

My Testimony

The Incident

Monday, 21st March 1988 began as a beautiful morning. After breakfast, Graham my son-in-law and I decided to finish clearing the last short section of the rear boundary. We were fencing the back of our fifty-three acre property. I explained to Graham how to fell the trees within a pre-determined area by cutting a scarf on one side, and then making a cut on the other a little above the scarf, and so on.

The bloodwood tree we chose to cut was on top of a creek bank, about twenty centimetres in diameter. I thought I had explained carefully how and where to drop it. I moved to the bottom of the creek to keep out of the way. After what seemed an unusually long time, I climbed up the creek bank to see what Graham was doing.

He had misunderstood and had cut almost right through the tree. As I approached, the tree moved slightly and Graham instinctively ripped the chain saw backwards to avoid jamming it. It was at full revs. It hit me with a terrible blow in my lower right chest.

The chain instantly severed ribs and severely lacerated my liver and diaphragm. Blood gushed forth profusely so I staunched the bleeding and set off with Graham across the creek to a vehicle track.

Every breath was sheer agony. I kept going. Graham was in shock and at some point knelt in front of me so I could climb onto his shoulders. The bumping at each step and trying to control my breathing was unbearable. I asked Graham to put me down and sent him home to get the car and tell my wife Ruth and daughter Caroline. They brought towels, which I clamped over a gaping wound in my chest.

Finally with the car, I managed to get into the back seat with my wife Ruth. My girls yelled, "Go for it Graham!". They followed.

The fifty-kilometre drive over gravel roads and bumpy bitumen was horrific. I had to slow Graham down at each bump. I was in agony and trying to breathe.

At the Yandaran cross-roads an overwhelming thirst come over me. We stopped for water we kept in the boot. The car was an old Volvo Sports. The engine was hot and I had to explain to Graham how to start the motor by shorting out the solenoid points with a screw-driver while Caroline held her foot on the throttle. We left at high speed with Ruth beside me trying to comfort as I groaned with intense pain at each breath. She wanted to be with me even if I did not make it.

At Casualty I was conscious and got out of the car. A nurse directed me to a wheel chair. Our neighbour Jack Hanks was there having a treatment. I acknowledged him and said, "I've got myself cut up with a chain-saw mate!"

It was needles, X-rays and inevitable questions before I was rushed to the emergency operating theatre. Doctor McGregor and his team did their best in sorting out the mess – the liver gash was cleaned and packed with special spray foam, the diaphragm muscle was repaired and sutured, the ribs were re-positioned, wrapped and sewn over with the muscular tissue lining from the chest cavity to avoid sharp ends irritating or puncturing the lung. A liver drain was also inserted and then I was hooked up with tubes through my mouth and nose to a breathing machine. My life depended on this for two and a half days in the Intensive Care Unit.

I knew nothing of all this as I was completely sedated and immobilized. My loved ones took round the clock vigils and told me all about it after I woke on the Thursday morning and began breathing on my own again.

My wife and I were not members of a religious organisation or church group, but we became totally committed to what we found as the truth of the Gospel message, and who is now our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We try to live by God's moral laws, the Ten Commandments, as well as God's created, natural principles for health.

At the Hospital

My wife asked me on Thursday morning if I'd like to be anointed as per instructions for the sick given in James chapter five of the Bible's holy scriptures.

At that stage I could not see through the "valley of the shadow" and asked her to arrange it. She rang some Christian friends, Dean Armytage and his Dad who live near Boonah in Brisbane, and they agreed to journey up to Bundaberg.

My father rang the hospital from Bowen on Tuesday. He later visited me on Sunday. He told me he had contacted the Sister in ICU by phone. She told him I was seriously hurt, but that my blood had tested out as nigh on perfect. She said this was a big plus in my favour.

I had requested not to be given blood, as I did not want to risk the problems of transmissions in those days. If blood was needed, my son-in-law Graham had offered - he has the same blood type. I had lost a great deal of blood but I was full colour in a few days. What a marvellous machine is the human body!

My daughter Jennelle arrived from Sydney on Thursday and joined Caroline and Wendy, (my second daughter), and my wife Ruth in the long vigils. Even though heavily sedated and totally immobilized for two and a half days on the life support machines, their voices and touches registered with me. This was indicated by the variations in beeps and wave patterns recorded by the heart monitor. Everyone noticed this interesting phenomenon each time they spoke to me or touched me.

It was so encouraging to have my loved ones nearby. It gave me the courage to hang on and strengthened my determination to live, even though I was not conscious.

On Friday morning I was to go back into theatre. When Doctor McGregor removed the dressings and examined the wound on Friday morning, he stood looking intently at it and never said a word for a minute or two.

What was he looking at? Why didn't he say something? Was he wondering how to tell me I'd need a transplant? All sorts of morbid thoughts ran through my mind.

