

The Secret Place

If there were one message that would be the basis of my faith, leadership and life, it would be a message about intimacy with God. I believe it is the power source to life. Let's face it, we came from God and when we die we will return to God, so it is only normal that we relate to God while we are here on earth, and that we trust and acknowledge Him in all of our ways. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Adam walked with God in the cool of the day. Enoch walked with God for 300 years and then was not found, for God took him. Abraham had such a relationship with God that he had the audacity to bargain with God over Sodom and Gomorrah.

Moses spoke to God in the tent of meeting as a man speaks to a man. David wrote songs to God, like Psalm 63:1: *"O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you."* And in Proverbs 3:5-6, Solomon, as rich and wise as he was, says to "trust in the Lord with all of your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him."

I could go on and on, but the Bible itself makes it clear that the hallmark of every man and woman of God is their connection to Him. A prayer of Moses is recorded in Psalm 91:1-2: *"He who dwells in the shelter [secret place] of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'" (Read the whole prayer; it's powerful!)*

I believe we all have a responsibility to build that secret place with God. For some it could be the beach, for others, the bush, the bedroom or the back yard. It doesn't matter where you meet with God. What matters is that you do! For me it was the bush. For many years when I lived in Wollongong I would frequent the various mountains of the Illawarra and call out to God, walking with Him, camping with Him for days, building my friendship, building the church and extending the Kingdom in that secret place.

Building a Room for God

2 Kings 4:8-10: *"One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a well-to-do woman was there, who urged him to stay for a meal.*

So whenever he came by, he stopped there to eat. She said to her husband, 'I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us.'"

The story here is about a well-to-do woman. Elisha the prophet would visit her and her husband when he was in their area. Recognizing that he was a man of God, she suggested to her husband that they set aside a permanent space for him, a room where he would be able to live with them more comfortably when he visited. So they built a room onto their house and furnished it with a bed, a table, a chair and a lamp.

You and I need to see the importance of connecting to God and making a space or a room for Him—a secret place for Him in our lives. This is our power source, the "engine room", the well that we will draw from.

All Blessings Come from this Place

Read 2 Kings 4:11-17.

This particular woman was barren, but because she blessed Elisha by giving him a room, she was able to have a son—something that had seemed impossible in her circumstances. It is in this secret place with God that you become pregnant with things from Him. It has been in that secret place that God has birthed many things into my heart, my life and ministry. That is what is meant in the following scriptures: Isaiah 30:15: *"In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you would have none of it."* And Isaiah 40:31 says: *"but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

Faith is neither a principle nor a formula. Faith is a relationship—a relationship of intimacy with the Faithful One from which many things are birthed.

Everyone must build their own space, because God only has sons, not grandsons. Every one of us must be accountable for our own relationship with God. It doesn't matter how well your pastor, parents or partner know God or how powerful the altar calls, the preaching, or the church program. The fact is that we must

all go to God if we want to know Him personally and become pregnant with the promises He has for us, able to stand strong in the midst of trial and tribulation.

In 2 Kings 4:18, we read: *"The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers."*

Even though the woman's son had been born as a result of a miracle, there were no exceptions for him...he too had to build his own secret place with God if he were to survive. One day he was out in the harvest field when he fell ill, crying out: *"My head, my head!"* I don't care how smart and intelligent you are: your head will not sustain you in the heat of the day!

So the boy went to his father, which speaks of strength, protection and ability. But the father couldn't help him. It doesn't matter how strong you are, how covered and accountable you are, or how much talent you have. In a time of crisis, these things will not carry you.

His father sent him to his mother, which speaks of comfort, counsel and nursing... and that's great. However, you can go to any counsellor, answer any altar call, and get the best pastoring in the world, but if you don't get yourself out of the nursery room of Christianity and build your own room of intimacy with God you will never grow up and run the race marked out for you. You will die before your destiny is fulfilled!

Verse 21 tells us: *"She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out."* The mother knew the place where he needed to go.

Jeremiah 17:7-8: *"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."*

Where is your source? Where is your strength found?

I remember taking on my first ministry position as a youth leader in a Dapto church when I was 18 years old.

