

The Life Testimony of Roy Waldrom

Dedication

As to dedicating this book, it would first go to a loving God who has taken me from what the world would judge as a person with no human graces and little education to a world traveller and a public speaker on relationships. Next would be my parents who as humble, hard working dairy farmers raised eight children who had all their basic needs met. Then, to a very dedicated and loving wife Myra, who has been a companion through my life's entire journey since we met just over 50 years ago. She is the only person, I am quite sure, who has the strength of character to live with me, an encourager who has many times put others first so that they could be blessed. Only Father God could have put two such different people in a marriage to live and minister around the world to so many people through a living testimony. Besides my dear wife, five precious children Allan, Ian, Barry, Shelley, and Peter, all who have gone through many not so pleasant experiences as I have tried to find life, in its meaning for me. In addition, I would like to give special thanks to those who contributed to the compiling of the record of my life's story, Videos and Web Site. Alec Macleod, Ronald Hubbard and Alan Pippenger. And last but not least, are all the wonderful people that have crossed my path as I have travelled the world.

Part One: Beginnings

My physical life started in June 1937. Born to farming parents in a small country town in New Zealand, I was the seventh child in a family of eight. It was a very different world to the one we live in now. Back then, there were no televisions or VCR's, no penicillin or polio shots, no frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, plastic, frisbees or the Pill, no credit cards, no laser beams or even ball point pens. It was before pantyhose, dishwashers, microwaves, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothing and long before man walked on the moon. It was in a day when people got married first, then lived together. It was a time before househusbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and computer marriages. There did not exist care centres, nursing homes, or group therapy! As for FM radio, tape decks, CD's, video and DVD recorders, faxes, cell phones, the Internet, e-mail, electric typewriters, computers, word processors, artificial hearts, swapping body parts (except on a car), all these were beyond anyone's imagination, other than in science fiction comics. Timesharing meant togetherness; a 'chip' meant 'a piece of wood', 'hard' ware meant 'hardware', and 'software' wasn't even a word. Before 1950, 'Made in Japan' meant 'junk', and the term 'making out' referred to how you did an exam or an interview. Pizzas, MacDonald's, Burger King, KFC and instant coffee were unheard of, just as were yogurt and processed food. Back then grass was 'mown', 'coke' was burned in the fire - not a cold drink - and 'pot' was a thing you cooked in. 'Crack' was a break in a wall, not a drug; 'Rock music' was Grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the Principal's office. 'Pigs' were farm animals, not police. Even though people lived a simple life, and they were aware of the difference between the sexes, it was surely before the 'sex change'.

People made do with what they had, and it seems they were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby. In our home there was no carpet on the floor, no refrigerator, no vacuum cleaner, no washing machine, no hot running water or flush toilet. The main luxury was wood stove that was used to cook the meals and keep us warm during the winter, and a radio. When I saved enough money I bought my own radio and thought I was made. The only other thing I desired was a BSA Bantam motorbike but did not get one.

We were poor according to the standards people have come to believe as normal in 2005, but back then we were a fairly normal family that always had food, a bed at night and clothes to wear. Three boys would sleep in a double bed which was one way of keeping warm in the winter. How standards have changed! We thought nothing of these things - we were simply pleased to have the company and warmth in the winter. As to interfering with each other, it was not thought of.

As a child I lived a very lonely life. The sibling above me was a girl who I refused to play with and any other boy my age lived at least half a mile away, which seemed miles for a boy under eight in those days. My friend was the farm dog who I played with having no fear of any danger. Then a family member told me to be careful and not put my head in the dog's mouth, which I ignored. One day, while playing with the dog, it bit my upper lip and it required three stitches. Because the dog bit me it had to be put down and I felt deep guilt - the dog lost its life because of my disobedience. All was fine, till the command came, which created a law, and I disobeyed. In my heart I made a vow that no animal would ever suffer at my hand again - hence I was locked into responsibility to animals and birds, until in later years I came to understand the dynamics of judgments and how to deal with them to be free.