After what seemed an age, he looked incredulously at me and said, "This wound wants to heal itself! I won't need to use general anaesthetic. I can tidy it all up, remove the drain-pipe, and put in a few more stitches under local anaesthetic this morning!"

What a relief! What incredible healing mechanisms God has put within this masterpiece, the human body, of all His vast creation!

I was apprehensive and wondered if Dean and his Dad would arrive in time to do the anointing service before return to theatre later that morning. About 3pm they arrived. We asked the nurse to draw the curtain and proceeded with the anointing as outlined in the scriptures. As we finished, the nurse advised the theatre was ready for me. I went off assured that my Maker was with me. The Master Physician was in charge of my case.

As the final work was under local anaesthetic, I watched the overhead mirrors. Doctor McGregor was temporarily called away to an adjoining theatre. A younger surgeon offered to do the job and asked if I'd like him to tidy things up a bit, to which I agreed. He straightened the ragged edges of the wound with his scalpel and carefully, neatly sutured it all together.

The plastic drain pipe had to come out of my chest, where it had drained the lung area after the lower lobe of the lung had collapsed from fluid build-up. Tissue had grown tightly around it and it took quite a deal to remove it while I held my breath to prevent air entering my chest cavity. Just as young Doctor Cliff completed the suture, Doctor McGregor arrived and remarked what a "pretty job" they had done.

Fluids, food and medications were administered and monitored with records kept on my chart - a drip into my arm, and a catheter from the urinary tract.

On Saturday morning I was surprised. My bowels worked perfectly. As the doctor explained, at the time of the accident the stomach had gone into severe shock and ceased all activity so the body could direct all its energies to healing till the crisis was over. What an amazing, remarkable organism.

Early Sunday morning, the drip entry to my arm was painful. The sister in charge removed it and called the night doctor. The vein had broken down. After checking the charts, he advised the drip could be discontinued as all outgoing fluids were perfectly clear and of the correct amounts. I was loosed from the other undignified tie to my bladder on Sunday morning and I was free again at last.

What a thrill to stand upright, to walk again, wash myself and visit the wards to share experiences, and encourage other suffering people. What a miracle to be up and about only days after such serious injuries occurred. I stand amazed at the incredible speed of recovery the human body is capable of. I believe it is directly related to how the body is managed and cared for according to the "Manufacturer's Manual".

On Sunday morning, the local newspaper heard about the accident and miraculous recovery. A reporter and photographer arrived. The Bundaberg Newsmail carried a large front-page picture and write-up in the Wednesday, 30th March issue.

A week later on Thursday, April, 7th, Newsmail printed my letter to the Editor, in which I expressed sincere thanks to all who'd helped me through my traumatic experience.

On Sunday evening after the last of a long line of visitors left, I went to the shower and enjoyed my first decent bath since admission. The hot water flowing over the wound area felt very soothing. I found myself reluctant to turn off the water. I finished with my usual full cold rinse. I felt refreshed and asked the sister in charge if I might wander down to the ICU to thank the staff for their care.

She rang through to make sure they were not busy. I was able to visit and chat with them for some time, finding out more about what they had done to me. (See the Medical Superintendent's Report.)

I shared with them my lifestyle, undoubtedly largely responsible for a swift recovery. I arrived back in the ward about 10pm for a few winks of sleep. Casualty wards are not conducive to sleep, especially when one is used to the peace and quiet of the Australian bush.

Monday morning brought Doctor McGregor. He checked me out. I was greeted with, "Well, how's this fellow with the liver that heals itself?"

The patient's reply, "He's ready for home!"

"Now hold on there. Not so fast. I need some liver function tests, and perhaps tomorrow.....". He ordered a complete liver function test and blood tests, and changed my diet to light solids.

By now I really relished my light diet which was supplemented with lovely fresh fruit, nuts and lots of dark organic grape juice supplied by my family. The dietician was not sure what to feed me. I sent her a simple recipe and things improved considerably.

Tuesday morning, 29th March eventually came around and the doctor arrived. Could I go home today? Yes!

All liver function tests were perfectly normal. He advised me to be very careful, and not to attempt anything that might undo the knitting process. I had to come and see him in a few weeks' time.

O that morning, after visiting around the ward and giving each person my Gospel booklet, I thanked the Staff for their care and walked out of the hospital. I was not completely fit, but I was well enough to go home - to enjoy sun-baths, herbal teas and poultices, bushwalks, and best of all, uninterrupted rest with my beloved wife and companion caring for me.

All this, JUST EIGHT DAYS after a terrible injury. It could easily have ended my life. I praise my Maker continually for, as King David said in Psalms 139:14, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."

A few weeks later I returned to Doctor McGregor for a check-up. He sent me for an X-ray. On viewing it he stood gazing for quite some time without saying a word. He turned to me and deliberately said with great conviction, **"Don, if you had not been living as you have for some time, you would most likely not be alive today. And what's more, if I had not seen what happened to you with my own eyes, I would not believe what has happened to you. This X-ray looks like a perfectly normal chest!"**

I could not help exclaiming, "Praise the Lord!"

