

God has given me the privilege, over the past thirty plus years to dig for some of the hidden treasures of our Christian heritage. He's allowed me to acquire a collection, now known as the Faith Outreach Archives, which has been appraised by Dr. David Bundy, as "one of the best in the world" on the Healing Movement.

How Did God Use Me to Develop the Faith Outreach Archives?

To answer this question, I must share with you a brief history of my life. I had a very dramatic experience with Christ through a dream in August 1968. Christ actually appeared to me, touched my hand, and told me that He loved me. At that time I was 24 years of age, on the verge of becoming an alcoholic, and had almost killed my entire family. It was through this experience with Christ, however, that I received my deliverance from all the demonic forces that had me bound. No one had ever told me that Jesus loved me. Everyone told me I was going to Hell. I knew that! What I did not know is just how much God really loved me!

After this wonderful experience with Christ, I knew I should go to church. I didn't want to attend a Pentecostal church because I thought those people were crazy. I was raised with a Pentecostal background. My mother, brother, and sister were true Pentecostals. I did not like Pentecostals because I had seen so much hypocrisy in the churches. Later, I came to the realization that you can't hide behind the hypocrisy of others. This was the devil's plan to keep me from God's plan.

I decided to take my family to a Baptist church because I felt safe there. I didn't think they would give altar calls. It just so happened this Baptist church did, and consequently, on November 24, 1968, my wife, Edna, and I both gave our hearts and lives to Christ. From then on we have been serving the Lord. I gave Him my ALL. I said, "God, whatever I have is Yours." I didn't have much. I wasn't even very educated. But what I had, I wanted God to know was His. After having God touch my life in such a special way and knowing now that He loved me so much, I was willing to do anything He asked of me.

I was a barber at this time, and I even owned my own shop. One day, some Miracle Magazines arrived in the mail from my brother, who was at that time working for A. A. Allen, one of the great "healing evangelists" (as they were known in the 1950's and 1960's). The barber business wasn't good at all because the "Beatles" had come to America, and long hair was now in style. A few days passed by, and one day when business was very slow, I was questioning God concerning different matters. I happened to pick up one of A. A. Allen's magazines that had a picture on it of him praying for the sick. Once again, Christ

came to me in a special way, and He said, "I'll use you like this, if you pass your test."

I knew, after this experience, that if God was going to use me like Brother Allen, I would have to study as much material as I possibly could on praying for the sick, the anointing, the gifts of the Spirit, etc. It wasn't long after that visitation from God that A. A. Allen died, and I was unable to obtain the materials I needed. So I just laid my experience aside.

Time passed by and in 1974, I founded and began pastoring Faith Outreach Chapel. Things were going well. We had a prison ministry through Teen Challenge (which my mother and step-father pioneered) where we had approximately 26 different ministers from our church going into 11 different prison facilities. We were seeing souls saved. Our church was involved in seaman's ministry, convalescent homes, door to door visitation, and street meetings. We were doing evangelistic work, trying to win the lost. This was my heart's cry – to win the lost.

During this time, however, I kept having a recurring dream. As I walked down the aisle of the church and out the door, the picture in front of me turned into a wheat field with the heaviest harvest that you could imagine. As far as the eye could see, there was ripened wheat. It was overlade; it was so heavy. In several sections of the field I saw different types of people and animals that are indigenous to only certain areas of the world. The Lord let me know that they represented the nations. I stretched my hand as wide as I could get it open, and I reached out and grabbed a handful of wheat. The Lord spoke to me and said that if He gave me the largest ministry in the world, I would never reach the entire harvest because it is too large. He said that I needed to train workers to go into the vineyard to reap the harvest.

Then God took me back to the church. I saw the people in the church wearing party hats and blowing little whistles; confetti was falling all around them. They were partying and having a great time, but they weren't winning the lost. I knew then, in my heart, that if the harvest was going to be won it wasn't going to be won by the supernatural ministry of a superstar minister or one particular denomination, but it was going to be won through the "Body of Christ," with every denomination involved. The "Body of Christ," however, needed to be trained. How would training the "Body of Christ" involve me? I was an isolationist, a strict Pentecostal, a sectarian. I didn't want to do anything to disturb my Pentecostal heritage. I couldn't imagine ever becoming involved with other denominations. As much as I despised Pentecost before I got saved, I became a staunch fighter, protector, and defender of the faith, even though I knew that some of their traditions were not biblically sound. Then God began moving me out of my little comfort zone, and I started meeting other people, especially through the Teen

Challenge program. It wasn't long before God moved me into a totally new direction that all began with a trip to McAllen, Texas.

In March of 1977, after God's dealing with me about my needing more training, I called the office of a certain minister to seek his advice as to what I should do. A. A. Allen had mentored this man. My thought was that if I'm going to be used in a healing ministry and I can't receive instructions from A. A. Allen, I'll see if this minister will take me under his wing for the purpose of training me. I did not want to become a casualty in God's army due to my lack of training. I had already seen too many casualties on the Lord's battlefield. I had seen too many preachers' kids who had gotten on drugs, gone to jail, and they were not serving God because of the ministry. I did not want my kids to become casualties. I was fighting tremendous spiritual battles. I wanted to know what was faith, what was truth, and what was tradition.