When I first went to school (which was three and a half miles from home) I was doubled on either my older sister's bike, or one of my brothers. Coming home after school one day, the wheel of my brother's bike caught, throwing me off, and I landed on my face and broke my nose. No one believed my nose was broken, and to this day my nose has a bend in it and one side is almost blocked. From as far as I can remember, till I was almost 7, when we met new people they would ask mum, "Is this your baby?" My mother would say yes, and I hated it. At seven and a half, my brother Maurice was born. From then on he was called the baby and I felt free - from what I did not really know. We had little in the way of toys and had to make our own fun. Time was taken up with doing jobs and scheming up things to do; in the summer we had the sea at the bottom of the farm to go and have a swim. Never lived childhood, always wanted to be an adult. Because I could not read and did not enjoy sport, school was a pain. The happiest days of my school life were when I was not there! At age twenty-five, I got glasses because it was discovered my eyes were oval instead of being round. I was left-handed and smudged the page when using an ink pen; I could not spell and I am a little

dyslexic. (What ever exactly that is!)

There was a time in New Zealand when there was a Polio epidemic and all schools were closed for several months. To me it was a wonderful because I was picked to sing in the school choir at the end of the year School Social. The song was 'Lavender Blue Dilly Dilly', and I hated it! I was very happy the social was cancelled and I could spend the time mucking around at home, (although we were sent homework, which I attempted to do, but it was not important). I left school at the age of fourteen years and five months. I never passed standard 6 and I did not attend High school. I told my father when he went to buy me High School clothes, not to, because the day I turned fifteen I would leave school. (By then I was 14 and 7 months).

All I desired to do was work with my hands. I enjoyed digging postholes, anything, in fact, to do with a spade or shovel. In 1952 there was eight labouring jobs for every man; by 1990 there are almost eight people for every job! After leaving school, early, for the first 6 months I worked on the farm for my father. Until I was legally allowed to leave school at fifteen, he paid me 30 shillings a week and gave me free board. Then I got a job for two shillings and sixpence an hour, working on a farm that had horses, sheep, cattle, and grew potatoes. The big thing was, he had a new tractor, and my father had an old one that seemed like hours spent in trying to get it started by cranking it! Getting two and sixpence an hour, I thought I was rich. Back then we paid six pence for a meat pie - that amounted to five meat pies for an hour's work! Today, a meat pie costs around \$2.00 and the average working wage is around \$8.00 an hour. Putting it that way I was quite well paid!

Soon after my sixteenth birthday I left home, never wanting to return, but before I left I asked my father if I could go and he said yes, so I went with his blessing. Later, I came to realise that to leave without permission would not have honoured my father and brought a curse on my life, that 'it would not go well with me' and also that 'I would not live long in the land'. I bought my first car off one of my brothers, a 1928 two-seater Wippet and drove myself to a city 150 miles northeast, called Hastings, to visit cousins, and one of them got me a job in an orchard. That lasted nine months and I left because I did not want to be involved in pruning the trees during winter, on top of which I had a break-up with a girl friend. So, I headed up the road, 140 miles, to Rotorua where over a year I had two jobs; then I left, intending to see my parents back on the farm, 200 miles south. When I got to Taupo, 50 miles down the road from Rotorua, the highway divided south and east. My parents lived south, and Hastings where I had been before going to Rotorua was east. I was hitch hiking and I said to myself, 'Which ever the way the car is heading that picks me up, I will go'. A car pulled up and it was going east, so I ended up back in Hastings. I never got back home on that occasion. It was springtime, so I went with a cousin to the Agricultural & Pastoral Show. I enjoyed it so much I stayed. Soon I had a job that lasted a while, till I was sick of it, and so I got another. This went on

until I was nineteen and a half, when I got a job with a builder. I bought a few tools and became a carpenter. I enjoyed that job and it lasted for eight and a half years.

When I was seventeen, I met this beautiful sixteen-year-old girl and it was love at first sight. She was playing the piano one Sunday night at her parents place when the young people went there for a singsong after church, plus which, I enjoyed the big suppers that the ladies seem to provide! A week or two later, it was Guy Fawkes Night - a get together round a big bonfire and an excuse to let off crackers and have another big supper. This beautiful girl hung around and pinched crackers out of my pocket, and then at the end I asked her father if they could take me home. The look on his face was not pleasing. Nevertheless, I went home in their car and that was the start of a three-year courtship, as we needed to, 'grow up'. On my girlfriend's eighteenth birthday we were officially engaged, but her parents said they would not give consent for marriage because they believed we were too young.