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I was a relatively new believer—about a year and a half old in the Lord, but after hearing a series of messages on intimacy with God I quickly began to build a friendship with God.

I would walk with God for hours up in the mountain and consume His word. That is where I believe the ministry was birthed—in the secret place.

Before long the youth group started to grow and my time was consumed with serving others. I found that waiting on God was becoming harder to do because of time constraints. I remember God speaking to me one night as I lay on my bed exhausted. He spoke to me out of Revelation 2:2-4: *"I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love."*

Well, what would I do? Give up the ministry! No! Instead, I pushed deeper into God. That is how it has been for the 25 years since then. Every trial, every testing, every failing makes me seek God more diligently and not pull back from my calling.

The Secret Place

2 Kings 4:32-35: *"When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm. Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes."*

The Secret Place Is a Place of Rest

Verse 32: *"...there was the boy lying dead on his couch."*

It's a place where we die to ourselves and become alive to Him, a place where "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The great rest Hebrews 3:11 speaks of is faith in the Faithful One, faith that brings us into a place of such peace that we no longer strive and stress in order to make things happen. It's a place where we can rest, simply trusting and believing that God is in control.

It Is a Place of Solitude

Verse 33: *"He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD"*

It's a place where just you and God meet. The radio and television have been turned off, there is no activity around you, and no people to socialize with. It's the place of quietness and rest that we read about earlier in Isaiah 30:15.

It's the place where we pull back from the "Martha" activity and simply sit at the feet of Jesus, listening to His voice and understanding His heart.

It Is a Place of Impartation

Verse 34: *"Then he got on the bed and lay upon the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out upon him, the boy's body grew warm"*.

We all look for impartation, whether it is in the business sector, ministry, sport or other areas. We hope that someone who has earned more, achieved greater success, or gone further would impart to us their wisdom, ability and anointing so that we would grow warm. I think of the times I have sat under and received prayer or got advice from some great men of God. I have sensed an impartation, a warmth, an anointing that has come on me. But how much more has come when I've drawn close to God and He's put His hand on me.

He walked back and forth in the room and had another go.

Verse 35: *"Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out upon him once more..."*

It Is a Place of Persistence

There is so much discouragement in life. In one sense you can understand when people give up, and I feel that many in the body of Christ are growing weary and fainting. We need to ignite a fire in our belly, lift up those weak arms that hang down and strengthen those knees that are feeble. And where is the best place to get that fire, that strength? In the secret place. The young boy in our story gave way when the heat of the day came upon him.

We can all react like that under the heat of pressure, so let's discover the power of persistence that we get in the secret place.

It Is a Place of Breakthrough

Verse 35: *"The boy sneezed seven times..."*

This is where the victory is won. This is where we get the breakthrough!

Remember, nothing is changed or won in the natural until it is won in the spirit, in the secret place with God.

I had just finished planting our third church in the Illawarra. It was one church in three locations now reaching towards 1000 members. It was the fulfilment of a promise God had given me years earlier, but my time to release the church was drawing near. It was in 1999. One day I was praying up in the mountain that had been my place of prayer at the time I first took on the church in 1988.

Suddenly God clearly spoke to me and said: "Hey Kevin, do you remember, this is where we built the church together."

I then turned to Haggai 1:8: *"Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honored," says the LORD"*

I knew what God was saying. This is how everything in Him is built.

It Is a Place of Revelation

Verse 35: *"...the boy opened his eyes."*

When we get with God—I mean, really get with God—our eyes are opened concerning who we are in God and how big God is in us! We see how small our problems are in the light of His greatness. The following story powerfully illustrates this point.

2 Kings 6:15-17: *"When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh, my lord, what shall we do?" the servant asked. "Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."*

The servant had been terrified when he saw the enemy's army surrounding them. But when Elisha prayed, the servant's eyes were open to God's world. Suddenly the world that so frightened him did not seem as big. So let's move into that secret place with God. Let's abide in the incredible shadow of the Almighty and begin to say: "He is my refuge and fortress, my God in whom I trust."

