

# **Testimony**

of  
**Gary M. “Mick” Wells**

## **Conversion**

I went to the altar and asked Jesus into my heart in a basement church in Elmwood Place, a suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1956. I was 5 years old, and my father, Rev. Ed Wells was the pastor. As I grew, I was strongly influenced by my dear mother’s view of salvation, which held that anything I would think, do or say that displeased God would cause the loss of my salvation at any given moment. Of course this was and is an impossible standard to keep, and throughout my growth years, became a consuming, unbearable, hopeless burden. I found myself confessing everything I could think of all throughout the day, knowing that Jesus would be faithful and just to forgive me of my sins, yet I suffered the hopeless perception of being lost, then saved, then lost, then saved, etc. ad infinitum.

## **Harmful Understanding of God**

I thank God for my parents and godly grandparents, for without them, I would not have been introduced to Jesus or grounded in the faith. Yet, there were so many quirks to sift through. Visits to Grandma’s church exposed me to extreme legalism. It was not uncommon for the preacher to get up and deliver a prolonged, high-pitched, droning monologue aimed specifically at how some poor woman in the congregation was caught up in “carnality” based on the way she was dressed. In those circles, the women were not allowed to cut their hair or wear make-up or jewelry, including a wedding ring. Open-toed shoes were taboo, as were ladies’ slacks, and dresses with short sleeves or having a length any higher than a few inches above the ankle. My parents were a bit more progressive when it came to apparel, but the pressure exerted on my mother to conform to congregational expectations in this regard ultimately culminated in a nervous breakdown.

## **A Year as a Student Minister**

I learned much under my father’s ministry, and I loved God. But based on my (flawed) understanding of salvation and God’s grace, I entered my adult life with no inner assurance that I was right with God. In this state of mind, I set out to prove to Him that I could be useful in bringing others to a saving knowledge of Christ, even if I couldn’t sustain that relationship in my own weakness. I married young, and accepted an appointment as a student pastor for the United Methodist Church. With long-range plans to attend seminary, my career plans were shattered a year later by a marital break-up. In the throes of bitterness, I

did not darken the door of a church for the next eight years, saving for a few weddings and funerals.

### **Re-dedication to Jesus**

In 1980, I found myself watching Oral Roberts on TV one evening. His message was simple – “Don’t give up!” The Holy Spirit used this moment, as I fell under conviction, walked across the house and locked myself in the bathroom. With tears, I told the Lord that I would live for Him, no matter what. I re-committed my life to Him, and surrendered my own frailty concerning salvation. Life has not been the same since that evening, as I moved forward to serve Jesus Christ without reservation or shame. Though filled with some significant challenges, I would not trade these ensuing years for anything. The Lord has given me songs to write, record and perform – hundreds of concerts, services and venues to praise Him and testify of what He has done in my life.

### **Miracle: Jesus Healed My Voice**

In 1999, with a severely damaged mitral valve in my heart, doctors gave me a short time to live. Although I prayed for supernatural healing, the Lord extended my life through the hands of a surgeon, and an artificial valve.

But the surgery had brought on an unexpected tragedy –my left vocal cord was paralyzed. I couldn’t talk – I could only wheeze and make gasping guttural noises. After a few weeks, there was no improvement. I was sent to an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist, who confirmed the paralysis and indicated that I should hold no hope of recovery. His prognosis was permanent paralysis. I was sent to a voice therapist who, after a few months, photographed my vocal cords with a stroboscope, only to find that the left fold remained paralyzed.

I was happy to be alive, but I was terribly confused. No other patient in the heart surgery ward had lost their vocal cords. I had to know why I was in this condition. Well, one physician said it was a mystery. The anesthesiologist who took an hour and a half to intubate me before surgery blamed the surgeon. The surgeon blamed the anesthesiologist. One relative counseled me to sue the doctor. Another wanted me to sue the anesthesiologist. Yet others encouraged me to sue everybody, including the hospital and its staff.

At this point, I thanked God for preserving my life, and giving me the opportunity to be a husband to my wife, and a father to my young children. Blaming and suing people was not going to restore my voice. Winning some prolonged and messy malpractice suit was not going to give it back either. I told God, “Lord, you gave me a voice and a calling to sing Your praises, and testify of Your goodness. I miss it, but God, if You want me to stay the way I am, I will use what remaining gifts I have for Your glory.” I refused to sue anyone, and put my situation completely in the Lord’s hands.

I went forward in a church service and asked the elders to anoint me and pray for my healing, according to the instructions in James, Chapter 5. A few days afterwards, I had located on the internet an Anglican minister for whom God had healed of voice paralysis. I emailed him and requested prayer. He responded with one of the most sincere and powerful intercessory prayers I have ever seen. That afternoon, while trying to talk to my wife, my voice returned through the miracle-working hand of God -- suddenly, powerfully and convincingly! I noted the time on the clock. When I later opened my email, I discovered the Anglican minister's prayer. It had been sent at the exact time – hour and minute – that my voice had been restored! Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever!

### **Miracle: Jesus Healed Me From A Stroke**

August 6, 2006 began as any other work day. The alarm clock announced the morning. I rubbed my eyes and found my way to the bathroom. Per routine, I brushed back the tub curtain, and stepped under the shower. Immediately, severe and sustained pain pounded the back of my head. I thought it was equivalent to a charley horse, and frantically tried to massage it away. I called to my wife and pleaded with her to bring me an electric massager we had – typically used for back therapy. Nothing relieved the excruciating pain. My wife drove me to the local hospital emergency room where I suffered an hour and a half in the waiting room before being treated. A quick brain scan revealed severe bleeding. Within minutes, I received my first-ever helicopter ride – to University Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

Once again, God healed me completely – this time from a stroke! He restored me with no loss of motor skills or abilities!

### **Pressing Ahead**

Today, I am retired from a 32+ year civilian career with the United States Air Force. I am blessed with a wife and three children, and proud to be a part of their lives.

Retirement is a time to reinvent one's self. I thank the Lord for each new day of life, and He continues to provide me with opportunities to serve Him and minister to others. Praise God!

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...” -- Romans 1:16a*

\* \* \* \* \*