Just after my 20th birthday I said to a man, "How do you get a house to live in?" His reply was, "Do it". That was all I needed to stir me to seek the ways and means of buying a house. I asked my future father-in-law for two acres of land, which would be enough to be a deposit on a house, so that I could use the land for a market garden. He said no. Although I was disappointed, his saying no was the best answer, because of the direction my life would take later.

The builder I worked for, said one day that there were sections for sale seven miles out of town, at the beach, for £350 - in Hastings, sections were selling for £700. I phoned my father and asked if he would loan me £300 for a section. Within a week or so, I was the legal owner of a block of land. Having the land, I was able to apply for a loan for a house, and by October 1957 we were nailing the roof on our new home.

My future wife's parents had very high ideals for their daughter, so when I came on the scene they wondered 'what the cat had dragged in'. But now, to own a house completely dumbfounded them, so they let us get married on the 21st of December 1957, by which time the house was completed, except for the outside painting. The house measured 912 square feet, very compact with 3 bedrooms. Before my father died in 1960 at aged 58, I had been able to pay him back the original 300 pounds.

December the 21st, 1957, was a great day! Now we were free to do what we were always scared to do because we knew nothing about birth control, in a time when if you got pregnant and were not married, you were rejected in a big way. Marriage resulted in our first child being born just nine months later and we were thrilled. I never thought, though, just how great the responsibility would be - we just did it. Looking back, it would have been wiser to wait a few months before having the first child. Now, having a wife and child, my time was taken up with working as a carpenter 45 hours a week, doing 9-hour days. Evenings and Saturdays doing lawns and gardens for people in

the village, plus looking after our own property on which we had a large vegetable garden.

Back then Sunday was a day for Church in the morning, a big roast lunch and a rest, then Church again at night, with teaching Sunday school in-between as well. For the first 6 years of our married life we did not have a car, as the 1940 Ford Prefect I had bought 2 years before our marriage, was sold to put the money into the house. Forty seven years later, there are five children and more than twelve grandchildren. Since we lived in a village, we were able to get to where we needed to go by walking. To get to work, I was either picked up at the gate or walked to the boss's place around the corner. A bus service went to Hastings twice a day during the week, and a fellow believer was very generous in taking us out for an occasional drive and there was a 1930 Ford model A., which we could borrow when needed. From the day of marriage till the day of typing this, 47 years have past, and in that time we had four sons and a daughter. Our four remaining children have married, blessing us up to this time with twelve grandchildren, and all our children and their spouses have accepted the Salvation of Jesus and are seeking to live as Christian families. Our oldest son followed the traditions of the family, till just before he married. Soon after that we lost the intimacy, not because of marriage, but because a person in leadership of a course that our son attended, judged me, and our son agreed with him. From the moment of that judgement, we were divided, until 20 years later when his family fell apart. He turned to me for advice, and when he removed his judgment we were instantly knitted together. Today, he has a deep teaching on Fatherhood and has proved that the Bible verse is very clear, 'that those who honour their fathers, by not judging them, will be blessed'. Since that time he has had continual daily blessings, the greatest of which is the fellowship between him and his father. Next is our third son, who became our second when his brother lost his physical life. He, his wife, and family live in Taupo and are a support to his Dad in every way, especially when it comes to computers. A constant companion, he has seen me on both good and bad days and knows how to unconditionally love me through them. Our second Son gained a commercial pilot's licence at eighteen. He worked hard and paid for it all himself. He loved flying and we were very proud of him. At twenty, he left New Zealand for Australia, where there were more opportunities to fly and obtained a job flying a Cattle Station manager around much of Queensland and the Northern Territory. Three years later, on the 18th of December 1983, as he rode his motorbike back from the village to the homestead, he missed the cattle grid by three feet and collided with a pipe rail at chest height. The bike went under the rail and he was found next morning, doubled up dead. The Police took the body to Mt. Isa for a post-mortem. Around 11 pm on the night of the 18th, there was a knock on the door of our home in Taupo (NZ.). A police officer had come with the message that there had been a fatality in Australia to do with our son, but that was all he knew. That night I slept very little, and as the next morning was Friday, I went to an early prayer meeting where I shared with the men what had happened. Within minutes I was told to get my bag packed as they had raised the money for the airfare to Australia. By noon I was on my way to Brisbane, and the following day I flew out to Mt Isa. On arrival I was taken to the police station where I was told what to do, which was

