

BERNI DYMET



**HOW** *God*  
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**A DONKEY**  
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Berni shares how God reached him at rock bottom and utterly transformed his life.

HOW *God*  
COULD USE  
A DONKEY  
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*To my Saviour who found me in  
my darkest hour and to the love of my life,  
my wife Jacqui, who makes my heart to sing and  
who has stuck with me through thick and through thin.*

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ONE

# How This Little Book Came to Be

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*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.  
(John 10:10)*

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ONE

## How This Little Book Came to Be

Back in May 2021, a brilliantly crazy friend of mine, Jason Blaiklock, approached me with an idea. He and his dad, Graeme, were kicking off a new venture to tell God's story through the stories of people whose lives had been transformed by His grace.

It was called "Unsung Heroes". Great idea Jason, but I'm no hero. Far from it. So it's something I struggled with for a time. Eventually Jason corralled me into a TV studio to tell that story. It's from there that this short book was born.

The awkward thing about being asked to share your testimony, is that as we ourselves look back on our lives, certainly as I look back on mine, we can see all the mistakes we've made. These days people look at my life, involved in the ministry of Christianityworks, doing the things that we do through the media, and they think, "Wow Berni has a blessed life. Berni has his act

together.” And so the last impression that I ever want to give anybody, is that that is, in fact, the case.

The only way that I agreed to share my story on that program and through this short book, is if I could tell it (a) warts and all, and (b) as God’s, story rather than Berni’s story.

Here’s what I mean by that. It strikes me when I look at any of the characters in the Bible other than God Himself and Jesus His Son: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph down to Moses, David, to Paul, Peter and so on – that they were all frail human beings who had made a good many mistakes along the way.

Abraham, held up by the Apostle Paul centuries later as this great man of faith (which he was) made some huge blunders along the way. He took his nephew Lot with him as kind of a Plan B in case God’s Plan A didn’t work out – risking his own life (and God’s plan) by having to save him.

Twice he lied about his wife Sarah, selling her into another man’s harem, again risking God’s plan, not to mention her life. He slept with his slave woman Hagar, and conceived Ishmael who went on to become the father of the Arab nations (wow Abe, that one worked out particularly well!) Blunder after blunder, do you see?

That's why it's important to tell the "Berni" story, warts and all. Because despite Abraham's mistakes, not to mention mine, God's plans prevailed. Which brings me onto the second bit.

Take Joseph in the Old Testament. He has an amazing story, right? He was treated so badly by his brothers, and locked up in prison and all that horrible stuff, yet still he prevailed. Each time he was faced with an injustice, he stumped up, used his gifts and abilities diligently and worked his way out of the situation; onwards, upwards until he became the prime minister of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself. So, it's easy for us to say: "Well, that's Joseph story – clever lad that he was!"

But actually it's God's story too. In fact it was principally God's story. As you read through what happened to Joseph, you can see how God mightily guided him through all those difficult times to achieve His purposes. As Joseph himself said to his brothers ...

*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. (Genesis 50:20)*

In other words, despite everything, despite you, despite me, despite all the evil that happens along the way, God always had a plan, and He always sees to it that His plans come to fruition.

So the second part of my condition in telling my story is that I can tell God's story, because it's to Him that all the glory goes. Me, I made a mess of my life and I'm going to share some of that with you, warts and all; the good, the bad and the ugly, because I know that as you look at your life, maybe sometimes you think to yourself, "Wow I've made such a mess of things. God can't possibly do anything with me!"

Well hey, if he can do something moderately useful with me and through me given who I was when He picked me up off the scrap heap, I'm telling you, He can do truly amazing stuff through you as well. So before we launch into my small part of God's huge story, why don't we pray?

*Father, I just thank You that each one of us has a different story. Lord, I thank You that You've taken frail human beings like us who've perhaps been tossed on the scrapheap by society or by others, and yet still You love us. Despite all the mistakes we've made, You love us! In fact, because of who we are, who You made us to be, You love us!!!*

*So Father, as we just share in just one man's small tale today, I pray that we see You. I pray that we would see Your mighty handprints, Your soft and gentle fingerprints, all over this one life, and that to You is the glory forever and ever, Amen.*

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)*

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## Two

# Let's Begin at the Beginning

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*Pride goes before destruction,  
and a haughty spirit before a fall.*  
(Proverbs 16:18)

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## CHAPTER TWO

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# Let's Begin at the Beginning

As God would have it, I was truly blessed right from the beginning, being born into a middle-class home in Australia (the place we call “the lucky country”) to two wonderfully loving parents.

My father, Adolf Dymet, fought in the Wehrmacht during WWII, first on the Russian front and then against the partisans in Yugoslavia. They were brutal and dangerous times. He spent the final years of the war (including his twenty-first birthday) in a British POW camp. He, his parents and sister emigrated to Australia in the early 1950's, as communism and the brutal rule of Nicolae Ceausescu took hold of their beloved homeland, Romania.

Now a name like Adolf was, as you can imagine, somewhat inconvenient in post-war Australia. So, the German abbreviation for Adolf is Adi, and Adi morphed into Eddie, so to all his mates here in Australia that's who he was.

