

 Pastor **James McConnell**

**THE GOOD
&
THE BAD
JESUS CHRIST**

I TELL IT ALL!

Foreword by Bob Gass

The Good, The Bad & Jesus Christ

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this book to my wife Margaret. When we tied the knot 57 years ago who would have thought that God would have taken us on this journey. Thank you for all your love and patience through both the good and difficult times, of which there have been many! I am literally blessed to have you in my life and also our two beautiful daughters, Linda and Julie. You have all brought so much joy to my heart.

I would also like to thank the members of Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle who are one of the finest congregations in the world. I could never have accomplished as much for the Kingdom of God without the faithful support from you, who have stood by me through thick and thin.

Also overseas, I would like to honour my two dear friends in San Antonio, Texas: John and Dale Estlinbaum, whose friendship has been a great encouragement to me during these last 42 years.

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ENDORSEMENTS

“Every life from start to finish is a tapestry being woven. Each thread woven into our particular tapestry to form our picture is the influence and impact of various people providence allows to cross our paths. When I was only a few weeks old, God began to weave a ‘special thread’ into my life. The name of this particular thread was James McConnell. He was my parents’ minister and they took me to the Orange Hall where Gospel meetings were being held, for him to give thanks to God for their firstborn and to ask God for His hand to be on my life. Every week, my parents took me to church and over the years James McConnell’s ministry began to shape my thinking, as I listened to the gospel he preached, learning of a glorious Saviour and my own personal need of salvation. I was thirteen when, after a sermon the pastor preached, I trusted Christ as my Lord and Saviour.”

“Pastor McConnell was more than a minister. He was like family. When my father was murdered by terrorists, he had the unenviable task of breaking the news to me and I still recall how we wept on each other’s shoulder that dark January evening. The Divine weaver was weaving this special thread further and further into the tapestry of my life.”

“Examine the life of David Purse and the golden thread that is James McConnell, repeatedly appears. He has been my pastor, my friend, my helper, my inspiration, my example and father in the

gospel that the Almighty used over and over again to shape and define the picture that is my life. Thank you Pastor for the impact you have had and the influence you have been in my life.”

Pastor David Purse

Senior Pastor, Whitewell Tabernacle, Belfast.

“Pastor James McConnell, affectionately known as the Bishop, is a born preacher. His preaching is powerful, convicting, solid, balanced and penetrating in application. I have seen him touch the lives of thousands of people of all ages and social backgrounds.”

“His love for Christ and the gospel is unparalleled. He has never lost his passion for lost souls. His love for God’s people has never waned. His drive to see the Kingdom of God extended is relentless. The steadfastness of his vision and zeal makes this book a must-read for everyone.”

Pastor Michael Bunting

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast

“I grew up in Pastor McConnell’s church, The Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle. I came to faith as a seven-year-old through his preaching of God’s Word. At age thirty I began full-time ministry as a pastor in Whitewell.”

“Pastor McConnell has been one of the greatest evangelists in Ireland in modern times, leading tens of thousands of souls to Christ. Travelling the world and building schools, churches, orphanages and medical centres for disadvantaged children. He has achieved many great things, but not for himself, for the Kingdom of God. I can recount times visiting hospitals with him where patients with dementia became clear of mind to talk of

salvation. Times of miracles and healing in the congregation, times of personal sacrifice and suffering because of God's call on his life."

"One thing is sure: it is certain this man has been touched by God and although we all exist within our own humanity, Pastor McConnell has also managed to live and pursue those things that are above. He has been a gift from God to this generation: a watchman, a shepherd and a servant."

Pastor David Murray

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast

"What can I say about Pastor McConnell? Or the Bishop, as he is affectionately known. I first heard him preach on 31st January 1982, which was the night I was saved for the first time in my life. I heard this man say that he loved Jesus and this had a life-changing impact on me, as it was the vehicle that brought me to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ."

"In 1987 my Mum took ill and I called at the church to ask Pastor McConnell to pray for her, which he said he would. Later I found out that within half an hour of seeing him he had gone to the Moyle hospital in Larne to visit her. He wanted to check that she was okay with Jesus! Unfortunately, my Mum passed away a few days later, but I will never forget his thoughtfulness and concern for his congregation, which meant so much to me."

Pastor Frankie Weir

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast.

