



Martin Reeves' Testimony

I was born in London, England into a family with no spiritual conviction or relationship with God. My father was a Queen's Guard and my mother worked in the theatre. To a secular world this would seem to be the ideal family situation, however things are not always as they seem from the outside.

As a young boy growing up it soon became very apparent to me that my father, a very large man over 2 metres high, had a balance problem and was often falling over. It wasn't long before I also noticed my father was different to other dads because he always had a glass or bottle in his hand. My father was an alcoholic.

Too young to understand the true nature of this problem or why his moods were so changeable I began to withdraw myself to my bedroom day after day as an escape. My solace in life became the pen so I began to write hundreds and hundreds of pages of stories and poems about life and how wonderful it could be, if only! I truly believed that things would improve, unaware that alcohol is the devil in liquid.

Before too long things became worse so my mother thought she could solve the problem by removing my father from his London drinking mates. After seeing an advertisement in The London Evening Newspaper about Melbourne City in Australia and opportunities for a new life, my mother decided to put in an application for immigration to Australia. Much to her surprise my father agreed.

After a year of preparation and planning we were on our way to Australia. We arrived in Melbourne Australia with no money and only the clothing we had with us. The few personal items we had sent ahead by international post became lost and were never seen again. We were placed into an immigration camp until we could find work and save enough money to be self-sufficient.

After a year in the tin shed immigration camp and hundreds of poems

and stories later we finally had enough funds to move out.

My father found work and seemed to be doing well until new drinking buddies came along and the old routine began again. A drinker will always find someone else with a drink in his hand willing to encourage him, regardless of where he is. The devil makes sure of it. The drinking became so bad that even holding down a job for my father was difficult so my mother returned to full time work. Soon the marriage was over and we moved away.

Not long after that, at the age of 14 I decided that the ideal life I had always written about was attainable, so I found a job and left home to seek that life. Soon after this I began to realise that the stories and poems I had been writing all those years could actually be put to music and set about to teach myself how to play a musical instrument. The cost of instruments was beyond my reach so I just looked at them in music shop windows, until one day I saw a tin guitar in a shop window on special. I ran home gathered up all my money, raced back and bought it. Thus began my race to learn how to play it. I bought books on how to play and began to frequent Melbourne City Mall the home of busking guitarists to learn as much as I could.

One Saturday, as usual I was on my way into the mall and saw a very large crowd gathered around in a circle listening to a busker. The largest crowd I had ever seen gathered at one time. I quickly made my way into the crowd to see and hear what was so magnetic to draw such a crowd. Normally, the majority of people would pass by, some would toss a coin, and some would just turn their head away and ignore the busker completely. Generally only a few would stand by and listen. So this was not a normal occurrence, it was something special.

As I approached the front I could quite clearly hear a man playing a guitar and singing. It sounded very different to what I was used to hearing. It sounded sweet, tender, loving, joyful, uplifting and seemed to warm the hearts of those listening. Yet so strange to me were the words he sang (You must be born again to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus Loves You). This was unlike any other busker I had ever heard

before. Finally I reached the front and caught my first glimpse of this busker – a small, well dressed man. The only striking thing about him was the pressure cooker he wore on his head. I thought to myself, “This guy must be crazy! Those things are extremely heavy. Why on Earth would anyone do that?”

I waited till the crowd had gone and the busker man was packing up, this way I could have an opportunity to speak to this rather peculiar man. As I approached him, he held out his hand to shake mine, smiled at me and said, "Hello young man, I am Mishach. How can I help you?" His presence was calm, gentle and softly spoken. I told him my name, how much I loved the music he was playing, and asked him to tell me more about it. It was not like anything I had heard before. The thing that confused me most was the lyrics; I did not understand exactly what they meant.

He began to explain to me that the music he was playing and the words he was singing were to bring honour and glory to The One and Only Living God and His Son Jesus Christ. He told me he was visiting from America as a travelling missionary and invited me to a fellowship gathering that Sunday. If I were available to come he said would gladly teach me some insights into guitar playing and techniques. This was an offer too good to refuse. Strangely I completely forgot to ask him why he was wearing a pressure cooker on his head....

I could hardly wait for the hours to pass and Sunday to come; I yearned so much to learn this special music that touched the heart. Sunday finally came and I set off to the fellowship meeting. As I approached the building I could see more people arriving and once again could hear that sweet music coming from within that I had heard just a few hours ago in the mall only this time it was multiplied as numerous people were singing along joyfully with it too.

I entered in and listened as they sang several more songs with Mishach and two other men playing guitars and a lady playing flute. The music and singing came to an end and a curly-haired man stood up and introduced himself as Paul. He told those gathered that he had recently

left The Salvation Army so that he could spread the Word of God. He told us that he had wanted to serve the Lord and spread The Gospel because two years earlier he had accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour and he believed that this was God's will for his life. He had joined the Salvation Army to do this, but found that too many restrictions were applied on him to do this freely. So he left.

Very confusing to me firstly was, what was salvation? Secondly, why does The Salvation Army not let you preach Salvation freely? This was mumbo jumbo to me. I did not understand what he was saying, but I did know one thing, he was very sincere and passionate about what he had said.

My main interest lay in the music and why it was so special. I believed that if I could capture some of that special feeling and put it into the stories and poems I had written, it was sure to be a success and lead to that better life I had written about for so long.