Both he and my Austrian mother Lotte, having gone through WWII in Europe, wanted so much better for their children, my sister Cori and me. So they drove us hard. My father drove me particularly hard. He expected a lot of me at school and I got into trouble whenever I didn't do my best. I remember getting the strap once for coming seventeenth in a class of fifty, when he knew I could have done a lot better (and yes, honestly, I'd been coasting that year).

I was also blessed with a high IQ right from the outset. To me, by the way, that's a physical attribute, no different to my height, hair colour (now rather grey), and propensity to gain weight very quickly. Yep, I was always the fat kid in the class. Back in the 1960's and 70's when I was at school all the other kids were skinny ... except me. And because I was always the one who was overweight, who couldn't run as fast as the others, who couldn't throw or catch a ball like the rest, I was always trying harder, trying to impress, trying to be successful

And that's good, up to a point. I remember that my high school motto was *Age Quod Agis*, which euphemistically translates to "Whatever you do, do well". That became part of my DNA. It's who I am, even if I didn't quite get there for the best of reasons.

So all this good stuff is happening in my life. Good parents, middle class upbringing. My IQ landed me in an elite, “selective” high school, which meant that I had the best teachers, smart friends ... I could go on. Blessed with a capital B!

Yet more and more, this idea of success took a hold of me. I tried to be the top in the class, in fact when I finished high school, I was the top student. The Dux of the school and the Student of the Year – a double honour that had never been achieved up to that point (1976) by anyone else.

Well, you can imagine. I thought to myself, “Man, I am so clever! I am so good at this!”

And with that ultra-inflated sense of self, off I went to join the Australian Army. That was a whole new chapter in my life, which we’ll talk about in a moment.

As I look back on my childhood, I can see with a great degree of clarity all the good things that God put into my life. The fact that I was born into the “lucky country” to good parents who drove me hard to achieve my best. The fact that I’d been given this Type-A, high achiever personality type that drove me to succeed. The fact that I was the fat kid in the class which spurred me on to even greater heights. No one likes to be the “fat kid” and yet, it kind of put me on this driven path to success which as

things turned out, ended up being a double-edged sword in my life as it is for many.

In fact you see it all the time. The society in which we live is all about success. How many advertisements have you seen where the underlying message is, essentially, “You can have it all ... you can be whatever you want to be!”? It’s how they peddle their wares.

“Buy me and you’ll be successful.” That’s the brand promise.

And so, that was the psyche with which I transitioned from childhood into adulthood. I had to be a success! Now success isn’t all that it’s cracked up to be. I’ll share a bit later how my realisation of that terrible truth brought me to the brink of life itself.

I wonder how your childhood went. I wonder how hard you were driven. I wonder how much this worldly concept of success has been dropped on your head as well. Because as you look at the Bible, you discover that it knows little if nothing, about worldly success. In fact if you look at Jesus as He hung there on that Cross, the Son of God, the Creator of the universe – nothing was created that He didn’t make – He looked like the world’s biggest loser, without even the clothes on His back.

I can see that now but I couldn't see it then. I launched into adulthood with the idea that I had to become someone. I had to have stuff, the best car, the best house, the best of everything, and that, as it turned out, was my undoing. And so there I was, leaving childhood behind, launching into adulthood ... and we were off to the races, as it were.

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. (Proverbs 16:18)*



### THREE

## Off to the Races

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*The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity. When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?*

(Ecclesiastes 5:10,11)

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## CHAPTER THREE

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# Off to the Races

High academic achievement translates into a wide variety of choices when you finish high school. So I had more than a few career paths that I could have pursued.

I was accepted into medicine at one university, into arts-law at another, not to mention a variety of what were then considered to be “lesser degrees”. But instead, I chose to go to the Royal Military College Duntroon, the Australian version of the UK’s Sandhurst or America’s West Point, to train to become a commissioned officer in the Australian Army.

And wow, when I arrived, I didn’t know what hit me! It was a tough, four-year degree course. I took a bachelor’s degree with a double major in pure and applied mathematics (the latter was later to be referred to as “computer science”). Academia suited me just fine, but I struggled terribly with being a soldier.

Remember, I’m the “fat kid”, so I was almost kicked out of the College a few times for failing either the annual cross country run or the nine mile “battle

proficiency” run with weapon and full military kit. I’m simply not built to run. It still gives me nightmares!

But just as in my childhood when my weight spurred me on to excellence, so at Duntroon in my own stubbornly Germanic, success-driven way, I decided that I was going to succeed come what may! It was a tough four years. We started with 161 cadets of which only 60 or so of us graduated four years later. A lot of the guys fell by the wayside.

Somehow, by the skin of my teeth, I made it. I graduated as Lieutenant Bernhard Walter Dymet and launched into a career as an Army Officer. Man, if you graduated from Duntroon, you were really something special! Do you see how this once again reinforced my drive to succeed? And honestly, the pride in me was so puffed up.

