information: www.thefellowshipnetwork.net.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 47—Believers Church, Douglasville, Georgia

The Foursquare Church

Formed: 1923

Headquarters: P.O. Box 26902, 1910 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

Active mission work in 145 other nations

For more information: www.foursquare.org.

Stories featuring Foursquare leaders in this book:

p. 30—“Detour?”

p. 181—“River of the Spirit”

Grupo Unidad

Formed: 1982

Headquarters: Blvd. Agua Caliente #11010, Col. Aviación, Tijuana, BC, Mexico 22420

For more information: www.unidad.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 88—Grupo Unidad, Tijuana, Baja California

SOURCES

Independent Assemblies of God International (Canada)

Formed: 1918

Headquarters: 330 Victoria Ave., PO Box 653, Chatham, ON N7M 5K8

For more information: www.iaogcan.com.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 158—Kangirsuk Full Gospel Church, Kangirsuk, Nunavik, Quebec

International Pentecostal Church of Christ

Formed: 1917

Headquarters: 2343 US Highway 42 Southwest, London, OH 43140

Active mission work in 18 other nations

For more information: www.ipcc.cc.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 166—Full Gospel Assembly, Hartford, Michigan

International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Formed by merger: 1911

Headquarters: PO Box 12609, Oklahoma City, OK 73157

Active mission work in 96 other nations

For more information: www.iphc.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 178—Fountain of Life, Elizabeth City, North Carolina

See also p. 181—“River of the Spirit”

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

Formed: 2003

Headquarters: PO Box 293389, Sacramento, CA 95829

For more information: www.nhclc.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 173—New Season Christian Worship Center/Cantico Nueva, Sacramento, California

Open Bible Churches

Formed: 1935

Headquarters: 2020 Bell Ave., Des Moines, IA 50315

Active mission work in 45 other nations

For more information: www.openbible.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 100—Living Word Open Bible Church, Cooper City, Florida

p. 147—New Life Open Bible Church, San Jacinto, California

See also:

p. 67—“Hard Case”

p. 115—“Double Trouble, Double Portion” regarding Eugene Bible College (now New Hope Christian College), Eugene, Oregon

Open Bible Faith Fellowship

Formed: 1982

Headquarters: 4490 7th Concession, Windsor, ON N9A 6J3

Active mission work in 15 other nations

For more information: www.obff.com.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 50—Windsor Christian Fellowship, Windsor, Ontario

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada

Formed: 1919

Headquarters: 2450 Milltower Court, Mississauga, ON L5N 5Z6

Active mission work in 60 other nations

For more information: www.paoc.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 28, 170—Bethel Pentecostal Church, Sarnia, Ontario

See also p. 78—“Makeover in the Mall”

Pentecostal Church of God

Formed: 1919

Headquarters: 2501 Brown Trail, Bedford, TX 76095

Active mission work in 40 other nations

For more information: www.pcg.org.

Local church mentioned in this book:

p. 74—New Life Church, San Diego, California

See also the pastoral family featured in “Advance Notice” (p. 178)

United Evangelical Churches

Formed: 1958

Headquarters: PO Box 1000, San Juan Bautista, CA 95045

For more information: www.uecol.org.

See also p. 139—“Just Taking a Walk”

United Holy Church of America

Formed: 1894

Headquarters: 5104 Dunstan Road, Greensboro, NC 27405

Active mission work in 4 other nations

For more information: www.uhcainc.org.

Local churches mentioned in this book:

p. 136—Mount Zion Holiness Church of God, Galax, Virginia