"I have known Pastor James McConnell for over twenty-one years and was saved under his ministry at the Whitewell Metropolitan Tabernacle in Belfast. He is a true servant of God

- an evangelist with a passion for souls, as well as having a caring, pastoral heart. There is no doubt he is a unique, once in a generation leader, who has been an inspiration to many, including me, over the years. He has been a shining light for the cause of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, not only in his homeland of Northern Ireland, but also right around the world, as God has blessed the faithfulness of the 'Bishop' as he's affectionately known."

"Pastor McConnell's love for the Lord Jesus Christ drives everything that he does, and it means he sets the very best example to those around him. Even in retirement he hasn't quite hung up his preaching boots yet, and I don't believe he ever will as long as there is strength left in his body. That is the heart of the man and long may it continue!"

Pastor Nigel Begley

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast

"Pastor McConnell or 'the Bishop' as he is affectionately known was 45-years-old when I first encountered him. I was a young man of 24 the first Sunday night I was invited by a friend and neighbour of mine, Frank Weir, to the Whitewell church on June 13th 1984 to hear him preach the Gospel. When Pastor McConnell made the appeal that night for people to get saved, I responded. Since that night he has had a remarkable impact on my life and that of my family who attend the Tabernacle."

"Through his dedication and faithfulness to The Lord Jesus Christ, I have grown to love and respect him as one of a rare breed of servants of God who truly loves The Lord. That is one thing about him that has never changed or faltered no matter what has came his way, both good and not so good."

"The Pastor still preaches The Lord Jesus Christ with the same passion and zeal as he did the very first night I heard him. His influence inspired me to enter the ministry and I have worked

alongside him since 1992. His ministry still challenges and inspires young men and women, and the not so young, to serve The Lord all over the world.”

Pastor Shaw Higgins

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast

“As a young lad of fifteen, I was invited to the Orange Hall one Sunday in 1964. I went with my younger brother and what I heard was a hungry pastor who preached from his heart.

“In those days the church was small and if a visitor appeared it was like the song “Some enchanted evening, you will see a stranger.” The Lord moved and saved my family one by one. I remember Pastor McConnell who lived in relative poverty back then; when he prayed on his knees you could see the holes in his shoes!”

“However, God honoured His Word and started blessing him with souls and has never stopped since then.”

Pastor William McTernaghan

Whitewell Metropolitan Church, Belfast

“At the age of 25, I walked into the old church at Whitewell, in a state of rebellion against God. As I sat under Pastor McConnell I recognised the truth and realised that I had a very big decision to make. I would either embrace the truth or reject it. Pastor McConnell made it very clear that there was no room for fence-selling. After fighting the Lord for weeks, I finally threw the hands up and yielded to Him.”

“One thing I always appreciated about Pastor McConnell was, he did not try to dilute the truth, he did not try to explain it away. He always said it the way it was. He called a spade a spade!”

“Whitewell became my spiritual home and personal Bible school. It was there that I learned to love the Lord, and it was there that I learned to dig deep in His Word. Pastor McConnell made Jesus alive. He made the Word of God personal to me. He gave me a hunger for the Scriptures. He also showed me that ministry was a lifestyle.”

“Through the direction and correction of the Word, I felt the call of God to be a pastor. Today, the Lord has given me the great honour of being a full-time pastor on the Omaha Indian reservation in Nebraska. Having sat under Pastor McConnell for ten years, I find myself quoting him all the time. He would often say to the young preachers: ‘Always preach for a verdict.’ That is something I have tried to apply to every message I preach.”

Pastor Paul Malcomson

Light of the World Gospel Ministries, Walthill, Nebraska

“It was an amazing night in Whitewell. Pastor McConnell had preached ‘a storm’ to over 3,000 people and dozens received Jesus. After the service he came down from the platform directly to me, an unknown visitor in his church and said; “Son, you need to come and see me!” It was an answer to the prayer of this 35-year-old business man with the call of God on his life, who didn’t know what to do with it or how to go about it.”

“Our first meeting in the church café was so different from what I had expected. Here was the same man who delivered the awesome, powerful, anointed word from God on Sunday night and yet here was a warm and down-to-earth man who was genuinely concerned for my situation. He didn’t have to help at all but his wisdom in leadership proved his ministry to be good. Given my position of responsibility to and for all the families at Wrightbus, his belief was that I should ‘prove out’ this call of God on my life and if I would give him one day of my week he would train me. That continued for five years.”