After ten years in the military, it was off into the private sector when a few of us Army officers started our own IT company. “Opticon Australia” it was called. Based on a system we’d installed together in the Army, we were into this amazing new technology, the scanning and storing of documents on optical discs and using that to improve the workflows of insurance companies, banks, government departments, global oil giants and the like. It was difficult at the beginning, but eventually

the business grew, and grew, and grew ... and yes, you guessed it, the more successful I became, the more money I earned; something was happening on the inside

I had a wife and we had two children, a big house, and a hefty mortgage. We did all the things that normal people do, but I couldn't admit to myself that success was turning out to be empty. That beautiful new burgundy coloured car that I'd bought, with the soft, beige calf leather interior, and the oh-so-lovely new-car smell, cost a small fortune as did the gold-plated taps in the ensuite. In fact, they were fantastic. It's just that, contrary to expectations, they didn't make me happy.

So what did I do? Did I change course? Nooooo! I just drove myself harder to achieve greater success so that I could buy more stuff. And the more I tried to succeed, the more distant God seemed to be.

Back in high school days, I'd had a bit of a flirt with Christianity, and yeah it seemed okay. But once you head into adulthood, once you have the responsibilities of a mortgage, a business to run and all that other stuff, not to mention the drive to earn more money, the drive to have other people think well of you, that whole God thing just kind of disappears into nowhere.

I remember in the early 1990's, I was speaking at an IT conference in Los Angeles, a stone's throw from

Disneyland in Anaheim. There would have been several thousand people in the audience. The projector screens either side of me (35mm slides back then!) were three or four storeys high. As I came off that stage, I remember this so distinctly, thinking, “I am so darned good at this, I am so clever!” One man in the audience even asked me for my autograph. *Seriously Berni, you are so much better than all these other ordinary people around you.*

But unbeknown to me, that pride was ugly to other people. I looked down my nose at those who weren't as smart as me, as fast as me, as successful as me. My favourite saying, can you believe this, was, “It's so hard to soar like an eagle when you're surrounded by turkeys.”

Not surprisingly, I alienated many people and so the more success I had, the emptier life became. Deep within, despite all the outward success, grew a sense of desperation. A desperation for *something*, although I didn't know what. I was after peace. I was after joy. I was after fulfillment, satisfaction and contentment. But the harder I tried, the more they eluded me.

So there I was flying all around the world (business class of course), now the high-priced IT and management consultant, trying to earn a good living, trying to provide for my family ... and it was right in the middle of that frenzied drive for success that my

marriage fell apart. The woman of my youth whom I'd married, decided to leave me for one of my best friends.

Now I'm not going to talk a lot about that. I wasn't a bad husband. I didn't beat my wife or my children, nothing like that. Nor did I cheat on her. But in my position, you can't talk about a marriage falling apart in any way impartially. It takes two to tango (or not), and it just fell apart. In any case, given the things I've told you about myself, you can probably join the dots for yourself.

And so there began the darkest period of my life.

*The lover of money will not be satisfied with money; nor the lover of wealth, with gain. This also is vanity. When goods increase, those who eat them increase; and what gain has their owner but to see them with his eyes?*  
(Ecclesiastes 5:10,11)



FOUR

From Darkness ... to Light

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*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will  
never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”*

(John 8:12)

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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# From Darkness ... to Light

We've all been through difficult times in our lives, and by sharing these dark years as I'm about to do, I don't want to imply, by any stretch of the imagination, that my pain is in any way worse than the pain that you've suffered during the trials that you've been through.

Hey, you've been through bad stuff too! You know what that is. It hurt a lot, and who knows how much more of it lies ahead for each one of us, amen? We simply don't know what tomorrow will bring.

But for me back then – “Mr Success” right? “Mr I've Succeeded At Absolutely Everything I've Ever Set My Hand To” – given who I was back then, for the most important relationship in my life to fail, was completely life-shattering! This wasn't someone else's marriage; it was *my* marriage that had failed! Even then it seems that in the darkest of hours, pride has the propensity to make things ten times worse.

The devastation! The betrayal! The shame! To have one of my best friends being involved with and then stealing

my wife. He and I had played together from when we'd been four years old ... since we were little kids! It just tore the stuffing out of me. The best way I can describe it is that it was like a deep black hole that I couldn't climb out of, and yet ... whilst I didn't know it, at the bottom of that pit, God's plan was to bless me in the months and years ahead.

And He began with some long-time Christian friends whom He'd already placed around me.

There was one couple, Sandra and Karsten, who'd been very good friends with my ex-wife. Despite that, they were the ones who opened their home to me, who prayed with me, who wept with me, who were just there for me. I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for them.

And one of my business partners, Mark and his wife Marion. They too opened their home to me giving me somewhere to live when I had nowhere to go. Now I had not been particularly nice to Mark over the years. He was one of those people that "proud Berni" used to roll over the top of. And yet, they had a little bungalow out the back of their home by their swimming pool, in which I was able stay for six weeks or so until I found somewhere else to live. In fact, it was Marion's then seventy-year-old mother Norma, who allowed me to live with her for nine or ten months until I moved from

Melbourne up to Sydney where my estranged wife and children had gone.