Love,

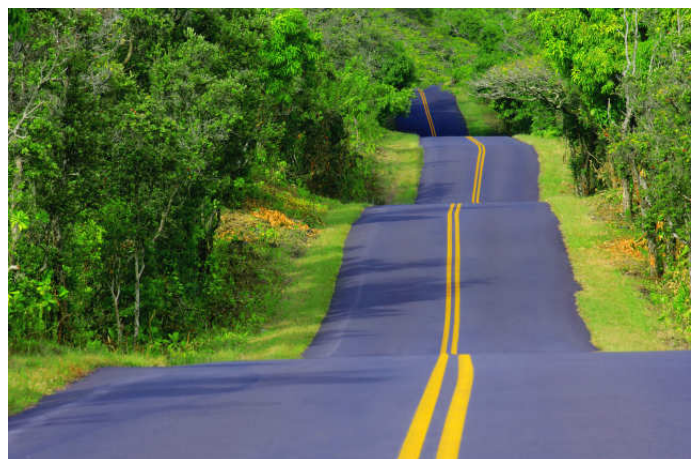
Kevin

Kevin's Travel

Kevin travels into churches he has friendship with to encourage and build into those churches. During the year he will be traveling to:

13th to 15th February
20th to 21st March
28th to 29th March
18th to 19th April
30th to 31st May
19th to 21st June
10th to 12th July
21st to 23rd August
12th to 13th September

Huonville & Hobart, Tas.
Melbourne
Shellharbour
Nelson Bay
Canberra
Shellharbour
Thirroul
Gold Coast
Mittagong





GlobeReach

San Juan Argentina—Paul & Veronica Harb

Greetings to you all the way from San Juan Argentina. We do pray and hope that all is well with you, family and ministry?

We want to wish you a happy Christmas as we celebrate and remember his birth together and may you have a wonderful new year. Declaring that 2009 will be a year of ABUNDANCE in every area, body, soul, spirit, financially and materially for His glory. Yes! We are blessed to be a blessing.

As for us, all is going well and always busy in the Fathers business. Just had another Australian team of eight people for 17 days visit us for ministry, which was a great blessing. Church is growing and have moved to three church buildings already because of growth. Work among the slums, middle class and upper class in going well and seeing many new souls come to Jesus.

We want to really thank you for your past support toward us and the ministry

during these past few years. God has been so faithful to us and to His work in San Juan Argentina. God in His faithfulness has supplied us with daily manna throughout these nearly five years. Your support has allowed us and helped us to bear much fruit in this land, were the harvest is truly ripe.

Paul & Veronica Harb
Email: him_ministries@yahoo.com.au
H.I.M. Ministries Australia/Argentina



Cambodia—Donna Byham

In addition to the usual clothes and toys, the Deborah House girls received an extra special gift this Christmas—new house parents and a little brother! Mum, Eam Saeun, and Dad Oung Sameath, with their nine year old son Eath Oudom, moved into Deborah House on 15 December.

As parents of two boys, Saeun and Sameath were delighted with God's provision of eight new daughters. Their eldest son, Eath Somnang, is 22 years old and living in their newly completed house with his aging grandparents. A strong Christian family with previous experience

as House Parents with another organization, we are hopeful that they will settle quickly and be a great asset to the work here. They really are a testimony of God's provision in answer to your prayers.

The students had an enjoyable Christmas with a number of Christmas and New Year programs in Phnom Penh and the provinces. They also appreciated the gifts of clothes and toys. Even the House parents were delighted to have received gifts as well. The House Parents also took the opportunity to use their devotional times to teach the real meaning of Christmas.

Donna is busy handing over responsibility for the project to the new managements team. Please pray for her as she says Goodbye to her home and work of over eight years that she may know God's favour and hand in all she has done.

Donna is coming home for a six month sabbatical before heading off to Burma to continue her missionary work there.

Donna Byham
Email: donnabyham@gmail.com

Indonesia—Colin & Kim Crago / Bali—Michael & Bianca Zietsch

Muslim Convert

On Friday 12th December 2008, Hidup Dalam Roh Kudus (Our Church) accepted an invitation to minister to the local School for special purposes. A team went over to the school and did their best to minister to the disabled students. In the corner was a young Muslim woman who just happened to be visiting the school. She was so moved by the presentation she asked to talk to the team.

