

## Rod Bent

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### Saved In A Classroom

God's ways are not our ways. Most of us have found this out who have come to faith in Jesus Christ. If any of you reading this have not yet received salvation though trusting in the one and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, I hope my testimony will help you make a step of faith to receive Him. God's ways are the best!

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I was born and grew up on a Waikato dairy farm near Te Awamutu. I was blessed to have a stable upbringing, along with my twin sister and older sister. I progressed through Primary School and attended the local College in Te Awamutu in the 3rd and 4th form. A dramatic change took place in my 5th and 6th form years.

Before I write more about that dramatic change, I want to say that we as a family were reasonably regular members of the local Anglican Church, and went to Sunday School, and believed in God. I was a well-behaved boy and considered myself to be a Christian. Most would say I lived a good life, as the world measured goodness.

My father arranged for me to attend his old school in Auckland, a state school with a small hostel for out-of-town sons of former students. I wasn't keen. I knew no-one and had to live away from the familiar comfort of home. I had no idea it was part of God's purpose for my life.

At the start of my second and last year a new 7<sup>th</sup> form boy came to the hostel, Ron. He happened to be in the dormitory bed next to me. God knows what he is doing! He pulled out a Bible and read

from it before lights out. I had never seen anyone read a Bible outside of a Church before. I was thinking about giving up on Christianity after reading about evolution. If it was true, Christianity had to be false. I started asking searching questions, and he had some good answers. Then Ron asked me to come with him to the weekly lunchtime meeting for Christian boys. I was nervous, but also hungry for truth. I was surprised to find several Prefects were there, and capable sports people were there. They weren't geeks or wimps!

After a few weeks a visiting speaker came to this meeting in B2 classroom, and he invited any who had not asked Jesus into their lives to do so. My heart started beating faster. Something was happening within as I realised it was the time for me to confess Christ as my Saviour and Lord. I realised my good works and good behaviour could not save me. I was a sinner and needed a Saviour. That moment is still so clear to me over 60 year later. I received eternal life.



The 50 boys at the hostel noticed a change in me. Another 7<sup>th</sup> form boy started to mock me and my newfound faith in Christ. Looking back, I realise that though it was uncomfortable, it was good for me as I learned to defend my new faith in the Lord. Ron and I continued to keep in touch from time to time. Today he is a regular member of the Taeri FFBMFI chapter, and like me he is doing some street outreach in Dunedin. Praise God!

### **FARMING WITH THE LORD**

After finishing secondary school, I decided to follow in my father's footsteps and become a dairy farmer. Later I questioned God about this, and He spoke clearly that this was my calling, and that he would use me while farming. It really came to pass. I liked the land and the cows and the challenges that go with it. He answered many farming prayers over forty-four years in the industry, including two unexpected answers to prayer for a farm worker, one man straight out of Waikeria prison, and another was picking up a hitchhiker when my need was urgent for a University student to work for me over the summer.



I took a year out of farming to complete a Diploma of Dairy Farming at Massey University in 1966. The best part wasn't about passing the exams but receiving the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. Other Christian students had something I didn't have. I found out that they were baptised in the Spirit. Before then I had never heard about it. (There were few Pentecostal Churches in those times, and they were small, and looked on with suspicion by the mainline churches then.) I got spiritually hungry and, praise God, received the Baptism and began to speak in tongues. I was twenty, and seeking God's kingdom first ahead of farming

success became the most important thing for me. Matthew 6:33 was a key verse for me.

### **A WONDERFUL WIFE**

I loved my parents, but they were in their sixties, and my dad had retired. I needed a wife! I'm sure nearly all reading my testimony would agree with that. I was stuck on the farm, and I started praying for God to provide a wife in 1966. In the meantime, I got involved in our church Young Adults group, and by 1969 I was the Leader. My birthday was in late June, and my mother suggested that after the Tuesday evening club meeting I invite the group to our place afterwards for supper. It sounded good to me. One of the young women, an Intermediate School teacher, asked a fellow teacher to come along that night. I thought this teacher, April, was a nice new member. She seemed to like me. When she got to her place, she had the God thought that she had just met her future husband! (She didn't share that with me until months later.) I cannot forget the night we first met, on my 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. We recently celebrated 55 years of marriage. I am a very blessed husband, and we're blessed with four children and seven grandchildren.