What was really interesting, was that I had never been nice to these Christians. Can I be blunt? I hated Christians. You Christians were so “goody-two-shoes”, you just used to rub me the wrong way. In hindsight, I guess that was because I knew that I was living the wrong life, I just didn’t want to admit it to myself at the time.

It turned out that each of these people who came out of the woodwork to be there for me, to love me, to cry with me, to provide for me, had a few things in common. Firstly, I had treated them really badly in the past. Secondly, they were Christians and yet thirdly, they were just there for me.

*I honestly don't remember much of what they said to me about Jesus, yet I will never forget for all eternity, what they did for me.*

But still things went from bad to worse.

I remember I was in Brisbane with my consulting work, staying at a hotel. I'd been weeping all night. My marriage was falling apart, the sense of betrayal was a terrible thing.

And on that clear, bright morning when I went out onto the balcony, it felt as though someone or something was pulling me over the edge whilst at the same time, someone or something was pulling me back inside. I felt torn. I came so close to jumping off that 8th floor hotel balcony onto the concrete driveway below.

I don't know how long I was out there as I weighed things up. It felt like an eternity. But eventually, I came inside. Those two *someones* or *somethings*, I can put names on them now, but back then I didn't have those names. I didn't know it was the devil pulling me over the edge. I didn't know it was God pulling me back inside.

And amidst the tears and the confusion, I knelt down by the bed (because that's what Mum and Dad had taught me to do - good Catholic upbringing!) and I said, "Lord if you're out there, now would be a good time!" That's all I had and, as it turns out, that's all it took.

The night before I'd been reading a Gideon Bible in my hotel room. God bless the Gideons for all that they do! And there in that place began a journey with God. Of course, He'd been working through everything thus far in my life. He'd been getting me ready, bringing me

to this point. *What others meant for evil, He all along, had meant for good!*

So with that feeble and uncertain prayer, that's where it all began for me.

I'd like to be able to tell you that things improved from that point onwards but no, they just went from bad to worse. A few months later she left me, took the kids, moved into this other man's home ... and it was all over!

As I said, I ended up moving from Melbourne to Sydney. I found somewhere nice to live, in a leafy-green suburb called "Oyster Bay". And it was there, in that inky blackness, in that dark hole, at that dining table around which there'd once been a family and now there was just me, completely alone in an empty living room weeping night after night ...

*... it was in that place that Jesus met me. It was in that place that the light of His love began to shine ever so brightly.*

I wouldn't wish that inky blackness, that darkness on my worst enemy. But I wouldn't swap it for all the money in the world because that's where my Saviour came for me.

And if you'd have told me back then, in that mess of a life that I had, that I'd be here today sharing this story

with you, I'd have said, "Man, you're smoking dope!" because I couldn't even see how I was going to make it to tomorrow, let alone years down the road. Yet God was in that place with me. Imagine ... me! And I'm actually sharing this with you today. Un-be-lievable!!!

*I don't know where you're at in your life. I don't know your walk, but however low, however dark, however black it ever becomes know this: Jesus is in this place with you.*

Those were the dark years. They became even darker – divorce, financial settlement, custody arguments. Man it was horrible! I said that I was going to share God's story through me warts and all; the good, the bad, the ugly – so there it is.

This was my life. I was living out the consequences of my prideful drive for success.

There was one weekend when I had literally no money left in the bank. I'd moved interstate. I'd paid the lawyer. My credit cards were maxed out, my overdraft was at its limit. I literally did not have enough money to buy food for the week ahead.

It was on that day that a little Church that I'd started attending (the Oyster Bay Christian Centre it was called) were holding a car boot sale. I grabbed some things from the garage, drove up there, opened the trunk

of my car and by 11:00 o'clock in the morning, I'd sold everything, whilst not a single other person had sold one thing! Even there God was providing for me!

As I said, no hole is so deep or so dark that God isn't there with us!

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)*





## FIVE

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# A New Beginning

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*If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ... "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

(Romans 10:9-11,13)

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## CHAPTER FIVE

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# A New Beginning

On the 15th of October 1995 I walked into a church in Wollongong, which is my hometown about eighty kilometres south of Sydney. These friends Sandra and Karsten had dragged me along. Now, I hadn't been to a church, other than the odd wedding and funeral, for like, a lifetime. My palms were cold and sweaty walking through the doors. God was up to something ... they sang songs. I wept.

The preacher, Ted Keating, preached a message that I remember so well that I could still preach it to you today. It was written for me – “God is calling you”. Yeah, I know it sounds a bit corny now, but God was on my case that day.

And after the service, while all you Christians were hanging around, you know drinking your instant coffee, munching on your biscuits and talking amongst yourselves in your little cliques, I went outside, sat down under a gumtree and gave my life to Jesus.

This is what I said – and again, they're words that I will never forget:

*Lord everything I have and everything I am, every hope and every dream, I give to You.*

That was the day my life began to change. I still had some bad stuff to travel through, but this was the day that my life turned the corner.

So, back to this little church, the Oyster Bay Christian Centre 80 kilometers north. It had a massive congregation of between twenty-five and thirty people. Not very impressive, I know.

