

among a heap of flax (Joshua chapter 2) from the king's messengers. As a reward they promised her that when the Israelite army arrived she would be spared with all who were in her house. She was to hang a scarlet cord out of her window so that they could tell which was her house. She obeyed and when the city was taken she and her household were spared, and thus that section of the wall remained standing as shown me in the illustration.

The next Sunday morning it was my responsibility to take the inmates down to the local church and a lay-preacher, who was a farmer in the district, spoke on the very subject the inmate had been sharing with me. I was amazed and it was there that I became convicted about the reality of God. Although I did not make a personal commitment at that time, I was stirred up.

During those days a Christian worker from Taumarunui, Mr Bob Mossop, used to visit us once a month. Initially I used to make sure I was not available when it was time for him to visit, but after my experience with the inmate and at the church I found I looked forward to his visits and used to like to talk with him. Sometimes we used to have a Bible study with him in our home. Eventually my wife, Topsy, received the Lord as her personal Saviour, but I was still not ready to do so.

One Saturday I went up to the part of bush in which we were working because I had seen evidence of pigs in the area and was keen on pig hunting. I went into the hut that the inmates used for shelter and to have their meals. I was by myself and I felt the Lord's presence in a way I had never experienced before. In the stillness of that empty hut I came under strong conviction concerning the need for the Lord in my life. Many things went through my mind, including the way I had rejected my family in pursuit of my sport. I remembered how Rahab was saved with her household because she obeyed, and

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I realized that I needed to obey. I needed to obey the Lord just as the inmate, the preacher at the church and Bob Mossop had been telling me.

In that hut, for the first time in my life, I got down on my knees and prayed to the Lord. I told the Lord that I needed Him, that I believed Him and I received Him into my life. There in that old hut I claimed Jesus Christ as my own personal Lord and Saviour.

A short time after my conversion experience Bob Mossop made arrangement for both Topsy and me to be baptized at the Gospel Chapel in Taumarunui.

After becoming a Christian I no longer felt the same about working at the prison. I had seen first hand the hassles in the lives of many of the inmates and I felt I would rather become involved in Christian work among children where they could be reached before they got into some of these problems and their lives became messed up. At this point in our lives Topsy and I became involved in the work of the Tangiteroria Children's Home where we worked for ten years. Although it was not always easy going we found it very rewarding having such an effective input into the young lives under our care.

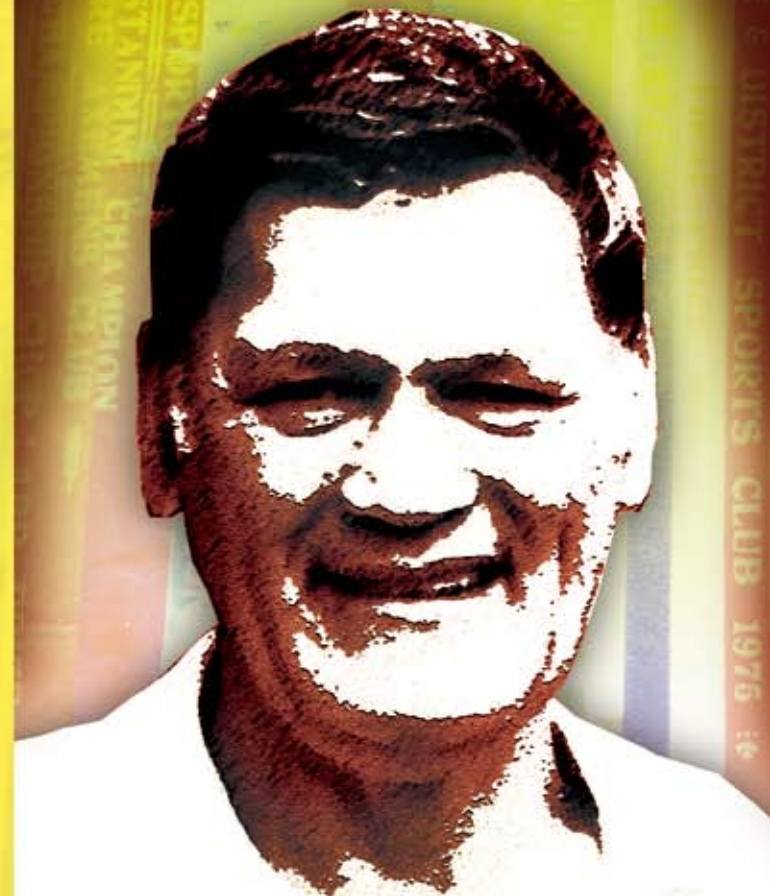
When we were no longer able to continue this work through ill health, we became involved in the work of Maori Postal Sunday School. Over the years we have visited many homes in Northland, as well as schools and Kohanga Reo groups. It too is a very fulfilling work and we are able to continue having a worthwhile input into many families and lives as we reach out to our Maori people with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only the Gospel of Christ has the power to redirect and changed damaged and ruined lives, because it deals with our sin and makes us right with God.

We know, because it has made such a difference in our own lives. What God has done for us, He can also do for you.

If God is speaking to your heart and you realise you need forgiveness and a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ the Saviour, please contact:

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The Story of a CHAMPION AXEMAN

Bill Wynyard



Puketohunoa te maunga. Taumarere te awa. Ngatimanu te hapu. Te Hurihanga Winiana (Wynyard) te matua. Merekingi Winiana (Edmonds) te whaea. Ko Wiremu (Bill) Wynyard ahou. Tena Koutou.

