

# A Personal Miracles Journey

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Experiences that Reveal an Amazing God

Terrence J. Hatch

With a chapter by Karen Delaporte

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## **Introduction**

How deep is this ocean we call reality? Some believe it goes far deeper than the visible waves on the surface. For those who dare to have faith in God, here is a book that peels back the top layer of reality of our existence to take a deeper look.

To do this, it contains personal experiences that point to a supernatural reality. I believe testimonies of miracles can become small gifts of faith. If we embrace them, they can help put broken pieces of life together in new and amazing ways. As the cover suggests, Believing that God is supremely powerful may seem extreme to some. Yet this book contains evidence that supports such a belief.

So for those tough mornings when the car won't start or tragedy is in the headlines, here are some little miracles that confirm God is in control. I hope you find them to be compelling evidence that God loves each one of us.

### **Stepping off Ledges**

In a familiar movie scene, an explorer stands on a rocky ledge and stares across a deep gorge. Mustering up courage, he closes his eyes and steps forward, half expecting to plunge to his death far below. Instead, his foot lands safely on a stone bridge that has been remarkably camouflaged. The scene is from "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade." Jones is seeking the "Holy Grail" – the cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper. Along the way, the movie connects miracles with principles of Christian faith. The result is great entertainment.

Outside Hollywood, a walk of faith has a deeper purpose than mere entertainment. In real life, we often desperately need God's intervention. In one way the movie had it right. Sometimes seeing God work requires stepping off cliffs, and that is often the path we must take if we are to learn to trust God. So this is a book about the struggle for faith, stepping off cliffs, and little miracles.

Fortunately, most cliffs for us are not like the one in the movie, yet there are parallels. In the movie, Indiana could have

played it safe had he given up on his quest, but instead he embraced a higher goal than mere survival – one with eternal aspects. In fact, staying safe might have stifled the little faith he had already mustered, so he gambled his very life on the hope there was something more.

### **Your testimony is important**

This book relates personal experiences. In doing so it outlines a similar journey – a faith journey – with many twists and turns. I offer it to you because scripture tells us that testimonies have power on a level that the book of Revelation compares to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. In Revelation 12 we read that those who follow Christ will ultimately overcome by “the blood of the lamb, and by the word of their testimony.”

A testimony is a personal experience that goes deeper than head knowledge, religious doctrine, or moral values. Scripture reveals tells us testimonies are meant to be told. In Philemon 1:6 we read, “That the communication of your faith may become effective by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.” When we acknowledge what Christ has done we make our faith “effective.”

So one purpose of this book is to offer little gifts of faith to some who may be new to following Christ, or to those may still lack faith experiences of their own. I was once in that condition. Also, for those who are more experienced it is hoped these stories will still impart encouragement. We can all use some of that. I believe it can do this because I have continued to benefit personally from having recorded these experiences, and also from reading and hearing testimonies of others.

Like many, if I am honest I tend to be a skeptic at heart. Sometimes my doubt overcomes my faith, and that is when I need to remember times when God stepped in. You see, experience is the cure for skepticism.

If you don't remember experiences they can be lost forever. Many Christians tell stories of God's provision, but if



they are not written down they are often forgotten. That seems sad. The precedent that scripture sets is one of documenting God's miracles for future generations to read. So this book is an attempt to do just that.

Many of the stories in this book are unusual – even extraordinary. It has been said that extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. For that reason, I have tried to be as transparent as possible regarding names, places, and dates so that others may confirm these things are true.

It seems the faith of many in the Church is starving for lack of a good testimony. I would rather trust the word of one who has experienced something, than to trust the word of many who have not. As a teenager I longed to know what was real. It was testimonies that helped me realize that faith matters. Some were told by pastors, others by fellow Christians, and many were found in scripture and books. Some books I have read with strong testimonies are:

- *Hey God!*, by Frank Foglio
- *God's Smuggler*, by Brother Andrew
- *China Cry*, by Nora Lam
- *The Cross and the Switchblade*, by David Wilkerson
- *Journey on the Hard Side of Miracles*, by Steven Stiles
- *True Miracle Stories that will Increase Your Faith*, by Andrew Houge.

