The making of an evangelist

Jarrott, Reginald Edward
"It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Phil. 2:13

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10
With Gratitude...

This book is a mark of appreciation to my wife, Alice, and my family, without whose sacrifice, encouragement, patience and understanding, this book could never have been written.

It is an acknowledgement, too, of the great help received from many Christian friends, as they have prayed for and helped in its compilation, both by active participation and financial backing.

Special thanks must go to Miss Suzanne Martin (a journalist), for her tireless efforts and help in making the whole book more readable from a public point of view.

There are others who read the script and helped me to put it into readable form, and without whom this book would have lacked much.

Thank you for all your help. God bless you for your labours of love!
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Ephesians 2:10 is a good description of the theme of this book. It is basic to the whole plan of writing. It underlines the fact that this author believes with all of his heart, that whatever our field of service, "we are His (God's) workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Let it be clearly said that this book is meant to glorify God and certainly not to glorify the evangelist. It was only written because others asked for such a book, in the hope that Christians might learn from it ways and means of reaching people for Christ.

It also aims to help those who feel called to be evangelists as their full time calling, and in line with Ephesians 4:11, where God "gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some pastors and teachers", etc, or in line with II Timothy 4:5&6, to "do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" -á so Paul told young Pastor Timothy.

One of the real fears that the author has, and still does have, in writing this book, has been the danger in seeming to take some glory for himself, when all glory rightly belongs to God, who will not share His glory with anyone else.

In setbacks and trials of faith, the apparent purposeless sections of my life are written to encourage others to see that no matter how rough the sea of life is, God still has His hand on the tills of our vessels, and the course is still being pursued to the pre-ádetermined end.

It is hoped that as people read they will find inspiration and spiritual help, as what appears to be stumbling blocks will turn out to be steppingstones, after all.

Jesus said, "Come ye after me and I will make you (to become) fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19), and he does just that.

After all, evangelists are God-ámade, not man made.

• Full time itinerant evangelist for 30 years (as of June 30, 1991)
• Doing evangelistic work over a period of 53 years
• Was State Evangelist and Director of Evangelism and Mass Media for the Baptist Union of Queensland for approximately 14 years
• Also Associate Evangelist to Dr John Haggai in All Ulster Crusade, Northern Island; and Director of Australian Outreach, Haggai Institute, for a period of time in 1975
• Headed organisation of Brisbane Crusade for Mr Haggai in 1974
• Has been Director/Evangelist for the Reg Jarrott Evangelistic Association, working in Australia and overseas for just over 14 years from late 1975 to 1990s.
• Presently doing evangelistic work when and where invited
• Was Secretary of Evangelistic Committee of Queensland Council of Churches (not World Council of Churches) for some years, and was chosen as Queensland Director of Crusades by International Evangelists, including Dr Billy Graham.
The purpose out of this experience which has covered all of Australian States and many overseas countries this book aims to do three major things.

1. To give inspiration to all Christians
2. To encourage others to evangelise by sharing methods found useful
3. To show how God influences a life by moulding it to His purposes

It is the writer's earnest prayer that others will be helped in the ministry of evangelism, in all levels of Christianity, as they read and ponder the pages of this book. To the writer, that would be adequate reward for the hours and years spent in its preparation.

M.A.R.E. Jarrott
Joseph said to his brethren in Egypt, 'But as for you, ye thought evil against me (i.e. when they sold him into slavery), but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive [from famine]. (Genesis 50:20)

As I studied in Life's Classroom in my earliest years, there were many setbacks, disappointments and close shaves which could be a parallel in some ways to the text above. My text could be "these situations seemed to be for evil á-á but God meant them for good!"

The way in which God is always standing in the shadows, directing life's affairs for His own purposes, is truly amazing and certainly comforting.

As I look back on my earliest days in life's classroom... it started on a Saturday, and it was quite a day á-á for my mother and father, my aunt (a nursing sister) and the doctor á-á and especially for my self. I arrived into this world a heavyweight, weighing 6kg at birth, the first born to my mother and father, and to the doctor, the biggest baby he had assisted into the world. It happened in Graceville, a suburb of Brisbane in Queensland, Australia, at the home of my parents.

My father, a plumber, spent a number of his early years in the Sherwood, Graceville and Chelmer areas, the place of residence of his pioneering forefathers. He was a sportsman of some repute and did a lot of sailing in the Brisbane river there. He represented Queensland as a sailing man, against New South Wales on Sydney Harbour; other feats as a sportsman were holder of a gold medal for bike racing, and he was a State and International Rugby League footballer, having played against New Zealand and England.

My mother, too, was born of pioneering stock. Her people were German migrants who came out and married here. My mother had been a shorthand typist before she was married to my father.