“Here with this man, this servant, I learned of his love for Jesus and came to understand that loving Jesus is ministry. Without Jesus and His love, there is no ministry. We truly are standing on the shoulders of a giant of the faith and a giant in good ministry. Thank you Pastor.”

Pastor Jeff Wright

Green Pastures, Ballymena

“During sixty years of full-time ministry and service in the Kingdom of God, Pastor James McConnell has seen thousands come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. From the religious to the atheist, the agnostic or the addict, they all come through the anointed, faithful preaching of the precious word of truth. Lives have been changed, given direction and hope. I was one of those souls saved and a life changed, delivered from alcohol and drug addiction.”

“Pastor McConnell is a man who loves the Lord Jesus and through the agency of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God he has taught me to love Jesus, to see Him in all the Scriptures and to be devoted to Christ alone. Through James McConnell’s ministry I was tutored and given the opportunity to enter full-time ministry to serve the Lord.”

“I am grateful to God for James McConnell and I pray for God’s continued blessing upon him. Thank you my Pastor for your faithfulness to the preaching of the cross, the blood and the book.”

“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

Philippians 1:3

Pastor Ken Davidson

Donaghcloney Elim Church

“Pastor James McConnell, a born leader, has been an instrument in the hand of God, as he has explained and proclaimed God’s precious Word not only in his beloved Whitewell, but in the many countries he has visited. His rich motivational ministry has made an indelible impression upon the lives of those who have listened to it. His evangelistic zeal and uncompromising commitment to the Word of God has always been at the forefront of everything that he did, nothing was allowed to eclipse the teaching of Scripture, or dilute his gift to preach the Gospel. He always took every opportunity to, in his own words, throw out the net”.

“Holy Spirit leadership, born out of an encounter with Almighty God, has marked out the ministry of this ordinary man doing extraordinary things. A man who unashamedly believes in the inerrant and eternal Word of God, and preaches with conviction and compassion as a faithful ambassador of the One who called him and anointed him for the ministry. James believes in the message he preaches, and has never resorted to gimmicks, current fads, or sought to satisfy the whims and fancies of any congregation. Rather, he consciously and continuously proclaims what people need to hear, rather than what they want to hear. Deference and timidity have never been part of his make-up, as he sought to awaken souls, for whom Christ died.”

“His life’s work which has resulted in outstanding church growth, has also encountered much opposition, ridicule, and many false allegations from the armchair critics. However, undeterred as a ‘gospel-driven pastor’ he refuses to be bound by compliance to public opinion, or legislation which is to the detriment of the work of God. Rather prayer, hearing from God, and the exposition of God’s Word are the hallmarks of Pastor McConnell’s ministry, a man whose ministry has been faithfully supported at all times, the good and the bad by his loving wife Margaret.”

“We have all only one life to live. Pastor McConnell has lived his, knowing that only what’s done for Jesus will last. Well done James and Margaret.”

Eric McComb

Superintendent of Elim Churches in Ireland (1979-2011)

“Many years ago, James McConnell heard the call of God to yield his life to the ministry of proclaiming the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of men and women from the penalty of sin. He has been faithful to the call of God.”

“His life echoes the words of Paul the Apostle; ‘For to me, to live is Christ.’ God has blessed him in his ‘Christ-centred’ ministry using him to bring a multitude of men and women to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“His expository preaching has been the inspiration of many young men to follow him into ministry for the Lord Jesus.”

To God be the glory!

Eric Briggs, retired Pastor

“In 2015, I came to hear of the case of Pastor James McConnell’s persecution for preaching his doctrinal criticisms of Islamic beliefs - matters about which Jim McConnell and I will, of course, disagree as Christian and Muslim clergymen. I remember vividly my smarting emotional response as I was reading the story of this criminalising of a man of my own father’s age and moral outlook, and dismay; not at Pastor James’s preaching, but rather that in the eight hundredth year of Magna Carta, the state should trespass on spiritual matters of a man’s heart. I couldn’t do anything other than speak up on this ethical issue, and so I picked up the phone and called Pastor Jim.”

“I didn’t know what to expect, and was immediately moved by the gentleness of Pastor Jim’s welcome and kindness to me. That day I met a true Christian who preached hard words in his seeking after truth and simultaneously offered boundless love to me in generous grace and friendship.”