This minister sent word to us that if we would come to McAllen, Texas, he would talk to us. In desperation, my wife and I traveled all the way from Baltimore, Maryland to McAllen, Texas. The minister gave us about fifteen minutes of his time, and the next day we were on our way back home. The minister told me that he would give me a call to let me know in what area of ministry he could use me. This man had several churches, a tent ministry, and an office. There were many places in his ministry where I could have been trained. On our way home, however, the Spirit of God spoke to my heart and said, "Son, if he doesn't help you, I have another way made." For whatever reason the training I desired so desperately never did materialize through this ministry.

Later that same year, after 10 years of never taking a vacation, I took my family to Arizona. It had been a desire of mine to take my family to Arizona where my dad had taken me to see the Grand Canyon and other sites when I was 14 years old. On our way home, when I arrived at a certain rest stop, the Spirit of God flooded our 1973 Pinto station wagon, and He would not let me leave that area. I had to get out of the car and walk in the desert. When I would get back in the car, He would deal with me again, and I would get out of the car and walk some more. It was very unclear to me what God was doing, and my family thought I had gone crazy.

Finally, we did leave, and when I arrived back home God started dealing with me again about Arizona. Every time I saw a cowboy movie on television, the Spirit of God would touch me, and I would cry if it showed scenery from Arizona. When I went to the grocery store and saw a can of Old El Paso beans with pictures of cactus on it, I would cry. I was the type of person, before I was converted, that never cried, and then after God took over in my life, it seemed as though all I did was cry. The straw that broke the camel's back was when I went into a bank and saw a calendar that had a picture of Yucca cactus on it in White Sands, New

Mexico, and I broke down and cried. The teller was so upset she asked if she should call an ambulance. It was then that I really began to seek God's face in prayer and fasting to see exactly what God was saying to me. Finally, I knew that God wanted me to take another trip to Arizona.

When I arrived at the rest area where my first experience took place, I discovered that I was directly above Miracle Valley, Arizona. Miracle Valley was originally the headquarters for A. A. Allen's ministry. I wasn't sure why, but I proceeded to drive to Miracle Valley.

Miracle Valley! Why, Lord?

It was a cold morning in November 1977, as I walked from the dormitory room in which I had slept the night before, across the campus of what was once Miracle Valley Bible College. There was a feeling, an excitement in the air; something new was about to happen that would change my life.

Again, God spoke to my heart and said, "Son, I'm going to make it possible for you to obtain a large portion of this A. A. Allen material because **there is a generation that knows nothing about the miracle working power of God.**

I said, "God, but how?" I was already at Miracle Valley; so that was no problem. The problem was that the people who were in charge of the material were systematically destroying it, by either dumping it or burning it. While I was there, I saw books and Bible studies on skids. They were stacked as high as the ceiling, row after row of them. The authorities, however, would only let me buy a few at a time.

Standing on the grounds of the school, wondering what God was going to do, I looked toward an open cattle range; a fresh blanket of snow had just fallen on the mountains in the distance. It was such a beautiful sight to behold. Winter was coming! A new season was approaching, not only in nature, but in my life, as well.

Having left Miracle Valley with two of each book and Bible study, I thought, "Wow, I finally have the tools to be the evangelist that God wants me to be. I'll go home and study these materials, and then I'll be ready to go out and evangelize with 'signs, wonders, and miracles' taking place in my ministry, just like God had shown me." I had already placed people in positions in the church so that I could step out and evangelize. Everything was ready, or at least I thought it was.

I wasn't home long when God stopped me dead in my tracks. He said, "Go back to Miracle Valley." I argued with God for a while, but, eventually, I obeyed His voice. I was able to purchase some more materials, but this time God also made it possible for me to stop at a few other Bible schools. That trip was only the beginning of well over 50 trips, not only to Miracle Valley but to many other Bible

schools as well. I began searching for information on one particular minister and that led me to another and another and another. It went on and on like that, and with the help of many individuals, I was able to obtain quite a collection of materials.

Having a great amount of zeal to do God's will, I began working feverishly, tracking down every evangelist that I could find who had been or was still being used in the working of miracles, healings, and the gifts of the Spirit. Many people thought I was crazy. My historian friend, Dr. David Harrell once said to me, "John, I thought you were crazy too, when I first met you." When you get branded like that you begin to wonder if you have tipped the scales of reality and human endurance, not only for yourself but for your family as well. It wasn't until Dr. Charles S. Price's daughter gave me his personal Bible and his Greek study Bible that I knew I was "called" to be an archivist. Up until then, I thought I was crazy, too!

We took eleven trips in one year in a 1973 Ford Pinto station wagon. I have a picture imbedded in my mind of my children cramped in the back seat, as we drove through the Arizona desert, with no air conditioning, and A. A. Allen books all around them, in the back of the wagon and even on the roof. There were times I would unload some of the materials at a train station or a post office, just so I would have room to stop somewhere else to pick up some more materials.