to identify the body and arrange for a funeral. Then the young policeman who attended the accident drove me 180 miles down in the desert in a police wagon to the cattle station where our son had lived. I slept the night and the next day gathered up all his personal belongings before being flown back to Mt. Isa in the same plane our son had flown only days before. I took the funeral service out of the back of the hearse, using the men who had gathered to carry the casket. After burying the body I flew back to Brisbane, sleeping the night there before catching a flight back to New Zealand, and arriving, early Christmas morning. I was not meant to be on the flight on the 24th as I was booked for the 25th, but when I arrived in Auckland a friend was waiting at the airport for me to take me the 180 miles back to Taupo. I asked how did he know I was on that flight, to which he replied that Jesus told him to go and meet that plane because I was on it. It was a miserable Christmas. The family was bewildered and I was devastated.

Eighteen months later, I was still grieving and could not figure out why. In praying about it, it came clear I had never set that son free to love me or reject me. The moment I did that, setting him free, I felt full of peace and I have not grieved since. Father God told us both that he took our son to save him and us further heartache because he had potential to go way off the rails.

The beginning of full time mission work among youth My wife's father had given us the building material from a shed he had pulled down, and after work for many weeks I used the material to build a car shed, 20 feet long and 12 feet wide. I then put an extension on the back for firewood. We had two sons and there were many boys in the village with very little to do, and so it came to me to start a hobby group, building shoe boxes, paper racks, and any thing that could be made with small pieces of timber, plus have a drink and biscuit at the end of the evening. While they were enjoying this, we would have what we called a 'five minute devotion', telling Bible stories. Starting with eight boys, it grew to the point of needing five leaders and using the village hall one night a week to have enough room. At that time the Brethren Church had a youth ministry called, 'Every Boy's Rally' and 'Every Girl's Rally', and we became part of that. At the end of eight years of building, an opportunity came available to become the first manager/caretaker of a brand new Christian Youth Camp on the shores of Lake Taupo. So, I found another leader for the Boys Rally and we packed up our family of three boys, all our belongings, and headed out to a new adventure. Full of faith, we were keen to put all the skills I had learned into ministry to young people. And so, in February 1966, we moved to 'Mission Bay Christian Youth Camp' as Manager, where we lived and worked for the next five years. Mission bay is situated on a beautiful lake, right in the centre of the North Island. The lake is 26 miles long, 16 miles wide, and 600 feet deep, full of fresh water and rainbow trout. When we arrived at the camp, the first thing that needed to be done was to build a 'long drop - that is, a toilet. For three months we lived in the shell of the camp building while the manager's house was being built, moving into the house in the May school holidays, just before the first camp. We lived and worked in and out of the camp for more than five years, during which time our last two children were born. On top of getting the Camp up and running, the first week started by taking Bible lessons in two schools. The NZ Education Department allowed for every class to have half an hour a week of what they called 'religious Instruction', and we said we would teach them about the Bible. The first school was half a mile from the Camp, and the other about twenty miles. By 1976 my wife and I between us had seventeen, one-half hour classes in schools over a 50-mile radius. Every second Wednesday we conducted a games