And as time rolled on, I thought, "I'm never going to meet another woman here to marry." I mean, honestly, all the single women were over eighty, so just a bit outside my demographic if you take my drift. One Sunday, about three years after my separation and subsequent divorce, I was called to preach the message. My Pastor, Phil Littlejohn, identified the gift of speaking and teaching in me early on and dragged me, kicking, and screaming, to start preaching. God bless that man!

I was due to preach and lead the service on this particular Sunday morning but I had a really high temperature, just under 40 degrees Celcius. If you've ever had a temperature that high, you'll know that you

can barely function. So, on the Saturday, I wrote the message a minute or two at a time. Sunday morning came and I was still really sick. There was no way that I could stand up for an hour and a half to lead a service and preach a message. I drove very slowly up the hill to the church building, sat down in the pastor's office and people laid hands on me and prayed for me.

Now I could have stayed home that day, honestly. I felt awful, but something inside me said, "God wants you to preach this day." So I went, and as they prayed for me the fever lifted. I led worship and I was mid sermon when all of a sudden, I looked out and there was a woman there about my age. I vaguely knew her mother, Jenny.

This woman, as it turned out, was visiting just that one day from interstate. If I'd succumbed to my sickness and stayed home that Sunday, I would never have met her. And in my heart, mid-sentence, mid-sermon, I knew that this was the woman that God had brought for me to marry. Much later I discovered that she'd had exactly the same experience that day. One thing led to another and the rest as they say, is history.

It's a long time ago now and Jacqui and I have been happily married for all those years. She is the love of my

life. She is the greatest blessing that God has ever given me on this earth!

Now you may be wondering what God thinks about divorce and remarriage? I was thinking the very same thing back then. Here it is, as it applied to me then:

*But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. (1 Corinthians 7:15)*

I then talked to Pastor Phil, and we worked through that Scripture. We believed that it was in accordance with God's will. So I proposed to Jacqui and she accepted.

But in parallel to this massive blessing, God was also working on the other part of His plan for my life. Unbeknown to me, He was soon to call me into fulltime ministry, a ministry that would leverage so many of the things that I'd learned in my previous life.

*If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ... "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."  
(Romans 10:9-11,13)*





SIX

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## The Call of God

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*For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.*

(2 Timothy 1:6,7)

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## CHAPTER SIX

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# The Call of God

Before we were married, I was still living on my own. One Saturday afternoon I was ironing a white shirt downstairs in my townhouse. I took it upstairs to the bedroom to hang it up and – I remember this as though it were yesterday – I sat down at the top of the stairwell.

God spoke to me that day in a way that He had never done before and has never done since. He seemed to be saying, “Berni, all those years you were prancing around on all those stages, so full of yourself, speaking at all those IT conferences around the world ... I was simply getting you ready. Now I want you to go and tell the world how much I love them.”

I didn’t know what that meant, but that call was burned into my heart.

Shortly after I ended up at a local Bible college and a couple of years following that Saturday afternoon ironing epiphany, as part of my four-year degree course, a memo came around to the ministry degree students saying, hey, there’s this ministry called Good News

Broadcasting (which is what Christianityworks used to be called). The ministry's Director was going to come and teach a half-unit elective on media, and if you're interested you need to sign up soon.

I didn't know why, but I just felt that God wanted me to take that elective, so I did. And over a period of many months, that's how I became involved in this ministry of Christianityworks. The man who taught that course, our former Director, ended up being charged for sexually abusing a child on our premises. He was arrested, tried, and convicted, so it wasn't an easy start.

I guess that's the point. It wasn't like everything just fell nice and neatly into place and then the ministry took off. Oh no, it was a really difficult transition. It's something you see in the Bible again and again. Abraham and Sarah were blessed with Isaac, for sure ... after a twenty-five plus year journey of uncertainty.

David became king, after his predecessor tried to kill him twice, and even then, armies came against him and even his own son tried to assassinate him.

But God was in those places to see His plans fulfilled. And He was in that place with me too, giving me a new start at Bible college, leading me into the ministry of Christianityworks that He was calling me to, and of

course in a wonderful marriage to Jacqui, the love of my life.

*Our God, my friend, is the God of new beginnings.*

*He took a broken wreck like me, a man of pride and ambition who desired worldly wealth and recognition. He led me through the consequences of my sin. He was there with me; He met me in that place, and then my God gave me a new beginning.*

I remember in those early days that a really well-known preacher, Joyce Meyer, came to town and she spoke at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. That building's been knocked down now, but back in the day it seated around eleven thousand people. Some friends dragged me along to the rally. I was sitting there in my seat before the proceedings began and it seems that this preacher-heart was already in me. I looked around and prayed, "God if only I could tell this many people about Jesus." But clear as a bell, I felt God say, "This is this is nothing. You need to think millions!"

Now my life was still in quite a mess. If I'd told someone that back then, they would have thought I was having delusions of grandeur, or that I was crazy, or both – just like Joseph in the Old Testament telling his brothers about the dream that he'd had, that they'd all be bowing down to him. So I didn't do much about it. I

tucked the thought away in my heart and kept on doing what I was doing.