*Rod & April cutting their golden wedding anniversary cake.*

### **FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MENS FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

I joined up back in 1980 as a spirit-filled Anglican man, hungry for fellowship. I found it as a member. In the late 1980's we became members of the local

AOG Church. I have been so blessed to make so many close brothers in Christ over the past 46 years, including Owen Johnson and Keith Wooderson, both past Waikato Regional directors. It is a privilege to serve as the current President of the Te Awamutu chapter, and to help men come to Christ, and grow to maturity in Christ.

## **CONCLUSION**

I can't squeeze all what God has done over many years in this testimony, that includes the blessings of Church mission trips to Fiji, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Kenya and the blessing of injury free farming from 1964 to 1990 (though I have had a handful of hospital visits after 1990.) Then there's the surprise selling of our dairy farm in 1987. We didn't have it for sale, but a buyer made an offer through a real estate agent, and God revealed in a dream that it was time to sell the farm. We were able to retain the farmhouse we lived in, as the new owner was happy with the second house on the farm, and we lived there until 2023. The Lord then led us to sell it and buy a town house in central Te Awamutu. My new career is now neighbourhood

and street evangelism!

God is so good. He is faithful. He uses the gifts we were given at birth, in my case, music, and other gifts like Bible in Schools teaching and leadership for 37 years. When we are aligned with the Lord and His kingdom, He gives us success and favour. I give Him all the glory for what he has done in my nearly eighty years.



**Rod Bent, Te Awamutu chapter**



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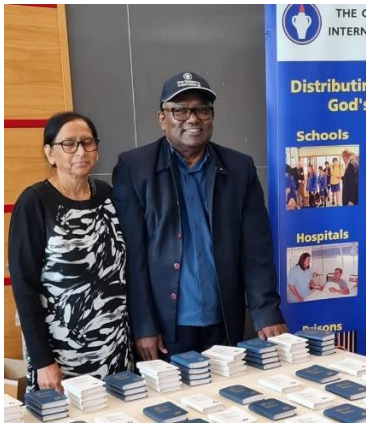
# Remembering a Chapter President - Deva Pillay

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In January Deva Pillay went to glory. Deva was a founder of the Manukau Gardens chapter in South Auckland which was formed around 22 years ago. Deva remained president throughout that time until ill health forced his resignation at the end of last year.

Deva's great desire was to see people become believers in Jesus Christ and to provide opportunities for people to experience God's love, power and presence. These things happened regularly at the chapter meetings arranged by Deva. His good standing in the community and his determination not to take "no" for an answer, enabled him to attract many well-known Christian leaders as guest speakers.

For several years his chapter had more members than any other chapter in NZ. That was the combined result of well run meetings and significant personal generosity on Deva's part to contribute towards membership fees for many men whom he had invited to his meetings. If Deva asked you to attend he could be very persuasive and persistent.



Deva together with his amazingly dedicated wife Yema, attended virtually every chapter meeting as well as being regular attenders at national conventions and other regional gatherings. Despite serious health setbacks in the past few years Deva continued to organise and host his monthly meetings.

In his retirement he also became an active member of Gideons and loved to share his faith with people he met while distributing Bibles.

Deva was a generous host at his home. Most chapter executive meetings were held at his home, often around a meal and always with refreshments. Visitors to the chapter were invited regularly to their home. They built a reputation of fine hospitality. Everyone was welcome in their home.