“There are moments in life when God’s Hand is heavy upon

events, and the Court case was such an occasion. I rapidly discovered among Pastor Jim's close friends, Catholic and Protestant, black and white, that while there were times we were desperately worried how the legal process would go, we had no doubt that in the eyes of heaven, Pastor James McConnell had already won!"

"Pastor Jim and our friends continue our commitment to work together for the cause of persecuted Christians and other vulnerable people, and upholding the precious freedom of conscience to disagree in brotherly love - something for which unnumbered innocent people daily lay down their lives."

Sheikh Dr Muhammad Al-Hussaini,
Senior Fellow in Islamic Studies at the Westminster Institute

FOREWORD

Jim McConnell is my friend, and I have always loved him. There are so many reasons. It was listening to him preach as a 19-year-old evangelist, that I was won to Christ and called to the ministry. I was only twelve at the time. And like him, I preached my first sermon one year later at age thirteen. I was mentored in ministry by a brilliant Bible expositor called Dr Gordon Magee and several other wonderful ministers, including Jim. But I noticed something unique about Jim. When he preached he seemed to have a 'glow' that caused listeners to be drawn to Christ. That was so in church, and also in open-air meetings where sometimes less than friendly crowds stopped to listen. He has been instrumental in bringing multitudes to Christ.

The first time I saw what I now know was a manifestation of the glory of God, was when I accidentally walked into a room where Jim was on his knees praying. I would describe what I saw that day, as either waves, or steam currents oscillating and rising from a road bathed in sunshine after rain. God's presence enveloped him, and touched me. I couldn't speak. I wanted to apologise for interrupting him but I was overwhelmed, so I backed out and closed the door. It's a hallowed memory that will always be with me. So when Jim speaks in this book about being visited by angels and having miraculous encounters with God, you can believe him!

To know Jim McConnell, is to know that he loves The Lord Jesus Christ supremely. Its obvious he has an intimate relationship with Christ, that's the result of hours of daily prayer and studying the Scriptures. When thousands of people in Ireland flocked to

auditoriums and football stadiums to hear him preach, the press took notice that Jim McConnell was a local pastor. So they kept asking: “What’s your secret?” Here’s my answer: “God chose to call and mightily anoint him with The Holy Spirit, and he chose to stand on the words of Jesus; ‘if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.’ (John 12:32) And for over half a century that partnership has impacted Ireland and much of the world.”

As a little girl, my wife Debby was led to Christ under Jim’s ministry and spent her early years in his home as a friend of his daughter Linda. When we were married, the pastor, who officiated at our ceremony gave us an amazing prophetic word: “You will reach more people through your writing than in all the years of your preaching.” That’s pretty specific and leaves no wiggle room. At that time I was booked for the next two years to speak in churches across America, and I confess I didn’t pay much attention to it. But like Mary, who ‘hid these things in her heart’, Debby wrote it down and dated it. And it came to pass. ‘The Word For Today’ daily devotional is now read in hard copy, heard on radio, and seen on television and internet platforms each day by an estimated 30 million people worldwide. To God be all the glory! And it started sixty years ago when Jim McConnell gave an altar call at the end of his sermon in a tiny wooden church in East Belfast, and I said yes to Jesus.

This book contains great Scriptural insights, records the highs and lows of ministry, and is a testament to what God can do with a life that’s totally dedicated to Him. Do yourself a favour. Invest in your own spiritual growth by reading it, and invest in a friend or loved one by giving them a copy.

Bob Gass

Author, *The Word For Today*

INTRODUCTION

As I sit down to write this book, with a little help from my friends, I realise that my commitment to God and His people has never changed – it's all or nothing!

Each word in this book has been scripted from either the pain or joy of the journey in my sixty years in ministry. Whether learning to follow the voice of God, or writing about those moments personally that we all would find it difficult to talk about – it's all within these pages.

Scripture says; '*All things work together for the good to them that love God.*' Romans 8:28. Did you notice it does not state, only good things work together... but ALL things. This includes the good and the bad.

I was amused when the publisher presented me with the title of the book, '*The Good, The Bad and Jesus Christ!*' I realised, how true it is!

You see, our lives are normally divided into two avenues - there is the good, and then there is the bad. But as believers, we have Jesus Christ who can take what we deem as 'bad' and turn it around to make it good.