We're jumping around a bit on the timeline here, but suffice to say that from the time I felt the call back then ironing, until the time that God led me into the ministry of Christianityworks was eight, rather long years. I was raring to go. I wanted to do stuff for God. I wanted to preach the gospel, but the truth is that I wasn't ready to go. God wasn't ready! He hadn't done the work in me to get me ready to share the Good News of Jesus with you and so many others.

One day at Bible college we were having a time of worship between lectures and someone came up to me afterwards, his name was Mark, an older man. He said, "Berni, I just felt God say something really strange for you. I don't know if this is for you, but here it is. God is in no hurry."

That word came to me just at the right time and through it, God gave me the patience to wait for those eight years until one day I was at a Christian media conference. Again, someone had dragged me there kicking and screaming – it was a weekend, I was tired and I didn't want to go. It seems that I'm so super-spiritual that God often feels the need to do things that way in my life!! But like Jonah, I'm starting to learn

that when God wants you to go somewhere and do something, He always finds a way of getting you there.

Which He did ... and there was a man from a radio broadcaster who had heard some of the little radio spots that I'd produced a few years before. His name was Dennis Adams. He'd never met me. I'd never met him. You know how it goes at conferences. You have a morning tea break and you're all standing around eating your little biscuits and drinking your cup of tea or coffee. He walked up to me and grabbed my name tag he said, "Oh, so you're Berni Dymet!"

As the tears welled up in his eyes, he said, "You have to do those radio programmes again!" Well, that's all I needed. It felt like God talking to me, it was a prophetic word. It wasn't a "thus sayeth Lord" kind of thing by any means. Dennis wasn't a man of pride, but just at the right time, God brought him into my life. So I left my secure, pretty high paying IT consulting career to step into this ministry of Christianityworks.

*For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. (2 Timothy 1:6,7)*





SEVEN

Discovering that Christianity,  
actually, Works!

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*We know that all things work together for good for those  
who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*

(Romans 8:28)

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

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# Discovering that Christianity, actually, Works!

Now back then Christianityworks was almost failing. We weren't producing any radio programs, certainly no television programs. There was almost nobody supporting the ministry, pretty much. I think that the total income for the year was under thirty thousand dollars, of which one corporate donor gave twenty-five thousand. Not exactly a firm foundation upon which to launch out into fulltime ministry!

My wife Jacqui and I, talked about it and prayed about it and together felt that this was what God was calling us to do. So, still with a rather hefty mortgage, I resigned from the IT company and stepped into this ministry that was, if not dead, then on urgent life support!

And to be perfectly honest with you I didn't have a clue what I was doing. The ministry had a few thousand dollars left in the bank, so we spent that on producing

a handful of radio programmes in an outsourced studio that we'd used before.

We couldn't afford to pay the rent for our offices, and in any case, it was too far from where I lived to commute. So literally as I was schlepping boxes out of our old office I prayed, "Well Lord, we're closing our office, we're moving it onto my dining room table. We don't have any money left in the bank, just a handful of radio programmes. Now what?"

That's all I had. There was no great strategic plan. I came from the IT industry. I didn't know any of the Christian radio stations around Australia, so who was I to go and ask them to broadcast these programmes that we'd recorded with our last handful of dollars? Like I said, I had not a clue as to what I was doing.

So there's Berni, carrying these boxes down a long hallway, past offices used by other ministries and again, there was this little whisper, "Go and talk to the guy in that office over there." Sitting in that "office over there" was a man from what you may have considered, in a worldly sense, an opposition ministry who were doing similar things to us – a great guy called Nathan Brown.

We knew each other at a distance, so I waltzed into his office, said hi, and launched into it, rather nervously. "Hey, we have these radio programs recorded, but I

don't really know how to get them onto stations." His response went something like this: "Mate, I'd love to help. There's so little Australian content being produced; they'll lap it up."

Had I done my market research before tossing in my job, I might have known that. But I hadn't, so I didn't!

In February 2005, our first half hour, weekly Christianityworks radio programmes went to air on a handful of stations. The series was called (rather pretentiously I think now, looking back on it!) "Custer's Last Stand and Being a Christian in the 21st Century".

I still had to go out and do IT consulting work to bring in the money to run the ministry, because there was no money. Small consulting jobs were fine but then a massive contract came up. I was appointed as an expert witness in a hundred-million-dollar IT litigation in the Supreme Court of NSW.

So, over the next three years, in parallel to writing and recording these radio programs, trying to restart the ministry, and everything else you have to do as a single-shingle, I wrote over 650,000 words of expert evidence based on 1.2 million documents in discovery. That's around six and a half PhD theses! Great income for the ministry but it almost killed me.

Needless to say, it was a long hard road from there. People look at the ministry of Christianityworks today and they think, “Wow it’s an overnight success!” Given where I’ve come from, I don’t like that term “success” much anymore. But even for someone who is still as driven as ever, you have to realise that on average an overnight success takes about twenty years, right?