and Bible program in a military camp, between 3:30 and 5pm for primary age children, plus a High School age group from 7 to 9, before driving home over a road that was covered in snow many times during the winter months. A typical Wednesday would be to leave home around 8.00 am, drive 30 miles ready for the first School class at 9am, to the next School at 10am; another at 11:30; and then to the High School for a teenage group till 1.00 pm. Then it would be back into the car again for a 15-mile drive to a country school, eating lunch as I drove. Finishing at that School by 2.00 pm, I then drove another 40 miles to the Military camp for the 3:30pm gathering. When we lived at the camp it was 45 miles home after the last group, but when we moved to Taupo it was a 75-mile trip back home! sometimes I would go to a parent's house and have supper so would be getting home around midnight. Next morning, there was no sleeping in, as I had to be at a school by 9.00 am, 8 miles from home. In May 1970, we moved to Taupo. After 5 years, the camp was expanding so much it needed more staff, and we had the option of doing nothing else but work at the camp, or move out. We chose to move. At that time, the house we built in Hawke's Bay, which we had rented for the 5 years while at the camp, sold. With the money we were able to put a deposit on a 4 bedroom, 1400 square foot home in Taupo, which was the town at the northern end of the lake. Following our son's death at the end of 1983, a friend and myself, along with several 'hammer hands', built 500 square feet on top of the Taupo house. It was completed, as we shifted in, all in 16 days. That now made the house 1900 square feet with 5 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Some home! Lots of room to bring up children, and have people to stay. In early 1993 we sold this house, which had become too big for the two of us, as all the family had left home, and we felt it would be wise to build a smaller place on an easy to keep section, especially because we seemed to be away so much. So, we were able to sell the big house and have a smaller home, built to our liking on an eighth of an acre, a back block, well fenced and easy to keep and protected when we are away overseas so much. It's just right for us, and only a mile from the centre of town, which is a good walk.

My spiritual walk

My grandmother on my father's side was a dear saint who loved Jesus. She came to visit us on the farm when I was two years old and I can still remember her sitting me down beside the piano and singing to me, 'Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so'. When the youngest child was born, it was decided to round up some of us and get us christened. One Sunday afternoon, one of my older sisters, the baby and I were marched off to the local Methodist church and 'done'. All I can remember was that the baby cried loudly all the way through the service. Other than that it made no impression on me. The next memory was from school, when a minister would come once a week and teach us Bible. Three things made an impression on me.

- 1) We were divided up into two groups, Protestant and Catholic, and could not imagine why.
- 2) We sung a song that stuck deep in my mind, "There is a green hill far away without a city wall, where the dear Lord was crucified and died to save us all..."
- 3) The minister had a pipe in his coat pocket and said if we did not behave, he would shoot us, as we watched him poke the end of the pipe through his jacket.

When I was thirteen, I attended a Methodist youth camp over Easter weekend, and the only thing that sticks in my mind was that I said to the teacher who took me that I needed something. So he had me kneel down, right beside the bags of potatoes and he prayed, "God, give Roy what he needs". In hindsight, that prayer was answered, only many years later. On the way home I bought a packet of cigarettes and smoked them. (I smoked from fourteen till sixteen and also drank beer and wine, mixed, for those two years). At age sixteen, at the end of a Sunday night service in a Brethren

Gospel Hall I came to understand that in order to be a Christian and go to heaven, I needed to ask Jesus to be my Saviour. I met with the preacher afterward and I told him what I needed. He opened his Bible and read to me John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Then he turned to me and said, "Do you receive Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?" I said, "Yes", to which he replied, "You are saved" and then prayed for me and left. Seven years later I was struggling because I knew that even though I had made that decision, I was not changed on the inside. I had made a mental decision to follow Jesus and I did my best to keep it, but it was all by soul power. My first big hurdle was that I could not read and I had been given a King James Bible that seemed to be full of big words that I had never seen before nor could understand. My way through was to listen a lot and attend the Bible study. But to be quite truthful, another reason to attend the Bible study was because my girlfriend played the piano for the hymns at the start of the meeting! The next thing that came up was baptism, so I went to the elders and asked to be baptised. They sat me down and asked why I wanted to be baptised and my reply was, "Because it was in the Bible", since that is what they preached. So they baptised me. For the next seven years I did all I knew Christians were expected to do, not drinking, swearing, smoking, going to dances, working on Sunday, including not polishing your shoes! I attended Sunday morning and night church services, I taught a Sunday school class, as well as attending the midweek prayer and Bible study. And I tried to read the Bible. In fact, I taught myself to read words by reading the Bible, and for years I could not read any other book because it was not in the format of the King James Bible. One night at the Bible study I tried to read the passage they were studying, out loud, (because I wanted to have a go and be part of them) but I made a terrible mess of it. Outside on the footpath at the end of the meeting, one of the elders came up to me and said, "Young man, before you ever read the word in public again get speech elocution lessons". I thought that sounded like electricity and I could get a shock, so I smiled and walked away, none the wiser. My girl friend, who was standing next to me, was very embarrassed. He never offered to pay for the lessons. As much as I tried to be a Christian I knew I had no assurance that I was one, and it was only some years later, at age twenty-three, I met the Living Lord Jesus. A man was invited to come and hold some evangelistic meetings at the local Gospel Hall and no one in the congregation invited him to stay and because we had a spare room, my wife said that we would take him. She prepared the room with a little table beside the bed, but as she showed him into the room, he came out crying and said that no one had ever loved him by preparing a room like that in his entire life. He said this even though he was now fifty-five years old, with a wife and family, most of them married! (I found out later he had done an unwise thing when he was first married for which his wife had never forgiven him and it was not