She has also asked for a Bible and we are expecting her at next Sunday's Christmas Service. Please pray for Retno as she tries to work this out with her Muslim family.
Email: colin.crago@gmail.com

YAY! WE ARE BOOKED TO GO!!!



We are super excited to announce that we are leaving for Bali on the 24th February 2009. We are currently at 96% of our budget and we want to

thank all of our supporters for all the prayer and financial support you have given us. Sometimes we have to pinch ourselves to realize that it is really happening! We have been so blessed to have so many awesome friends and family believing in us! We are truly going to miss everyone so much.

Michael & Bianca Zietsch
Email: zietsch@mailsnare.net

It's Missional
It's Emergent
It's Incarnational
It's 24 Hr Express

24HR EXPRESS @ LIFE

Will be on the 20th to 21st February 2009 playing at Soapbox will be Bodacious Cowboys playing tribute to "Steely Dan"

24hr express is a 24hr experience for ministers & leaders that will give you a missional approach to church. You will experience a Soapbox night where some of the best muso's in

Australia play. It will have its own bar and restaurant. Then you'll serve in Soul Café among the needy of

Newcastle. You will also get to see an art exhibition, attend A.A. and spend time with Kev talking about the whole missional church and what that means to you, your church and your community.

For more information and accommodation suggestions contact Life Church office on 4961 0211 or Kevin Wilcock on 0407 467 798.

Cost for Soapbox \$45.00
Cost for 24 hr Express \$35.00



An Australian based relationship of churches and ministries that

work together in reaching our nation and beyond

to plant, parent and partner with churches in order to see them impact their communities

Providing—relational and visionary oversight

CONNECTING IN 2009 Ministers & Leader's Gathering

MELBOURNE

Friday 20 to Saturday 21st March

Ozreach gathering at

Mantra on the Park Melbourne from Fri-

day 12:00noon to

Saturday 12:00 noon.

Bookings can be made on

Ph **03 9668 2500**.

If you have an entertainment gold card we have been quoted

\$180.00 for a 1 bedroom apartment or

\$220.00 for a 2 bedroom apartment.

If you **DON'T** have a gold card you can book your room through **Luke Thompson** on

Ph **03 9668 2500** and let them know you are attending a conference and have been quoted

\$192.00 for a 1 bedroom apartment and

\$272.00 for a 2 bedroom apartment.

WEB address is:

www.mantracityhotels.com.au

See attached brochure for details

A number of the team will be sharing along with a few ministers from Melbourne plus many enjoyable meals will be had together as we enjoy the restaurants of Melbourne.



Profile Malcolm & Antonia—Weir Huonville Tasmania

How long have you been married?

19 years

How long have you been in ministry?

6 months

Favourite things you like to do?

Malcolm: Fishing & Hobby Farming

Antonia: Horse Riding & Hobby Farming

What do you like about OzReach?

Real genuine fellowship and caring people and the vision of being committed to the building of authentic Aussie churches that relate to our communities.

What other work have you done?

Malcolm: Book keeping

Antonia: Sales & Hospitality

What's the hardest thing you find in ministry?

Fasting & Praying

When are your birthdays?

Malcolm: 2nd September 1963

Antonia: 12th April 1970

What's your favourite food?

Malcolm: Pizza

Antonia: Sundried Tomatoes, eggplant & olives



HUON LIFE CHURCH

For how long have you pastored the church? 6 months

What things are running well in your church? Pastoral Care & Fellowship

What is your vision statement?

Huon Life Church has a vision of a harvest with no end, no limitations—connecting people to Jesus and to each other.

What things can you improve on?

Missions and Outreach

Email: mweirhuon@gmail.com

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; because there is not effort without error and shortcomings; but who does actually strive to do the deed; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement and who at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly. So that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt.

OzReach Leadership Team

Administration

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Secretarial & Event Management

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Pastoral Co-Ordinator

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Finances & Treasurer

Emil Varga
0412 440 335

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This team get together once a month for the purpose of prayer & fellowship.

All churches wanting to relate will need to make contact with this team.