By 2013, the ministry had grown to the point where we were reaching millions of people around the world every week with the good news of Jesus through radio. But our resourcing hadn’t caught up to what we were doing. We were heading towards Christmas that year with just on a hundred thousand dollars’ worth of bills that we couldn’t pay.

Now, I tried everything. We wrote to our supporters. I went to see major donors. I did everything that I possibly could and we still had a hundred thousand dollars in bills that we couldn’t afford to pay. And of course here in Australia, at Christmas time everything shuts down for three weeks for the summer holidays.

People were saying, “Berni you’re going to have to shut this ministry down.” Even though almost all our creditors were Christians who were prepared to trust in God, it’s not such a good Christian witness to be trading insolvent, right?!

So I went to the Lord and I prayed, “Lord, we’re reaching millions of people with the love of Christ, but if You want me to shut this ministry, shut it down I will.” Yet the sense that I received back from God was simply, “Trust Me.” It wasn’t clear. It wasn’t declarative the way my call into ministry had been. In fact, as I look back on it now, it was rather vague to tell you the truth.

It’s Christmas Eve. I’m driving down to the carpark under the apartments where Jacqui and I live. My phone rings. It’s a man who’d had given a generous gift a few years earlier, but nothing for a long time. This is what he said, “I’ve just had this great stock market transaction. I want your bank account details because today I want to deposit one hundred thousand dollars into your bank account.”

Now a hundred thousand dollars is a lot of money in anybody’s language, but back then it was an inconceivably large sum for the ministry; something that honestly, I thought was impossible.

But according to Jesus, nothing is impossible for God. Time and time again we’ve seen Him step up to meet the needs of His ministry. Sure, He expects us to do the stuff that we can do for ourselves. But He also expects us to trust Him to do the things that only He can do.



Hey, it turns out that this whole Christianity thing actually works!! Who'd 've thunk?!

*We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8:28)*

## EIGHT

# Fast Forward to Today

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*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19,20)*

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

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# Fast Forward to Today

And so today, through this ministry of Christianityworks, we produce radio and television programmes that go to air in over one hundred and sixty countries around the globe.

One of the short television programmes that we produce, the daily Fresh devotional message, is carried by cable and satellite networks into over 85 million homes. By radio and through digital media it's translated into a dozen or so languages, and reaches millions of people each and every day!

Every week we receive so many testimonies from people whose lives have been touched by the Word of God through Christianityworks. Is that because I happen to be particularly clever? Well as you've read, I am in my own limited kind of way, but that's something I'm able to say without a great deal of pride these days. And of course God works through the gifts and abilities that He gives each one of us. But that's not the reason

this ministry is used by Him to touch and transform so many lives.

I'm just me. I'm that wreck if a man whom we talked about earlier on. I'm that prideful guy. I'm the guy who used to stomp on people and to get to where I was going. I'm the guy who used to persecute Christians!

***But all along God had a plan.***

While I was strutting around like a peacock on stages around the world, God was getting me ready to do what He'd planned for me to do. And if God can work through a donkey like me, just imagine what he can do through someone like you. And that's the point.

He's blessed me to be part of an amazing team of people – producers, administrators, pastors, supporters, project managers, camera operators, sound engineers, web developers ... the list goes on – who together make up the ministry of Christianityworks.

We each have different journeys that brought us to this place. We each have different gifts and abilities. We each have things in our past that we regret and that we're ashamed of. As St Augustine once said, "Every saint has a past, and yet in Christ, every sinner has a future."

I count it a privilege to be able to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with so many people around the

world. This ministry of Christianityworks is made up of just thirteen staff globally – a few in India, a couple in Africa, one in the U.S.A., and the rest in Australia.

Each one of us, like you, is just an ordinary person who believes in a mighty, mighty God. And that's why God has taken this ministry to where He's taken it. He had a plan. He pulled together a team of faithful saints, He's brought together many who pray for and support the ministry. If you're one of those, then from the bottom of my heart, thank you!

Through bog, ordinary people like thee and me, He by His grace, chooses to tell a lost and hurting world of His love for us in Jesus Christ His Son. Hallelujah! And the sense that we all have about the ministry of Christianityworks is that really, it's only just begun!

So that's the story. And it ain't over yet!

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19,20)*



## NINE

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# Let's Make This About You

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*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the LORD, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, declares the LORD, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.*

(Jeremiah 29:11-14)

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## CHAPTER NINE

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# Let's Make This About You

I am completely and utterly gobsmacked that God came to save me, but after all Jesus Himself said that He came to seek out and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

As I said, I don't know where you're at in your life now. Perhaps there's a sense that, "I don't know if God could ever do anything with me."

Well, I'm here to tell you that He saved a wretch like me and He wants to save your life too. And not just save it, but renew it. When you put your trust in Jesus, the old self dies. The old self, dominated by its addiction to sin, is no more.

*Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)*

That newness of life is for you. He came to give you a new life just as He's done with me. Where once I was empty and desperate, my joy in Christ is now complete

– in a very real way, day after day. These days, I earn a fraction of what I used to earn back as an IT consultant, but I am richer than I've ever been, knowing that I have life eternal through the price that Jesus paid for me ... *for my sin* ... upon that Cross.