One time while I was en route on another trip, the car broke down, and I was so tired, I said, "God, why am I here, and why am I doing this?" You see, God had given me the "grace" to collect materials, but he never supplied the finances for me to develop the archives so the "Body of Christ" could use them. I couldn't understand why, until I was reminded of the story of Joseph in the Bible. God had also reminded me of what He had spoken to me earlier: **"There is a generation that knows nothing about the miracle working power of God."**

That's when I began to see God's vision. A. A. Allen had documented his entire ministry, while so many other ministers had not. If someone documents his ministry, the person himself may go home to be with the Lord, but people can still benefit from his or her "Voice of Experience." I will never be able to interview A. A. Allen, Dr. Charles S. Price, Charles Spurgeon, nor D. L. Moody. However, if I pick up one of their books, read their life stories, read a magazine article written by one of them, or watch a film clip, I get the feel of who that person really was and how God used him. Once I realized this, I set out to obtain as much material as possible for the archives.

As I dug for these treasures, I was able to accumulate all kinds of documents, such as: 16mm films, sound recordings, sermons, tracts, books, correspondence, diaries, financial and legal documents, photographs, crusade advertisements, etc. Most of these materials I obtained from the actual minister

himself, a family member, or a friend of the ministry. Many times I would hold personal interviews with a minister if he or she was available, and if not, I would interview a family member or friend of that minister.

After I had been collecting materials for several years, God opened a door for me to purchase material from an underground vault in Miracle Valley that hardly anyone knew existed. In this vault were documents pertaining to the entire ministry of A. A. Allen. It even contained some of Brother Allen's personal mail which included magazines, letters, brochures, and all kinds of materials from all the "healing evangelists" of that day, especially those who were involved in the "Voice of Healing" ministries (Gordon Lindsay, William Branham, Jack Coe, Gayle Jackson, etc.).

It was almost 18 years to the day, after God had told me he was going to make it possible for me to get the Allen material that I, again, stood on the very spot where He had first spoken to me. And I was able to say, "God, you have truly kept your word."

Once I had obtained such a large quantity of Allen material, God gave me the means to trade materials with other people who had some "collectible" materials. This is how my desire for training led to my becoming known all over the world as an archivist.

Because so many ministers of the past failed to preserve their ministries, Faith Outreach Archives has become a record chamber to preserve the memory of our Christian heritage. In the interest of generations that will come after us, we are working to recall and store up the information that is an important witness of our past.

Proverbs 2:1-5 says, ***"My son if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."*** This scripture was the basis for my search for knowledge and has become the highlight of the Faith Outreach Archives.

Throughout all these years, my hearts only desire has been to meet the people who had the power of God flowing through their lives in a miraculous way, and who helped so many people who were hurting so badly, whether it was in body, soul, or spirit. I wanted to learn from them, but in the process, I did not want to become a casualty. Many of the first people who were part of what became known as the Pentecostal movement or the "healing movement," became casualties of the spiritual warfare. I did not want to become one of them.

It was through serendipity that God brought me to the place where He actually wanted me to be. I never thought I was qualified to be an educator or a

historian. I was a barber who was saved by the grace of God, and whom God had placed in the ministry as a pastor for the purpose of training me to evangelize. Becoming an archivist never crossed my mind.

I have learned over the years that in order to go forward, you must remember from whence you've come. **The heritage of the past is the seed that brings forth the harvest of the future.** If there is going to be a harvest of souls in the future, then we must preserve the events of the past. That is why an archive is so important.

Only God could open the doors through which I have been able to walk. God is faithful!

What Does God Have In Store for the "Body of Christ?"

We are living in a time now that is so different from when I first started on my Christian journey. What was not acceptable in time past is now acceptable. Isaiah 60:5 says, ***"Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear. . ."*** You can't flow with someone until you can "see" what that person is seeing. The whole church world is now starting to see some of the same things. My desire is to see people used in the power of God without losing them to the battles they face in spiritual warfare. The Lord had spoken to my heart and said, "I want to use you without losing you." So he placed me in a "school" that was unlike any other school, to train me for the task He has for me to accomplish.

God is not only in the process of training me, but He is in the process of training the entire "Body of Christ." No matter what denomination a person belongs to, God is moving with His supernatural power and stirring His people to be used in the gifts of the Spirit. He is bringing "the church" to a place where there will no longer be superstar ministers, like William Branham or A. A. Allen who had a handle on the power of God. God is beginning to use the common people to administer the power of God that will bring life, healing, and deliverance to this end time generation.

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)

In Closing

I'm grateful to be able to say that, through it all, all three of my children have had a personal experience with Jesus Christ, and they are all serving God. They, too, have learned to love the things of God, including the historical aspect of

the Christian movement. Each one of them has had an important role in the development of the Faith Outreach Archives.

I would like to thank my family for sacrificing a lot of their time and energy in helping to bring the Faith Outreach Archives into existence. Also, to the members of Faith Outreach Chapel, I would like to say a special thank you for not only giving of their substance, but for giving many hours of their time as well. Most of all, however, I would like to give praise and honor to the One who made it all possible, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.