

**The Holy Spirit does what the Holy Spirit does.**

I met some interesting people in prison, and now and again they wander across my mind. I wonder what they are up too and how their lives have worked out. For some, they wouldn't have, but I hope not all.

There were five Chaplains at Spring Hill. We had our office in the Whare Hui. It was where big events took place. It was a large building, had a proper kitchen, toilets and gathering space for all that went on there. As well as our little office.

With such space to look after, and employment always in high demand, the Whare Hui had a cleaner, and it was the Chaplains job to supervise what they did.

Being the Whare Hui cleaner was a plum job as we were relaxed bosses, there were plenty of people to talk too, it was inside, toilets and kitchen on hand and sometimes even food, as lots of functions took place there. It was a perk ... if you could put up with the religious people.

And I don't just mean the Chaplains. There were volunteers, who were lovely, but very enthusiastic. The cleaner was constantly being asked if you they were born again, saved, or had they seen the light!

Other prisoners figured in this too. They had to be dealt with as well. It is amazing what gaol will do for a spiritual life. Some were very genuine, but others were that crooked they couldn't lie straight in bed.

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Being the Whare Hui cleaner was a perk, if you could stand the religious people that came along with it.

In my 5 years, one cleaner was a standout and his name was Paul.

It was a match made in heaven, Paul was perfect for the job and the job perfect for Paul. He was the real McCoy as a Christian, so from that stand point he fitted right in.

He got on well with the volunteers, was always asking about the faith, talking about the bible and wanting to know different things, they loved him.

He was a hard worker. The carpets were dust free, the kitchen, toilets, floors and windows sparkled and glittered in all the right places. Our building gleamed and shone from morning till night. And as a prison outfitting is all indestructible stainless steel, that was quite a feat.

And he did all this in spite of being a bit busted up and bent out of shape, due to a motor cycle accident in his youth.

But the special thing about Paul was that he had a gift. He was the best evangelist I have ever come across. Everywhere Paul went he talked about Jesus ... and people listened.

Paul talked ...people listened ... and they became Christians.

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Then one day out of the blue, two Corrections Officers came in to the office and shut the door. You knew something serious was going on if they shut the door when they came to see you.

One of the officers said Paul's surname, (they always used a surname, never a first name) "he has to stay here for the day and he's not allowed to go. Only staff can remain in the building, so everyone else will have to leave or go back to their units. We have reason to believe that a hit has been taken out on him and he is going to be moved from the prison this afternoon."

Then they opened the door and left.

After everyone had gone, I got Paul into the lounge, sat him down and told him what the story was. In spite of everything I said, he wasn't keen to be going; he loved it there, he loved the people, the work and the work that he felt he was doing for the Lord.

So, I took Paul to the book of Acts, and the beginning of our chapter for today, "That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria."

I said to Paul that sometimes God moves us on by speaking to us; by signs, wonders and visions; sometimes by others speaking to us; a word from the bible, an opportunity ... and sometimes ... by persecution and heartbreak.

That afternoon Paul left for another prison in the North Island, and I haven't seen him since.

The Whare Hui was never the same again.

I heard he had continued his work as an evangelist ... He was so successful that when he was released, he went to work for a Christian organisation in that capacity ...

Paul was a believer from Samaria, from the other side of the tracks.

He believed in the Lord Jesus, was baptised in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. At a later date he received what he understood to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands.

Paul was a Christian ... and very far from perfect ...

And thanks be to God ...

**... The Holy Spirit does ... what the Holy Spirit does.**

Amen.