There were times when Deva had strong inflexible views on FGB matters which sometimes led to strained relationships. However, a common experience would be receiving a phone call from Deva a week or so after a difficult conversation to renew the friendship as if all was well and desiring to move on together. He always remained positive and looked to restore good relationships. He valued loyalty and supportive friends. Deva has left a legacy of lives who have been enriched through his hard work and his dedication to FGBMFI. He maintained that ethos, loyalty and effort right to the end of his life, seeking to fulfil the calling of God on his life to see others blessed by God. He has left a huge gap in the lives of many, but has also left us with immense gratitude for a life well lived.

*Eulogy speech by :*

**Graham Simpson,  
National President**

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# “Okay, FGBMFI (Houston), we have a problem here.”

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This famous quote came originally from astronaut Jack Swigert in 1970, when he and the other astronauts on the Apollo 13 flight realised they had a problem they couldn't solve on their own. It seems to me that if other chapters are like the Te Awamutu chapter, few members are actually sharing the gospel, few are actually successfully inviting non members to the monthly meetings, and very few people are actually turning to Christ through FGBMFI. We have a problem!

1. In 2025 only one non-Christian man attended one of our monthly meetings.
2. At our recent February meeting I asked members what the key Bible verse was defining the gospel. No-one knew what it was. (The answer is at the bottom of the page.)
3. Some members are confused about the main steps in bring people to the saving knowledge of Christ. We lack teaching in our chapters on God's ways to evangelise.
4. We have sidelined the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 6 points in the FGBMFI mission statement in our Action Manual, which is, **“Training and equipping men to fulfil the Great Commission.”** We have failed to do this in our Te Awamutu chapter. We are repenting and have begun a fresh commitment in the following four areas. **First.** We are lifting our level of personal and chapter prayer. Only some members have an abundant prayer life. **Second.** We are going to have a time in our monthly meetings for members to share both challenges and blessings in sharing the gospel in the past month. **Third.** As President I have made a commitment to give keys and tools to our members every month on how to be more fruitful in sharing the gospel. **Fourth.** From March we are going to start a Search and Rescue team for any members who are serious about bring

the lost to Christ. I'm happy to start with 2 or 3 men, but I will be praying for more to join the team. I face the reality that some members will not want to join our spiritual Search and Rescue team.

5. I face the reality that Satan will oppose all the above, but with the help of the Lord, His kingdom shall advance! We shall use every appropriate tool as we go to the lost in our community, workplace, and neighbourhood. I believe the Holy Spirit will empower us to do this. I believe the promises of Scripture. While we have a current problem, we believe for a turnaround in our chapter.
6. Recently I had a prophetic word about being an evangelist in the community, and it is happening, to the glory of God! It is burning in me. My prayer is that similar kinds of turnaround will take place in our NZ chapters. It's not enough for us to rely on our speakers or Pastors to do the heavy lifting of preaching the gospel. Jesus said **‘Go’** to all of us.

**Rod Bent,**

**Te Awamutu chapter President.**

Here is the Scripture passage (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*) with the definition of the gospel of Christ. (Refer to point 2.)

***“For what I received from the Lord I passed on to you as of FIRST IMPORTANCE, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”***

Without understanding they are sinners and need a Saviour, people will not get saved.

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# For Not Everyone Has Faith

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## Introduction

*"Mike Bunt has been praying about the following word, asking if it should be included in FGBMFI's Vision newsletter. Rodney Francis said, with all words he believed there was often a bit of self in the word. If touched and encouraged please join with Mike in proclaiming in Jesus name "A measure of faith to believe" over everyone, group, town, city etc the Holy Spirit gives you."*

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"How **VAST** is God's Grace?"

This was the question I believe the Holy Spirit asked me in May! I have been pondering on this since then, how do you measure it, nothing is impossible for God. He can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine!

Earlier in May I read an article from Kenneth Copeland Ministries on facts about **faith to believe**. Little did I realise that 'How VAST is God's Grace and Faith to believe?' were to tie in together with a challenging word from the Holy Spirit. Kenneth wrote, 'We are all given a measure of faith to believe' Romans 12:3." Then he said, what happens when **not everyone** has received 'faith to believe' 2 Thessalonians 3:2 and Romans 15:31.