I thank God for my home. On both sides of my family there were many devout Christians, who followed the Methodist persuasion, although some by force of circumstances, drifted into other denominations.

Our home, in material things, was adequate, but could not be called wealthy. However, in spiritual things, my sister Valma (now Mrs Tom Pryceá-davies) and I were very rich indeed.

From the day of my christening, I was surrounded with love and prayers and concern that I should be trained in the things of Christ.

My greatá-grandfather on my father's side had been known for his spirituality and preaching ability.

Through this time of love, my relatives and my loving God were giving me a good start spiritually.

My father died at a relatively early age of 55 years, on August 15, 1942 á-á just four months after my wife and I were married. Strangely, his father also died at 55 years of age.
I believe my father's early death came as a result of an injury at work, during the depression years. As a result, he was a semi-invalid for about 10-12 years.

This was the first of a series of disappointments in my life, which later turned out to be 'His Appointments'.

As Joseph said to his brethren one day in Egypt "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass and save much people alive." And in the setbacks of life, I can truly say God meant them for good.

My father's injury at work was not only a setback for our family, but it was life-changing for me.

I attended the West End Primary School, and sat for the Scholarship exam. According to my teacher, the future looked rosy for me in the field of study.

After passing the Scholarship Examination, I was able to attend the Central Technical College (Commercial High School), with a view of fitting myself for office work and business administration.

After a period of time, I was getting ready to sit for the Junior examination, in order to take the next step up the ladder. However, I had to leave my studies to help support my family, as my father could no longer do any work and so lost his job.

Australia was going through bad times economically during the years of the Great Depression, and so I had to take any job at all. My first job was in a peanut factory. It was a job with heavy lifting, dust and grease.

I was grateful for the job, but disappointment because my study seemed to be of no avail. But I found out that God meant this for good, too.

Then, after about 2-3 years, I was put off work simply because I had reached an age, it seemed, where some firms would or could not pay higher wages.

Although I was too young to go on 'relief work' which was offered to the unemployed, I was permitted to do some, because of my father's inability to work and our strained circumstances.

I like to tease young people by telling them I was a Road's scholar because I learned to work on roads and in parks, scything down long grass (and watching out for drunken metho drinkers, asleep in the long grass), and doing concrete work, laying cement paths. "Methylated spirits was called 'White Lady'.

To receive my pay for 1 1/2 days' work per fortnight amounting to $2.75 a married man's pay which my father was entitled to), I had to queue up at the local police station.

To supplement this income to help my parents, I went from house to house selling food products for a firm that packaged jellies, spices and the like.
After saving a little money from that work, I decided to add some haberdashery items for sale, but on my first day out I was stopped by the authorities for not having a licence to sell the items. Apparently, the food selling was OK, because I was representing a firm; but the haberdashery items needed a rather stiff licence fee, because it was my own property.

The authority who questioned me told me that to recoup the money I spent on the haberdashery items, I could sell them privately to my relatives and friends.

The other thing I was able to do was to go door to door selling jams, which my mother made. My mother also did some work - washing and ironing mainly, and sometimes making curtains, as my father was unable to get a pension for some time.

(Both my parents were singers in church choirs. My father was a very fine singer, who was urged to train for opera work, but declined. He was a baritone, and my mother sang alto.)

We managed to eke out a living in the way described above. These things helped me to prepare for something I was to do in my as yet unknown future as an evangelist: viz, the art of calling on people, so God meant this for good, also.

After some time, my sister, Valma, got a job in the city and so she was able to help with the family finances, too.

Having been out of work from the factory for about 18 months, I was surprised to receive a call to come back, as they had developed a peanut shelling shed, and wanted me to work there.

Although the work was dirty and the air was terribly dusty (I had to wear a dust mask), and the lifting of literally hundreds of sacks of peanuts onto high stacks was heavy work, I was glad to be working again.

At this peanut factory, I learned a number of things that stood by me in my future work for Christ: over the whole period of my employment, I worked in a gas mask, while the firm was treating dried fruit in a gas chamber. I also had to stand from morning to evening working outside in the beating sun, soldering tins so I could fit lids on them, for storing peanuts. It was monotonous work, and hot, but it taught me to work alone and to do a fair day's work without supervision. To avoid the monotony, I set myself a target each day and then tried to better it in the future. I also learned to cook peanuts, almonds and other nuts, in extremely hot vegetable oil. Too, there was heavy lifting of cases and sacks of peanuts, weighing up to 238 lbs. Sometimes we had to work right up near the galvanised roof of the shelling shed, stacking sacks of peanuts, with our backs touching the hot roof.

The people I worked with came from various walks of life and after becoming a leading hand, I learned a lot about their views, on taking orders at times. (Sometimes, their views were quite explicit!)

