

Strange things happen!

When I first became a Christian, Janet and I were living in Ruakaka and I was working as a Gardeners Labourer at the Marsden A Power Station.

A few weeks before Ray, my boss retired in 1982, we had a big planting project to complete. To help we hired 4 students; 2 high schoolers from one of the bosses' families, and 2 on student job search, all young women. Plus, a mate of mine who was looking for some work.

My mate was one of those guys who was never without female company. No matter where he went, or what he did, he always had someone in tow. So, it didn't come as any surprise to me that one of the uni students fell for him in a big way. The only trouble was ... he was trouble.

We had been friends right through high school, got up to mischief in the local area, and even went to Aussie and got in to trouble over there. We had both become Christians ... but my friend ... Brendon ... never really settled. I was fortunate to have Janet to keep me going and on the straight and narrow. Brendon, try as he might, couldn't be alone. For a new Christian, this caused him some serious grief.

So, he and one of the uni students hooked up. Brendon was a labourer, Robyn a doctor's daughter. At the end of the contract, with the work finished, Robyn dropped out of university and they went off together.

Then about 18 months later at Easter time, I felt this genuine urge to go to a Christian gathering at the Ruakaka Camp Ground. It was a Tent Meeting being run by a fringe Pentecostal Group called "The Revival Centre". We were living just up the road and Janet's brother and his wife had gotten involved with them so I thought I'd go along for a look.

While they had some odd beliefs, they attracted a large number of people to their meetings and many made Christian commitments. So, I was keen to go and have a look.

It was Easter Saturday evening as I wandered across the river and went in to the tent. It was big and so was the crowd, about 300. The music was loud and the whole thing was going off. The singing went on for a bit and then they came to "Testimony Time."

And the first person to walk up to the microphone in front of those 300 people ... was Robyn. I was stunned, she said that her life had unravelled over the past 2 years, that she had dropped out of university and hooked up with someone ... and that it had all gone wrong.

In the process of it going wrong, she had become a Christian.

I found Robyn afterwards and had a quick catch up but she was busy with other people so I headed off home, as I was walking, I came across the phone box in the camp ground. You remember those, red, with a door. You put 20 cents in, dialled, then pressed a button for a local call.

This was in days before cell phones and I was very excited about what had happened, so even though I had no money, I went in to ring Ray and let him know what I'd seen. I figured with the miracle I'd already witnessed; I might as well give another one a go. I dialled Rays number, it rang, he answered, and I hit the button ... and low and behold, the call went through.

It was very cool. ... **Strange things happen ...**

Why on Easter Sunday morning am I telling you this odd little story?

Because 2000 years ago, on this very morning, 3 women came bustling back in to the community they belonged too, with an even stranger story. They came as witnesses to the resurrection from the dead of Jesus Christ. Fearful, excited, believing and unbelieving at the same time. Full of hope, purpose and faith because of what they had seen.

In 1982, I came back into the community I belonged too, with a strange story and a miraculous phone call, as a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Robyn's own words ... "she had been raised from the dead."

I came excitedly, slightly fearful, believing and unbelieving at the same time, full of hope, purpose and faith because of what I had seen.

On Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, this is our witness too, the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. This resurrection; which changes lives, alters futures ... and ... raises the dead.

I read about it in the gospel. I felt it in my own life. I saw it on a Easter night in 1982.

... I see it sitting before me now ...

"He is risen ... he is risen indeed."

Thanks be to God ...

Strange things happen.

Amen.