A light came on inside my spirit. I have been blessing people many times over the past several years since reading and giving away copies of Richard Brunton's book 'The Awesome power of blessing'. Why don't I start In Jesus name blessing people with '**a measure of faith to believe**'. So, I began proclaiming a blessing over my family and friends and neighbours to have a 'measure of faith to believe'.

Little did I imagine God had bigger plans for this revelation. A favourite scripture for me for many years has been Deuteronomy 29:29 "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

I have been doing exam supervising for many years at Otago University, and always pray for the students in the exam room which I supervise, usually blessing them to do well in the exams and one occasion the Holy Spirit I believe reminded me about 'God's Kindness' and as I pondered on this he

prompted me to pray an individual blessing upon the 91 students. The Holy Spirit confirmed this when his presence filled my car afterwards.



Walking on the university grounds to set up the exam room in June, I believe the Holy Spirit spoke to me saying '**proclaim a blessing on everyone on the campus to receive a measure of faith to believe**'. Was the Holy Spirit really saying that? It blew me away, yet in faith I began to proclaim the blessing on **everyone**; no one was to be left out. This was emphasised several times. And reminded me of the question put to me 'how VAST is God's grace?'

Joel 2:28 & 32 (NKJV) says 'And it shall come to pass afterward, That I will pour out My Spirit **ON ALL FLESH**; .....32 And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the Lord shall be saved.'

Since then, my blessing proclamation has extended to include other universities and educational institutes. My suburb, the city, then all of New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific Islands. Also to quote scriptures such as, 'It is God's will none to perish but everyone to come to repentance' 2 Peter 3:9, 'Ministering angels ministering to bring people to salvation'. Hebrews 1:14, It's not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord' Zechariah 4:6 and 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways says the Lord' Isaih 55:8

I have shared this several times now and each time the Holy Spirit's presence manifests. On another occasion while watching utube, an address by

Trevor Yaxley, a New Zealand entrepreneur and businessman, he shared parts of his faith journey of how and where the Holy Spirit led him. One story touched me deeply.

He was given a vision/dream and the Holy Spirit impressed upon him to have the dream/vision made into an animation series which would be viewed by over 100,000,000 children. It came to pass. The Holy Spirit set up divine appointments with key people to make it happen. As I watched this, the Holy Spirit came powerfully upon me. I'm not saying that over 100,000,000 people will be given faith to believe. However, how big is our faith? Without faith it is impossible to please God. Trevor also mentioned his belief that the Lord is going to release a huge revival upon earth shortly.

Does that mean all people will become believers in Christ? I cannot answer that. We all have a free will to believe or not to believe. What I believe he indicated to me was to bind the strongholds over people, in Jesus' name, for there is power and authority in the name of Jesus, and to loose the

Holy Spirit upon them, who will usurp the stronghold with a measure of faith to believe. Matthew 16:19

It amazes me that God, the Almighty, wants to include us in his plan. I have found that to be true on many occasions. One of the main reasons Christ was here on earth was to set the captives free and instructed his followers to do likewise. Luke 4:18-19

A question on my mind is, how and when will many of these people come to faith in Jesus? In faith I do what has been asked of me. Hopefully many others will proclaim in faith with me, **the blessings on all people for a measure of faith to believe**, and our great God will do his bit using whoever and whatever means he chooses, to draw them to himself, as Jesus is lifted up on the earth. John 12:32

**Mike Bunt, Taieri chapter** *(written August 2025)*

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## Upcoming Events

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(1) A 2-Day Convention will be held 4-5 June 2027 in Christchurch. Anyone is welcome to participate. It is still in planning state. For more information, please contact Hugh August on 0210 542 257, and Steve Blakemore-Terry on 027 212 2900.

(2) En Hakkore Camp 12-13 September 2026. Anyone is welcome to participate. For more

information, please contact John Speirs on 027 432 3695, Evan Walker 021 408 088.