until after his death that she came to realise her bitterness and forgave him. How sad that he was never present to hear it. He was a preacher of love but had never received love from the one he loved most, his wife.) At that time I was off work, getting over a hernia operation, and so was able to go out visiting with the evangelist. (It was hard work in those days because you had to go out and invite people to come and hear you preach.) On one day, at almost lunchtime, we were making the last call before we returned home at a house occupied by two old ladies who belonged to the Anglican Church. The evangelist got one of them upset, real well, over the fact that you can have assurance that when you die, you go to Heaven. The lady exploded by shouting, "Presumption!", three times. But as she said those words I was deeply convicted and scared that she would ask me if I had that assurance, since I would have had to say, 'No'. I tried to hide behind the preacher, and although he was a bit wider, he was shorter than me and I could still see her eyes peering at me over his head. So I quickly said, "It is lunch time and we should go home!" And so we left. As soon as we got home I headed for my bedroom, got down on my knees and said, "Lord! If you don't give me assurance that I am saved and going to heaven when I die, then I quit trying to be a Christian, as I cannot be a hypocrite". I heard nothing, so I got off my knees and went down to the kitchen and called the preacher and I said, "Come here". He replied, "What is the matter?" to which I said that I had no assurance of my salvation. He opened his little pocket New Testament at John 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on His name", and told me to read it. I ran my eyes over the words and got to the middle of the verse for the second time. All of a sudden, I was flooded with love, joy and peace and I knew for certain that heaven would be my home when I left my physical body. An assurance that has never left me. I went out that afternoon singing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine, O what a foretaste of glory divine", followed by, "Something lives in every hue, Christless eyes have never seen". Jesus was now real, living in me and I could walk and talk with Him. I knew then that He was my friend because of what He said, "My sheep hear my voice I know them and they follow me". And also that He would lead me into all truth and that it was He who would do the work in and through me, as long as I let Him. After that, one night a week when the day's work was finished, I would get down on my knees beside my bed, and say, "Lord! Which family of the Sunday School children would you like me to go and visit tonight?" A name would immediately appear in my mind and I simply believed Jesus put it there. After tea I would go and borrow a car - we did not have a car and the one I borrowed was a model A Ford from a fellow believer - and just go. One night I went to the family that lived at the end of a road, about 5 miles away, (which seemed in those days a hundred miles), but they were out. I left and parked the car up on the beach and sat and cried. I said, "Lord! I believed that was you and there is no one home. If that wasn't you, then I must have missed it some where". I mentioned this to an older Christian believer whom I trusted and his reply was, "If there was no one there, then God did not move, so it must be you". With that I felt condemned. I pondered that situation for months, too scared to ask God any more questions again. Some while later though, I felt the Word of God speak to me and say, "Roy, it did not matter if there was any one home when you went to visit. The most important thing I require of you is your obedience". (By the way, I found out later that the family were out in the hay paddock. Had I waited, they would have come home not long after I left!)