When I look back at my life and the times I fought like Joseph to get out of a bad situation, it was those days that made me realise

that God had created a means of escape which is only found in Him.

As I share with you some of the stories that carved my life and character. I want to take you past the 'headlines' that you may have heard to the content of the story.

If I can help pastors or believers to run the race through the situations we all face without fear, then this book will be one treasure I seek to leave behind.

For the next number of pages allow me to minister to you.

Grace for the journey,

Pastor James McConnell

Chapter One

WHISTLING IN THE DARK

I was born in East Belfast on 15th May 1937. Yes I am that old! We lived at 14 Spring Street on the Woodstock Road. My father Edward was a driller in the famous Harland and Wolff shipyard, which employed over 30,000 men in its day and my mother Jean was a great housewife, building her wee family in what was known as a 'kitchen house.'

In those days in Belfast as World War II came near a close, the American GIs, the British soldiers and our local battalions were stocking up for the famous D-Day invasion. Due to the importance of Harland and Wolff to the war effort, the German Luftwaffe sought to flatten Belfast. During those times I remember my dad lifting my sister and me out of our beds and wheeling us in a pram quickly in the dark to the Castlereagh Hills. When the 'all clear' siren sounded, it was only then dad would lead us back to our home and thankfully, it was still standing.

I had a happy early childhood but sadly, I lost my mother at the age of eight. She developed septicaemia and passed away.

I am not sure whether it was the passing of my mum at such a young age that sparked off the fight against fear in my life, or if it was being moved basically overnight to live with my granny and granddad due to my sister's illness. But I know this - fear began a vicious fight to control me and to hold me hostage to its command.

Faith and fear are two opposites, and yet, each of them has a plan for you! Fear will seek to control you, it will cause you to dread getting out from under the bedsheets in the morning. It will cause you to not attend that job interview, it will cause you to lose your joy, but did you know faith has a plan?

When the armies of God were promised the land, fear's plan was for them to stay where they were, but faith's plan was to enter the promised land. As a young boy I did not realise this, for I had not yet met God. But somehow I knew at the other side of fear there is freedom and if nothing else, a new found confidence could be mine if I could be free from the fear! For instance, and this might make you smile – one night I decided to take a short-cut through an entry, leading from Cherryville Street to the old field at Spring Street. To stop the Luftwaffe seeing where the city was located, at night the people of Belfast were under orders to keep the city street lights switched off. The darkness of the night had captivated the streets. I remember gazing down that dark entry and thinking, there could be an assailant waiting on me, but James McConnell decided to walk the walk, and off I went into the darkness.

Like David lifting the five stones to face his Goliath, I lifted what was the next best thing - two half bricks! As David ran to his Goliath, I walked nervously; like Elvis, with a shake in the leg. My eyes glanced from side to side, the knuckles of my fingers were white from holding the bricks tight with fear, and then halfway into the entry I thought I noticed something. I began whistling in the dark. I'm not sure if it was a proper tune, or just a stammering whistle, but what I realised was, fear had made a tune.

It's wonderful how we see fear, and yet the very same situation in front of us can be seen differently when faith is at the wheel. I still sometimes find when I am nervous or anxious over some great decision, I start to hear a faint whistle. I then remember, I don't have two half bricks any longer in my hands, but something greater - the Word of God in my heart! Little did I know back then, as a young boy, that life's journey can sometimes take us down a dark path like that entry. It's a path that we ourselves would not

have chosen, but nevertheless the path has been taken and we must walk along it.

That path of darkness can be a divorce, a break-up, the doctor telling you that you have cancer, a bankruptcy order, your child being admitted to hospital and the doctor saying: "There is nothing more we can do." It's that path that we are all frightened of, yet occasionally it just comes knocking on our door and we must learn to answer the call.

My beloved mother...

For several years I had the privilege of having my mum at my side. Her main desire was to keep me out of trouble and guide me down the right path in life. I loved my mother very much. She used to go to Greenisland to visit a girl called Minnie who was very wealthy and often, I'd accompany her. We were only a humble family living in a small house, but she and this lady were really made for each other. Together they formed a special relationship and when I look back now, I can see the impact that it had on me as a boy – I too sought that special relationship.

I remember meeting her a few years after my mum died and she said to me: "I miss your mother, she loved the simple things in life."

