

# AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE LIVING GOD

MY TESTIMONY – BARRY RAEBURN

At University, I was taught that humans had created religion to help deal with the seemingly unexplainable mysteries of the universe. At University, I conveniently exchanged my faith in Christianity for a combination of agnosticism and new age philosophy.

I believed that much of what Christianity claimed to be spiritual experience could be explained away as being psychologically induced. These 'weak' people, I reasoned, 'needed' religion. It was their crutch and way of coping with life, while we more intelligent advanced and educated people didn't need this type of help.

I think I must have broken my poor mother's heart when I sat in our lounge at home and sincerely explained to her that I did not believe in heaven or hell or sin, or any other of Christianity's guilt ridden concepts. I proceeded to tell her that not only did I not believe in God, but that I was god! (In the New Age sense).

I would say to God though, if you are out there and you can prove to me beyond any shadow of doubt that you exist, then I will believe. The rational arguments and debates I had with Christian friends would not sway me at all.

It was in my second year of university that I saw a poster advertising a miracles meeting at a local church. I thought it might be fun to go along and see what would happen. Maybe I would see a miracle or God might show up. I went to the meeting held at Hamilton Assemblies of God church. The speaker was an Australian healing evangelist by the name of Tim Hall.

Towards the end of the meeting, the evangelist began to describe a number of situations concerning people's lives. He pointed in my direction and said there is a young man sitting in this direction, he has been into drugs, he is confused, and he needs to come up to the front.

I felt my heart begin to thump in my chest and I looked around. There were old people everywhere, I could not see anyone who might fit this preachers' description; I thought he must have been talking about me. Was it some sort of party trick or had God actually spoken to him? If God had spoken to him, I wanted to know how.

We went through what I perceived was the usual drill, praying the sinners prayer (which I did not pray, because I knew it already). Then we went out the back with our counsellors. I told him I was just really messed up and that I already knew the gospel message. I just wanted to know how this man had known I was in the meeting.

The counsellor said 'why don't we get him to pray for you?' I agreed. We went out the front and the counsellor explained to the evangelist that I was the young man who was confused, and been into drugs and so forth. Tim said 'lift your hands' and I thought, 'why not I'll give anything a try.' I lifted my hands and he began to shout out a number of times "Spirit of God." It seemed like he was shouting out to God for me. After he did this a few times for some reason I thought, this guy actually believes there is a God. I felt like a little crack formed in my mind.

I also felt something stirring in or around my stomach and I thought, I don't want to miss this so I looked down and I saw with the naked eye, what seemed to be a beam of light coming into my stomach area. The beams increased until it was like a stream of light coming into me. I wasn't

visualizing it, or imagining; I was actually seeing it with my physical eyes, and my mind was analyzing it. I was in shock actually, wondering what was happening.

The stream just seemed to stop after a while and I felt this light starting from my feet slowly rising up my body and it begin to fill me. It rose and when it reached my head, it pushed out all the false ideology and messed up confusion. For a while I stood there and I felt like I was floating about four feet off the floor. I felt like I was in heaven. I turned to the counsellor and he said, "Do you believe in God now?" It took me a long while to respond and God knows I struggled in that moment, because in all honesty, I didn't want to, but I replied, "I guess I have to."

In a moment of time I knew God was real, I knew the Bible was true and I knew sin was real. I knew I had to give my 'issues' to God and allow Him to help me come to an understanding of things in time. It's amazing what a miracle will do that no amount of persuasion could ever do. This experience with God transformed my life forever. From that moment, I began my life as a believer.

I discovered God was someone far more beautiful and wonderful than I could have ever dreamed of or imagined. I was spoiled for anything less than His presence. I had to spend all my time talking with Him and praying. I witnessed to all of my friends and led some of them to Christ. I spent hours reading the scripture and spending time learning from God through prayer.

I believe that we can listen to what others tell us about God, but we need to experience God for ourselves, to really know what He is like. I wanted that taste of the supernatural; I had an insatiable thirst for God. God's beauty had stolen my heart.

I remember a few months after I had come to Christ, I found a place to stay at a Youth With A Mission base. This was a place where missionaries lived and operated from. It was an incredible place, with so many people dedicated to serving God. I was praying in my room and I felt God come and visit me and He was so close. I saw a great light and I was overwhelmed with the reality and presence of God.

After prayer, I went downstairs and there was a man in the lounge who was asking questions. I went over to find out what had been happening and he had been walking down the street past the base and had seen a great light over the building. I was able to spend time sharing with this man what the great light was. This man saw something! He wanted to know what it was! God can show Himself to you, I have no doubt.

On another occasion I was praying in the living room of a friend's house. I cried out to God: "God, I need to see you, I can't live like this anymore; I have to meet with you." I continued to cry out to God and then I saw what seemed to be a great cloud coming into the ceiling of the living room. I said to God "right ... now I have you here I have a question for you."

At the time I didn't know what the question was, but I knew I had to ask it. Finally, I said to God: "What is it like being God?" I felt God say: "It's so wonderful." And then His presence lifted. I thought about this response and thought, 'yes it must be wonderful being God.' He is the most beautiful being you can possibly imagine.

When I came to the Lord my Pastor, Ian McCormack, had the testimony that he had died and been to heaven and been brought back to life again miraculously. When I first met him I felt like he was looking right through me. I could tell his

experience had transformed him and his view of reality. You could just tell he had been to heaven.

He said in heaven he saw Jesus and His face shone with light. As he walked towards Jesus he wasn't able to see his face because the light was too overwhelming and bright. This Pastor's face shone with the presence of God as he shared his story. He has shared his story all around the world. This is what an encounter with God will do to you.

**Ian McCormack's incredible testimony of heaven and hell is online: [www.aglimpseofeternity.org](http://www.aglimpseofeternity.org)**

Throughout history God has revealed Himself to different people. When you encounter God, it transforms you and the way you see the world and also the way others see you.

Many of us ask why can't we see God? Why can't we experience Him? My response is: 'Do we even try or give Him an opportunity to prove Himself?' I am convinced if we allow Him to; He will prove His reality to us. God is real! In fact, He is more real than you are. God is interested in you. He desires that no-one should go through life without knowing Him. You can encounter the living God.

[www.barryraeburn.org](http://www.barryraeburn.org)

**TWO NIGHTS OF FIRE - 2015**  
Friday April 24<sup>th</sup> & Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 7pm

**PASTORS AND LEADERS CONFERENCE**  
Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 10am-12 midday

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