Christian teens and their parents need to read books like these so they can understand their faith better – and books are not the only source. Today, powerful testimonies have become available on the Internet. Simply searching the word “miracles” on YouTube brings up many videos, many of which reveal spiritual truths or life-changing testimonies.

Seeing what God has done can increase expectations for what God will do. Brenda and I have certainly noticed our faith grow stronger as we reminisce about the events, miracles, and coincidences in this book – ones that have defined our very

personal life journeys.

Dare I say coincidences? The word simply refers to an unlikely alignment of events. I believe that such alignments, especially in answer to prayer, are often from the hand of God. I am always looking for signs of God's intervention, and sometimes coincidences can be just that. I believe God can use them to grab our attention, reveal he is with us, show us he loves us, and even point us to where he would want us to go. Let's face it, almost any answer to prayer can be called a coincidence. But when we trust God is in control, the things that skeptics call coincidences can be miracles.

Finally, out of necessity this book is written from a first person perspective. That is a particularly challenging way to write, and I ask you to be somewhat forgiving as you read. I have tried hard to keep ego at bay, and I hope you can see that. If you end up thinking this is a book about the author, then I have failed. On the other hand, if you see this is a book about the Author of Life, then it is a success.

A journey has many steps, and a spiritual one can last a lifetime. People of faith trust it will last for eternity. So now I offer for your consideration a journey of personal experiences that illustrate how the master of the universe can participate in the lives of ordinary human beings. •

## CHAPTER 1

### First steps

This book is roughly in chronological order, so it begins with first steps. Maybe I worry too much, but if you start to feel impatient and skip ahead, I won't be offended. After all, journeys tend to start small. Faith journeys are no different. In my case, the first steps occurred when I was very young. In those days my family lived in Bingen (pronounced "Binjun"), Washington. It sits on the banks of the Columbia River across from Oregon and the scenic Mount Hood.

On a cool day in January, 1957, a train pulled up to a depot. It was a scenario I would see again as I grew older. After a train pulls up, a conductor grabs the handrail and swings to the ground. He then retrieves wood steps from the depot and places them next to the train. On this day, he helped a young woman and two small boys into the arms of her waiting husband. At eighteen months of age, I was the younger boy.



*The railroad depot in Bingen, Washington as it appears today.*

Earlier, my parents graduated from Northwestern Bible College in Minneapolis where they met. After they married, they

learned of a small group in the state of Washington seeking a pastor. In response, as my father tells it, he booked a train west. The group then drafted a charter and chose the name, “Grace Baptist Church.” Not long after, my mother, brother, and I also made the trip. Within days, we moved into a small house near the train tracks, between the local sawmill and the river.

Grace Baptist first met briefly in a building on Bingen's main street and then moved into a large house. Some of my earliest memories include walking a few blocks on warm summer evenings to services. At those meetings, I recall annoying pats on the head, and playing in the back with my older brother Steve. During one service we were so loud that our mother pleaded with us, promising ice cream if we behaved. The gimmick worked, and visits to an ice cream stand became a regular Sunday evening treat.

However, to us kids, the most important thing in our lives was not church – it was trains – since trains ran past right in front of our house. We would often watch them go by in amazement. Then, in 1959 Oregon observed their 100-year Centennial celebration of statehood. My grandparents visited from Wisconsin, and we attended. To a four-year old it was amazing. Steve and I were in awe when we rode a tour train, and for months afterward, our little red wagon became that train. We would pull it around our yard so often that we wore trails into the front and back lawns – to the frustration of our parents.

It was as we pulled the wagon that I recall my first discussion about faith. You see, in those days, Steve and I did not think faith was complicated. But on this day we strongly disagreed about a memory. After much arguing we finally agreed that someday in heaven we would learn who was right.