I expressed my sincere thanks to the whole medical and ancillary Staff of the Bundaberg Base Hospital. I found them to be really skilled, caring wonderful people. My sincere thanks also went forth to all who helped, encouraged and prayed for me in my hour of need.

Most of all my thanks must go to my Maker and my Redeemer, who saw fit to answer the many prayers offered, and who helped me in such a remarkable and miraculous way.

My hope and prayer now is that this experience and testimony here may perhaps be the means of encouraging yourself or others to consider our Maker and to follow the natural and created principles He has given us to run this wonderful human machinery - for long lasting, smooth and trouble-free operation! Should you happen to accidentally damage yourself as I did, may you also see the incredible self-healing powers latent within the human body, properly run and maintained in harmony with these unchangeable principles from our Creator.

Thank you for reading my testimony. Now many years later, there is a sequel that has to be told!

When one commits his life wholly to God and His service, I believe that accidents which happen always have an outcome with reason. I really believe that true committed Christians have incidents, not accidents. In Romans 8: 28, the Apostle Paul says, "All things work together for good to them that love God."

How could my experience work for good?

I have had my testimony written up in New Idea and broadcast over Radio and TV. Millions of people have read my story. I have been able through my testimony help many people understand the natural principles of their being and have seen folks change lifestyle to return to good health and strength. We can even consider these God's laws. This is a continual ongoing opportunity to show everyone with whom I am acquainted, to move into a healthier lifestyle here and now, and while I am doing this, in grace I help "whosoever will" listen to the Gospel and take hold of eternal life.

But a most thrilling outcome happened in 1997 while I was in Townsville shopping at Woolies on a Friday afternoon. My mobile rang and a man identified himself as Barry Mason from Charters Towers. I did not know a Barry Mason.

He went on to say, "Don, I was in hospital with you in Bundaberg, and before you left you gave me a Gospel booklet. I've been trying to track you down for some time because I want you to teach me how to be a Christian!"

I suggested that Barry come to Townsville after our Creator's special day – the Sabbath, and we'd have a Bible Study time together. He was only an hour away. We had over three hours of wonderful fellowship and study of God's Word.

I returned to our home in Kingaroy and introduced Barry to some wonderful Christian friends, Les and Del Morgan, who lived up on Harvey's Range west of Townsville. They helped Barry to understand more fully the major truths of God's Word and fellowshiped with him often.

I had a phone call about two years later. “Don, I want you to come up to Townsville and baptize me!” Of course I was overjoyed to do this. We travelled again to Townsville and baptized Barry into Christ and His church, in Les and Del’s pool. Barry is still growing and happy in the Lord, and is leading his family in His footsteps. Praise to our Wonderful God!

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NEWSMAIL - WED. 30-3-1958

• Mr Don Menkins displays the scar left by a chainsaw. "I thought I'd had it."

Miracle, says man who survives chainsaw accident

A man who survived a deep gash from a chainsaw last week said he believes in miracles.

Mr Don Menkins, aged 52, said there was no other explanation for his "incredible recovery" than his belief in the Bible and in clean, healthy living.

Mr Menkins was injured when cutting trees on his property at Yandaran last week. His son-in-law, Mr Graham Baird, was slicing through a tree when the chainsaw dragged suddenly free.

It struck Mr Menkins across his right side, severing two ribs, chopping out a piece of his liver and badly injuring his diaphragm.

Mr Menkins described the pain as excruciating. He clasped his arms around the wound, which bled profusely, and staggered to the road to get in the car.

"I thought I'd had it . . . blood gushed everywhere," Mr Menkins said. "I grabbed everything tight and pressed . . . trying to breathe with a cut-up diaphragm," he said.

"It is a miracle of God and the tremendous healing power in my body."

Mr Menkins was released from Bundaberg Base Hospital yesterday.



All Communications to be
addressed to The Manager.

In reply please quote
this Number

BUNDABERG *Hospitals Board*
BUNDABERG. Q. 4670.

ps/lm

27th. April, 1988.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Mr. Donald Menkens was admitted to Bundaberg Base Hospital on 21/3/88 after a chain saw accident when he was hit on the right side of his chest.

This resulted in a large laceration and he was taken to theatre that night where he had a deep laceration to his liver. This was stitched and packed. A large laceration of his right diaphragm was also sutured.

Post operatively he was ventilated and suffered a collapse of the base of his right lung. Extubation was performed on the 23/3/88 and from that time onwards he made good progress. The remaining wound was closed on the 25/3/88 and he was subsequently discharged on the 29/3/88.

This indeed was a serious laceration to the upper abdomen resulting in considerable blood loss with damage to the lung, diaphragm and liver.


P. SWEENEY.
MEDICAL SUPERINTENDENT.