(3) Waikato / BOP Camp 21-22 November 2026. Anyone is welcome to participate. For more information, please contact Allan Levi on 022 631 5541.

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# Report on the Waikato BOP Regional Camp, 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> November near Ngongotaha

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## Waikato BOP Region Camp 2025

Our region held our annual camp at the Lakeview Bible Camp near Ngongotaha, on a hill site overlooking beautiful Lake Rotorua. It was the first time for several years that we have gathered for a weekend together, rather than an intensive Saturday seminar that we held during the last couple of years.

The camp theme was God's grace. We were blessed to have retired Pastor, Murray Smith, from Bridges church in Cambridge, speak on that theme. There were about 25 men present from our four chapters, including Keith Wooderson from Paraparaumu. His wife Maureen helped Ariana Levi prepare our meals. We were well fed! A carload of Auckland FGB men also joined us.



*View looking south to Lake Rotorua*

It is not possible to write about all the sessions we enjoyed, but here are some gems that Murray spoke about.

- Grace brings forth devotion to God, and us extending grace to others. John 1: 14-17, "grace for grace" means the power to receive more grace.
- We are not under law but under grace. 1 Corinthians 1: 3-7. God's enabling grace.
- God is able to make ALL GRACE abound to us. 2 Corinthians 9:8.

- Grace doesn't write people off. Grace offers restoration.
- Be a faithful steward of God's grace. Use your grace gift to serve others.
- It's about how faithful we are, not how successful we are.
- Grace overcomes our fears and insecurity. Fear works against grace. Murray testified how he nearly died in a motorbike accident, and the fear that came against him then

We had testimonies from many men, including Owen Johnson, Geoff Winter, Herb Robertson, Matthew Harrison, Peter Bilton, David Brown and others. David called us to pray over and anoint our Regional Director, Allan Levi, and his wife Ariana. It was a powerful time.

We were blessed with great times of worship, led by Doug Erutoe on guitar, with backing from Geoff Winter and Rod Bent.



*Rex and John cooking barbecue meats.*

At the end of the camp on Sunday, we agreed to return about the same time next year, and it is now booked. The facilities were good, and the location was excellent. We were blessed also with pleasant fine weather. Local FGB men Rex and John cooked a great barbecue meal on the Saturday. We Full Gospel men know how to

prepare a delicious barbecue meal! The women did a great job in the kitchen, providing many nutritious meals.

To God be the glory for a wonderful uplifting camp. There is room for more to attend the camp this coming November. Regional director, Allan Levi is the person to contact to book a bed.

**Rod Bent**

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## Waikato BOP Regional Camp – Group Photograph

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## Report on the Lower North Island Camp, 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026 at Pohangina

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Started the camp on Friday night with a great time of prayer and praise.

21 men including 2 teenagers attended on Friday night.

Terry Walker brought an amazing testimony on Friday night and throughout the weekend.



4 more men arrived on Saturday.

Time was taken to remember Tom Auckram and John Stewart who have gone to be with the Lord.

The weekend was a great time of prayer, words of encouragement and healing.

I am already looking forward to next year's camp.

**Lex Daly**

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## Lower North Island Camp - Photographs

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## Lower North Island Camp – Group Photograph

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Sidenote : *“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, be not distracted by things of earth”.*

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## Tribute to Laurence Rea – 1930-2025

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*Laurence Rea, photo taken in 2009*

Laurence was our longest serving President, and the oldest former member living to 95. He served for seven years and was a popular President. He was converted to following Christ in his mid -life and he never looked back. He became President in a time of crisis for the chapter, because at the 2006 AGM no-one wanted to be the next President. He put up his hand to serve in that position, and he did very well for the next seven years. He last shared his testimony at a chapter meeting in 2016. Former President Owen Johnson spoke of his role in FGBMFI at his funeral service in mid-November. Laurence has gone to his eternal reward.

**Rod Bent, Te Awamutu chapter**