My task also in the shed was to help to keep the machinery going smoothly, and this job nearly caused me to lose my life.
In the third time in about 5 or 6 years, I had a near-fatal accident, but the third time was so very close, I found it to be utterly terrifying. It happened when I was employed the second time in the Peanut factory. In looking after the machinery, I noticed a belt had come off a pulley. I climbed up on the cross beams of the machinery about 15 feet above the floor. Although I had dealt with this type of problem many times, and was always careful when doing the necessary readjustments this time, in a split second, I was caught in the belt by my left arm and quickly drawn into the machinery. In the kind providence of God, just when I thought I would be ushered into eternity, the belt loosened its hold on my arm, and threw me out, having badly broken my arm, and torn my thumb severely.

I felt onto a table moving below, and gave the girls working there a tremendous fright. Then I bounced off onto the concrete floor, head downwards, where one of my workmates, with great presence of mind, ran forward and caught my head so it did not hit the concrete.

In these three accidents mentioned: a traffic accident, a surfing accident, and this argument with machinery, God was the teacher again in life's classroom, reminding me of the brevity of life and the necessity to be prepared. These were two great lessons for one, who, in the future, was to be God's evangelist, and I needed these two lessons to be etched in my mind.

The ambulance came and took me to the Brisbane General Hospital, for what turned out to be five different repairs to my arm, and approximately 14 months of suffering in and out of hospital.

In the course of treatment later on, I was admitted to Ward 15, which dealt with the badly injured and orthopaedic cases. The ward was divided into two sections at one end, the lighter injuries; the other end was known by the patients as the 'long stops', because of the length of the patients' stay. I became a member of the 'long stops', because of the five attempts to fix my arm (which I found out later, I was in danger of losing).

For the first four adjustments to my arm, which included three operations requiring general anaesthetic, I was little or no better. My fifth operation was a bone graft, taking bone from my left shin, and using the bone to heal my arm, where pins and wire inserted had failed to heal my arm completely.

The remarkable thing is, that the first four times I was treated unsuccessfully, I was a non-Christian. I went to church, but I wasn't saved. But the fifth successful time, I was a Christian, saved by God's grace. Even the hospital bed mates noticed the tremendous difference when I went to the operating theatre with Christ in my heart. They sent someone over to ask what had happened to me so I told them about the Saviour's presence in my life. After my conversion, I often got up at night when I heard the moans and crying of patients, and went behind the screens to tell them that the Saviour could help.

I had indeed found the truth of the text, which says that if any man is in Christ Jesus, there is a new creation, former things are passing away, and all things are becoming new. (II Corinthians 5:17)
God's lesson for this period was the problem of suffering and the need people have to find God's remedy. Now I have sat where the suffering sit, and God was helping me understand for the future days the things I would need to know.

I was definitely becoming "God's workmanship, being created in Christ Jesus unto good works...".

Amidst the suffering, pain and seeming hopelessness, there often is a spirit of humour which is used to ease some of it.

Whilst a patient in the hospital, three of us set up a paper which we called "Ward 15 Weakly" (deregistered at all butcher shops as a 2nd class sausage wrapper).

The 'staff' consisted of an editor, with a broken back at 21 years of age and 5 years of hospital stay behind him. Then there was a sub-editor, with one leg missing and the possibility of losing the other. He had been in that ward for a long time. Then I was appointed the paper's artist to draw the front pages. The rest of the staff were reporters or spies, if you like whose duty it was to report on happenings in the hospital.

Our complete edition at the start was two copies only, written on writing paper from a pad, and the front page had a drawing on it. My publication was bound with sticking plaster at first. Some patients loved our paper and others hated it especially some of the young nurses it seemed, when the paper reported mistakes they had made in bandaging, etc.

I found it hard to draw the front page, with my left leg strung up towards the ceiling, and my left arm likewise. I found it very difficult one morning, to eat a boiled egg one-handed with a dessert spoon.

My front page featured a drawing with the caption, "Thoroughbreds don't cry" and it seemed to become the ward's motto and was an encouragement to the sufferers in Ward 15 and beyond. One day a Brisbane Telegraph feature writer, Joyce Stirling by name, featured our ward and its paper, "Ward 15 Weakly", with a photo of my front page drawing, "Thoroughbreds don't cry"/

A Presbyterian Fellowship Group saw the article and decided to get behind "Ward 15 Weakly" and publish it so that it would have a wider circulation throughout the hospital and beyond. Later, too, advertisements were inserted to keep the paper in its production.

I believe God was in all this too, teaching me the lessons that although suffering was irksome, one can be 'down but not out'. Also, in laughing at others, we learned to laugh with them, and at ourselves, too.

In a later chapter, there are further amazing instances showing the guiding hand of God, bringing singing out of sighing, and joy in the midst of frustration and pain.