My mum was lovely - a wee stout lady who was very kind and popular with people. I was a restless wee boy and I think at times, I nearly had her head turned!

One day we were walking along the Albertbridge Road in Belfast and my mum noticed a policeman. She took my hand and walked over to him. I saw her winking at him and she said: "Talk to him and tell him he has to be a good boy!" Whether it was his voice or the uniform, I could feel my body shaking in front of this policeman, who was talking to me. But it taught me one thing – that my mother had an authority over me, but this policeman was elevated to a more senior level of authority. It is important to know

whose authority one is under. Scripture says; *'For me and my house, we will serve the LORD.'* Joshua 24:15. Honouring our parents is a reflection of how we honour the Lord.

My mum's passing was a hugely significant moment in my life. It still is today, all these years later. I think about her every day. I remember the day she died. I came home from school and the neighbours were waiting on me and they told me the news. She died on 19th June - the close of World War II.

Mum died whilst pregnant with her third baby which was late in life for her. Septicaemia had set in and she died in agony. My last vivid memory of my mum was the birthday party she held for me; I had just turned eight. It is vivid in my mind. The kids were queued outside the house; she made everything, the food was amazing. A few days later, it was just after the war. They were having parties on the streets and I remember she came down the stairs and said to me: "Son, go and fetch Peggy Allen." She sat down on the stairs and I could see she was in pain. I ran down to Peggy who lived two doors down.

The ambulance came and took her away and that was the last I saw of my mum. She died shortly after she arrived in hospital; I later found out she died an agonising death. In those days when a woman was pregnant it was hidden from the children so I didn't understand what was wrong with my mum. Peggy was a very close friend and neighbour, and soon after my mum died she moved to England.

Two years after my mum passed away, both my father and Lila my sister who was fourteen, developed tuberculosis and the home was locked up. They were admitted to hospital so I was sent to live with my grandparents. Back in those days, it was called 'the bug.' I remember before they left having a separate cup and plate, and a separate knife and fork and we washed those well to have them ready for the next meal. As a child this would have an impact again, psychologically. It was like the lepers in the Bible - everything had to be cleansed once they touched it and people were told to stay away.

It's sad that we can still do this today as Christians. If people don't fit into our box or our thinking, the result is - we excommunicate them, we cross the road when we see the person coming or we look the other way - but love will never do this. In fact, Jesus the supreme manifestation of love, left Heaven to come down here to this sinful earth to save a wretch like James McConnell. And in the midst of the turmoil and darkness in my young life I was about to find that out!

Now living with my grandparents and attending Park Parade School, they had a difficult job managing me, and because I felt alone, I used to walk the streets at night until 2am. They gave me a key and I was able to get into the house and sometimes I didn't return until the next morning because I found a sanctuary in Ormeau Park. It wasn't that I was a troublesome child. But when I look back it was just that I wanted to be on my own. It is wonderful how the mind of a child works. Perhaps somewhere inside of me I had concluded that if I was by myself then I couldn't be hurt again, no-one could leave me again, especially those whom I loved. However, God had different plans, let's read...

Psalms 139:7-18;

'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.'

No matter where we seek to run or hide from God... when God has a call on your life... we must answer that call and it was during the summer nights as I slept under a big fir tree in Ormeau Park, God was going to be knocking on James McConnell's door.

Christ became so real to me. During those particular four years, while it was a disaster in my life, it was also a foundation for my life. I experienced the supernatural. The person I talked to most over those four years was Jesus. To Him - nobody else. In fact, He was more real to me then and He is more real to me today than human beings are.

Shortly after my father left hospital, he died of cancer. I remember before he passed away, I was rubbing his back because he was in pain and I recall him saying: "You are going to be an evangelist."

I think he knew something was going on in my life. Sadly, I hadn't been as close to him as I had been to my mother as his illness had separated me from him.

As I begin to take you on my journey know He who has started a good work in you is well able to finish it.

Just some of the highlights...

- How I learnt to whistle in the dark?
- What happens when you outgrow your planting pot?
- Finding your own secret tree
- The wrapping must match the gift
- It's ok to cry
- My unwillingness to surrender
- Meet the McConnells
- My confession – you won't believe it!
- When cancer comes
- Children for sale
- What really went on behind the Islam court case
- The church split
- My next successor

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