And even more than that, I have an abundant life ... because the little things that I've been called to do in the Kingdom of God are being used of Him for His glory to save peoples' lives.

And the thing that maybe made the biggest difference in my life, that wrought the greatest change, that set me free to walk in that newness of life, is this:

*Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*  
(Hebrews 4:12)

The Word of God is alive and active. It is the power to lead us in the newness of life that God has planned for us. Tragically, I see so many men and women who profess faith in Jesus, but who never open their Bibles; who never let God speak into their hearts.

Pastor Phil Littlejohn whom I mentioned earlier, my first Pastor at Oyster Bay Christian Centre, was a man of God who Sunday after Sunday faithfully taught

the Bible, faithfully taught me the power of the God's Word; the power to open my eyes; the power to shine light into the darkest recesses of my soul; the power to set me free from arrogance, from sin.

Now that's a lifelong process. God ain't done with me yet. Nor is He done with you. He has a mighty plan for your life.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Jesus saved you out of His great love, and with a specific purpose in mind. You are His workmanship created in Christ, the same hands that flung stars into space, the same hands that did that woodwork in that carpenter shop in Nazareth ... the same hands that were nailed to a cross.

He laid down every strand of your DNA, and if I were able to string every piece of DNA in your 32 trillion cells end to end, they would reach from here to the sun and back a hundred and fifty times. Think about that. A hundred and fifty round trips to the sun is how much DNA you have!

You are *His* workmanship, got it?

And why did He create you? To do the good things that He prepared way beforehand for you to do.

I'll say it again. God has a plan for your life. It's different to the plan He has for my life – so comparing, makes no sense at all.

But what we do know is that along the way, it will almost certainly involve suffering, it will almost certainly involve loss. And yet despite that, there is a newness, a richness, an abundance of life in following Christ that can be found nowhere else.

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.  
I came that they may have life, and have it  
abundantly. (John 10:10)*

Literally, the word there means super-abundantly. That's the life that God has for you.

And that's the life that I am living today. Yes, earning much less money. Yes, there are always trials. Yes, it's so difficult some days, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm doing what God created me and called me to do.

You have gifts and skills that I will never ever have. You can do things with relative ease, that I could never contemplate, *for you are God's workmanship created*

*in Christ Jesus to do the good works that he prepared beforehand for you to do.*

So that's my story and that's your story. The story of a *super*-abundant life. The story of a sinner saved by the grace of God through the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Before we part ways, let's pray together:

*Father I pray for both of us. Lord You sent your Son Jesus to die on that cross, to pay for our sin, to rise again from that empty tomb so that we too might walk in newness of life.*

*Father, for those who are struggling, for the one who can't see a future, for those who think "God could never do anything through me", I pray that the word of my testimony would be breathed into their heart through Your Holy Spirit. That we might know that what You have planned for us is indeed a super-abundant life.*

*Thank you that Jesus died for us. We accept Him as our one and only Saviour and the Lord of our lives, and we thank You for the breath that You've put in our lungs that we may serve You and glorify You for eternity. In Jesus' name we pray.*

*Amen.*

God bless you as you live out your superabundant life  
in Christ

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*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish  
but have eternal life.*

(John 3:16)

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# ABOUT CHRISTIANITYWORKS

Here at Christianityworks our passion is seeing countless lives transformed one by one, as we share the good news of Jesus through the media around the globe.

It's something that we've been doing since 1957. Of course back then we were known as Back to the Bible, changing our name to Christianityworks in 2001.

Today, the radio and television broadcasts that we produce with the support of friends like you, reach a weekly audience that we conservatively estimate to be over 10 million people in 160 countries.

We believe that as we make innovative use of mass media – radio, television, digital + online and print – God works mightily by His Spirit and His Word, transforming lives.

In fact, its not something that we just believe, it's something that we know.

We receive so many testimonies each month from around the globe, of lives that have been saved, touched and transformed as God works through the ministry of Christianityworks.

Thank you for remembering that Christianityworks is a faith-based ministry. We rely on the support of friends like you to reach the lost with the saving love of Jesus.

Your secure, online gift today will make a powerful difference in the lives of so many.

To give, just visit: [christianityworks.com/donate](http://christianityworks.com/donate).

Thank you with all my heart.

Your friend in Jesus,



Berni Dymet



SCAN TO DONATE

# HOW *God* COULD USE A DONKEY LIKE ME

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Berni Dymet

*Berni shares how God reached him at rock bottom and utterly transformed his life.*

So many people who hear Berni on radio, watch him on television, read his books and receive his daily Fresh devotions have been asking to hear more of his story.

So finally, we managed to get him to agree to sharing it in this booklet. But he only did so on the condition that he could (a) tell it “warts and all” – the good, the bad, and the ugly, and (b) tell it as God’s story. Because all the glory goes to Him for taking a man who was broken and giving him (as Jesus promised in John 10:10) an abundant life.

Our prayer is that you’ll be inspired through Berni’s story, by what God can do in your life too.

**christianityworks**

you have **God's Word** on that