In my earliest years I was raised in a large family of 16 in the Northland district of Karetu. From the age of 9 I lived with an aunty and uncle on their small farm in Ngawha (Waitaheke Road) helping with the chores such as milking the cows, helping in the large vegetable gardens and other general farm work. During the latter part of my life on the farm my days were long and busy. My uncle was away working splitting posts some 5 km behind the Ngawha Springs. As my aunty was unable to milk, I had to have the 18 cows milked, the cream separated and out on the road (a couple of km's away) by 9 a.m. and then off to school. I used to take the cream by horseback and many times I would have to gallop the horse flat out with the 8 gallon can in order to catch the cream truck.

The day came when I left school, winter was near, the cows were dry and I went to help my uncle drag the posts he had split over the summer about 5 km using three teams of horses with about 12 posts on each sledge. He paid me the equivalent of \$2 a week. My poor uncle could not read or write and signed an agreement with the owner to have the job completed and off the property by mid June. He was unable to hire a truck because of the clay road and the autumn rain made it impassable other than by sledge and there would be two loads a day beginning at daybreak. The job was completed by mid winter and within two months the cows were due to come in and so it was back to my milking job.

Christmas in 1947 came, and my older brother arrived home from the coal mine in Huntly for the holidays. He told me about the big money to be made in coal mining and he managed to lure me into returning with him. My first pay was about \$28 for the first fortnight and I thought I was the richest man in the world. I worked in this coal mine for nine months.

Another brother had a bush contract in Taumarunui falling and heading trees for 10c per 100 super feet, so away I went to

join him after the bigger money. I worked in the bush until 1952 when I met my wife and we were married on 28th June that same year. We then went to Ohura where I worked in the coal mine there until 1971 when the mine closed and they converted the miners' hostel into a first offenders' prison. I then joined the prison service as a warden and, because of my experience with the forestry, I was able to serve the Justice Dept. supervising work parties of prisoners in the bush doing clear-felling, burning off and planting pine.

It was during this time that I took up wood chopping competitively. To reach the standard I attained everything else in my life took second place and my family suffered as a result. The most important thing to me was to become fit. Nothing else really matter to me than to maintain my fitness and become better at the sport than my competitors.

1973 was the year I won the Maori and World Championships at the Waimiha Show. All that week, building up to this event my wife, Topsy, was ill in bed. But I had trained for months for this day and nothing was going to interfere with it, not even her illness. I thought if I asked my neighbour to pop over every now and then to keep an eye on her things would be alright. That morning as I left, my wife looked at me in a way I will never forget, but my obsession and pride got in the way of my real responsibility.

I had just put away my axe after winning the Maori Championship, about 2 p.m., when my neighbour arrived after traveling about 100 km to tell me she had taken my wife to the hospital and she needed me bad. My response was, "What can I do – even if I went now?" The World Championship was just coming up – (which I also won). My neighbour gave me a similar look to that which my wife had given me that morning.

I eventually got to see my wife the next day and I was shocked to see how drawn and sick she looked. The doctor called me aside and said, "Mr Wynyard, you are a very lucky man. Your wife had a fifty-fifty chance of survival!" She had had to have an emergency operation because of blood poisoning.

Then one day in the guard house at the prison I picked up a magazine and read an article. It was about an Australian sportsman who had become a world champion rower. Like me he had put everything else aside in order to reach his goal. But he had contracted leukemia and had been reduced

to a wheel chair. It was only then that he was forced to stop and think about the things that mattered most in life. The nurse was pushing him in his wheel chair around the gardens one day, and for the first time he noticed a rose. Before this such things did not exist to him. This article began to make me realize that there was more to life than the goals which I thought were so important, for I was making the same mistake this man had made.

Not long after I had read this article, one day I arrived for work and there was a gang of prisoners ready for me to take up into the bush on a work detail. During the day, one of the inmates who was new on the job came up to me

with a strange remark, "You're just like I thought you'd be," he said. I did not know it then, but he was a Christian, and how he came to be in the prison I still do not know. I asked him what he was talking about and he said he had heard about me from the other prisoners. I replied, "Go on, get back to work!"

You're just like I thought you'd be, he said.

He left me for the time being but any time he had a chance over the next few weeks he would sidle up to me and say things like, "I was reading the Bible last night and thought you might be interested in this." Then he would share with me what he had been reading. He did this on a number of occasions and once he directed my attention to the mist coming off the bush and said, "See, that's how we're going to go up. The dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we who are alive will be caught up together with them!" He was talking about the second coming of Christ, but I was not interested. I told him to get out of it and not to be so stupid.

This man never gave up on me and on another occasion shared with me the Old Testament story of how the people of Israel, with God's help, had captured the city of Jericho (Joshua chapter 6) and how that a sinful woman, Rahab, who was a prostitute had been saved. By this time I actually found myself becoming interested in some of the things he was saying. One day he turned up with his big Bible to show me an illustration of excavations revealing how the walls of Jericho had collapsed. They had fallen out flat, but one portion of the city wall was intact and he said that was where Rahab had lived in her house on the wall. He told how that Israelite spies had come to her and, at the risk of her own life, she had hidden them on the rooftop