We also believed that God could do anything. At some point, our parents led us in a simple prayer to ask Jesus into our hearts. For more than a decade, that prayer was the depth of my relationship with God. But even today I look back at those experiences as important first steps in a spiritual journey.



*Grace Baptist Church moved from Bingen to White Salmon, Washington, into this Grange Hall building, also known as the Odd Fellows Hall. In 1960 it was white.*

Some have questioned whether little children can be saved at such a young age, yet Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3). Little children simply believe and trust. Sometimes I think we adults try to complicate the path to God.

When I was five, the church moved up the mountain to the town of White Salmon. Our family followed, moving into a house on Spring Street. Services were held in the Grange Hall, also known as the Odd Fellows Hall. I can't believe I still remember those names. On Sunday mornings we attended Sunday School, where we learned Bible stories and songs including, "Jesus Loves Me," and “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” After morning services, my brother and I would approach the pianist and ask for candy. She would invariably dig a couple of Hershey's kisses out of her purse. We thought it was wonderful until Mom suggested

that begging for candy was rude. After that, we no longer asked. But that wasn't the only treat church offered. We also discovered that gum wads from the undersides of pews are quite tasty!



*Grace Baptist Church today as it appears in Google Streets.*

## **Early memories**

Winters in White Salmon were milder than the Midwest where I now live. Still, one blizzard dumped so much snow that I couldn't see over the edges of our shoveled walk – an experience I thought was incredible. The snow could also make driving on mountain roads treacherous. My dad would put chains on the tires – a practice I have not seen in the Midwest.

One of the more treacherous roads ran up the side of a mountain overlooking a lagoon. Steve and I were afraid of it, and would beg our parents to avoid it, but we often lost the battle when it was the shortest way home. I was still too young to understand how to release worries and place them in God's hands.

In 1961 we moved to Washington Street, and our house faced south. Through the front window we had an amazing view of the beautiful snow-capped Mount Hood across the river. It was a view my brother and I simply took for granted.

When I started first grade, my teacher's name was Mrs.

Logan. I recall her insistence that we cut smooth curves with scissors, and I remember her frustration – and mine – that I seemed unable to grasp the meaning of words on paper.

Obviously, her efforts paid off, and sentences like "see spot run" soon came alive. Then, before second grade, my dad accepted a position as associate pastor at Harbor Baptist Church in Hoquaim, Washington, a city southwest of Seattle and close to the Pacific shoreline. So we moved.

All of this may not seem important to a spiritual journey, but journey's often begin small. Soon little miracles would come that would dramatically shape my young faith. •

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## CHAPTER 2

### **Protected in the storm**

Second grade began in Hoquaim, Washington, a town on Grays Harbor, not far from the Pacific Ocean. By this time Steve and I had younger siblings – Karen and Keith. One Friday after dark, the chore of washing dishes was mine. As I toiled over the sink, a glance out the window revealed trees and bushes whipping wildly in the wind. When I ran excitedly to the living room, my mom said I should stop imagining things and go back to washing dishes. Just as I began to protest, the lights went out. Thankfully, the dishes were forgotten.

The next few hours were frightening as high winds buffeted the house. Our dad was across town at a church meeting, so Mom took charge by lighting candles and leading us in a prayer for safety. Then we all huddled on the couch watching a large picture window bow dangerously inward only a few feet from us. Fortunately with our prayers and God's grace the window held.

By sunrise the wind subsided. It was only then that my mom realized the danger we had been in from the bowing window. With all the wind noise we hadn't heard an upstairs window break which was directly above the picture window. Mom regretted not moving us to safety away from the window but expressed thankfulness that God had protected us. Was it a miracle? I wasn't sure, but for me this became my first awareness that God can answer prayer.

Soon my dad made it home, and told of power lines and trees down everywhere. In addition to our broken window, our chimney had fallen, and many trees on our street were uprooted. And then, of great interest to my brother and I, a two-story house about a block west of ours had become a single story house when its lower level collapsed!

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