After the meeting, Mishach and I sat down, and he taught me many things about the guitar and shared many songs with me. He told me that I needed Jesus in my life if I was to truly understand why the music and words were so special. He then explained to me what salvation was and how it had changed his life, just like it had changed Paul's life, the man who had recently left the Salvation Army. I left the meeting that evening sure that my new found musical knowledge would be the key to success and that better life. Mishach and I had several other meetings over the course of the year and he taught me much about music and guitar, yet my ears were still closed to the truth about Jesus.

It was not long before I felt the need to expand and record my new-found music so I began to seek out fellow musicians for accompaniment and moved to Sydney. Over the next 12 years I found myself firmly entrenched in the serpent's pit of deception (rock music) performing, recording and touring etc. My life governed by sin, substance, ego and popularity. Rock music propagates self-determination, which ultimately leads to anarchy and a Godless existence. The hardest place to see this is from the inside.

After a promotional trip to England to plan a world tour, with popularity at its peak I fell very ill, was hospitalised and went through a lengthy recovery process. During this time I began to assess and reflect back on the journey to date. The better life was not where I was heading, in fact, I was entertaining and being a part of the life of those who were doing the very thing that displeased me the most about my own father. I was performing to drunkards. I was contributing to their misery. Did my music really have that special feeling I had so longed for? No! I knew it was time for change...

I came out of hospital and found myself with no employment, no income and nowhere to live. I needed to do something in a hurry but was not sure where to begin. I had only been out of the hospital a few hours and a man whom I did not know rang me and offered me a job in a film, video and photo reproduction shop in the city. I had done some study over the years of touring on this subject and had produced some of the band's music video clips and promotional posters.

He told me that he had obtained my number from the Hospital Chaplain, Paul who had visited me during my stay in the hospital. I was so grateful for what he had done that I immediately rang the hospital to talk with him and thank him. Imagine my surprise when the hospital told me that they did not have a Chaplain called Paul and never had. So thinking I may have mixed up his name I described the young man to the lady on the phone. She told me that she had worked in the hospital for over 15 years and no one of that description had ever worked as a Chaplain there. In fact the Chaplain only went to people who had asked for him to come or requested him to come on their admission sheet (which I had not done) and the Chaplain was certainly not a young man. The next day I went for an interview and was given the job.

When we had filled out the paperwork and finalised the work contract I asked Peter my new boss about the Chaplain Paul and who he was. He just laughed and said, "To tell you the truth I am not really sure. A Chaplain named Paul rang me and asked me if I could help you out and give you a job. He gave me your phone but did not give me his.

At that very time he rang I was writing out an advertisement to hire someone. The timing was perfect and his recommendation for you as a worker was very high.” To this day I still wonder who that man was.

My life felt like it was beginning again. I found a new place to live and met a wonderful girl named Maria at my favourite restaurant (Bachelors don't cook very much). She was very special and a very hard worker. Every afternoon she would rush over to help me at my work to make sure the jobs were finished and packed on time.

One afternoon Maria and I were just finishing packing up the last few jobs when a man came into the shop and asked if we could reprint some photos he had taken. He pulled out a very large bag of photos and began to show us his pictures – hundreds of photos from many different countries all over the world.

He asked if we could do a special deal for him because he was a travelling American missionary named Gary. My heart was touched as I thought back to Mishach, the travelling missionary with the pressure cooker on his head. I agreed to do his work and made a very fair offer to him for which he was very grateful. The following day Gary came back to collect his finished work. He was elated with the results and invited Maria and I to come to a fellowship meeting he was hosting that Sunday. We accepted his offer and arrived at the meeting not quite sure what to expect. Everyone was warm, friendly and very welcoming. We sat and talked for a while until the music began to play.

That sound... those words... I knew them in an instant (You must be born again to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven). My mind again began to travel back in time. They sang and sang praises to God until finally a man walked up to the front and said, "Hello, my name is Paul, and I would like to share my testimony with you. Some years ago I accepted The Lord Jesus as my personal Saviour, I knew his calling for my life was to tell other people about that wonderful salvation that only Jesus can offer. So I joined the Salvation Army believing that I could do just that, but I found too many restrictions were placed upon me to do this openly, so I left to become a travelling missionary and evangelist.”

My heart stopped. I realised that God had brought me right back to where he had first led me all those years ago. God had a plan for my life, but I was a modern day Jonah who had been running away from God's will for my life. Maria and I accepted Jesus as our Saviour, Lord and Redeemer in July 1992. Oh the grace that was handed down to man, that Christ would die for my sins and me! If only I had listened to God's plan all those years ago.

Our lives began to change as we sought to find God's truth and will for our lives. Maria and I are now married and have 5 beautiful blessings (children) from above; our calling is to teach them of The Saviour's Love that they may tell others also. By the grace of God we have had the privilege of serving The Lord over the years through our Church and family ministry, Kingdomkids. Our ministry reflects a burden we have to reach and teach young people about the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the Salvation that is available only through Him.

That wonderful new life is there for all to embrace, there is no need to begin searching elsewhere. The world has nothing to offer that could ever compare to the Love of Christ. We love Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ more and more every day and yearn to tell all of His love for them. That new life, that joy, that fulfilment I had written, dreamed, and sung about for all those years, I have now found. It only exists when a life is lived for Christ.

1 John 5:12

He that hath the Son hath life; [and] he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

Amen.....