I have always attended church and even though I can’t remember it I was taken as a baby. My parents attended a Welsh Baptist church where my Dad was a deacon and also the Treasurer and my Mother was a Sunday school teacher and played the huge pipe organ. Church was part of life and included church trips to Porthcawl and Barry, concerts, jumble sales and the like. We went three times on a Sunday irrespective of the weather and I suppose it was from these things that I learned commitment and faithfulness. Nothing seemed to stop my parents going to church not even illness.

Having said all that when we moved house my Dad went to an English speaking church and my Mather continued to attend another Welsh Baptist church. I was sort of stuck in the middle and at this point I drifted – I was about 13. The real turning point for me came when a group of local churches including the one my Dad attended organised a Crusade in the Central Hall with two evangelists called Gordon Weeks and David Ware. My Father was in the choir and nagged me to come to listen one Sunday night after church. I went and the words of the speaker just as well have been directed at just me. So at the age of 14 I gave my life to Christ and began my Christian walk.

I was baptised in water at 15 on November the 5th – the sparks really did fly! I came to realise that there was such a thing as being baptised in the Holy Spirit and quite a number of us teenagers pestered the youth leader so much that he held a special service for us to be prayed for. The experience was like being hit with a gust of wind so powerful it had to be God. I began to speak in tongues and have not stopped since. The language began to grow and the vocabulary increase as I allowed God to speak through me.

The next major step on the road of growing in God was finding out who I was and what gifts God had given to me. I loved the Bible and couldn’t keep my head out of it. When I was baptised in the Spirit it was almost as if the light had been switched on because when I read I understood things that had seemed strange before. This took me on to want to study and being a lover of books I began to buy and read as many books as I could. I am afraid that I have never got out of this habit and my basement if evidence of that!

The upshot of all this was that I was asked to start speaking in the church and even though my debut only lasted 8 minutes, I understood that doing this made me feel alive. This was certainly what God wanted me to do. Engagements began to emerge from other churches locally and at 15 I had a small circuit of churches. One of these churches was called Peniel AOG Tonypandy and was led by a fabulous gentleman called Bill Cooke. When I went to University a while later the church gave me a gift towards text books. Mr and Mrs Cooke had two sons that attended the church one of whom was called John. He was to feature in a major way in my life.

At 18 I passed my A levels and went to study Zoology at University College Cardiff. I obtained a single honours degree and went on to study for a Ph.D. in Parasitology. Just before my Graduation while I was actually writing up my thesis I received a phone call from John Cooke asking me out for a meal. This was the start of a relationship which would end up in our marrying in 1984.

University was hard especially as a scientist. I was bombarded with evolutionary theory from every angle. There were only two Christians in my year and the other lad was very young in the faith. Unbeknown to me he arranged for us to have the lecture hall one lunch time and invited every one to come and hear ME talk about creation! To say I was petrified was an understatement. Even though most of those people went away not having changed their minds they developed a respect for us and understood that our belief in creation did not mean that we were mentally ill.

After obtaining my doctorate in 1982 John and I were engaged and we got married in September 1984. I got a job as a Research Officer in the University Of Wales Hospital Of Medicine and worked in the Department of Surgery on Crohn’s disease. In the mean time John and I looked around for houses.

John had had a very serious car accident which had left in nearly blind in one eye. He was unemployed as a result and so money was non existent. Nevertheless we looked for houses. John has always been the one full of faith and it was his idea to do this. Eventually we chose one which we felt was right. We didn’t have the money and so applied for a mortgage which the estate agent said we would never get. We did actually get an offer for a mortgage but in the interim a cousin of my mother’s had moved back into the area and approached us about the house. Would we like a hand with it he said. We both laughed and asked if he had £10,500 to spare. He got out his cheque book and wrote the cheque saying that we could pay him back interest free every month. God is incredible!!

During this time John and a number of young people from various churches had miraculously managed to buy an old disused church in Tonypandy which they were renovating themselves. This building became known as the Ark and we were both very heavily involved in it at the time. Today it is our Youth Centre and the home of the Living Way Academy. John’s vision for the place became reality and through his faith and that of the young people involved the Ark is a spiritual stronghold in the town.

When I married John I moved to Peniel where John was an elder. I became a deacon and worked as the secretary. During our honey moon God spoke to us and told us that when we came back we were to be prepared to lead. Even though this didn’t happen for a while John did take on the Pastorate of the church and was ordained and inducted as the minister in 1989.

I began to speak not just locally but all over the country and realised that my primary gift was teaching. We went to Scotland, all over Wales, Northern and Southern Ireland and all over England speaking and teaching at conferences and churches and seminars. Our ministry extended to America in the 1990’s.

I began to be asked to write down some of the stuff that I was teaching and from these requests came books. With the help of people like Aaron Linford and Paul Curtis both of whom are now with the Lord I embarked on a writing career. I was given a word from God that told me that my words would travel the globe and so far books have gone to Africa, America, South America, France, Belgium, India, New Zealand and Australia. God is good to His word.

After being married for 7 years we became the proud parents of a baby girl – Sarah Jayne. My mother had just about given up hope, but when she was born she gave both sets of parents so much joy. Sarah came every where with us. She was at every meeting and went to just about every conference we ever did. When we did a mission to the Navajo Indians in the middle of the Arizona desert Sarah was only 5 but she came too and seemed quite at home.

In the same year 1991 God spoke to us about opening a Bible College. I had always wanted to lecture in one but obviously my qualifications were scientific. During our married life I had however, pursued and passed exams in around 6 courses with London Bible College by correspondence which included NT Greek. John being John said to me one day – ‘Why don’t you start your own College.’ After some time I came to the conclusion that this was what God wanted and so I began to put together a syllabus, write a prospectus, develop timetables and of course advertise. The problem was that even though we would have outside speakers much of the course was going to be my responsibility and so I had to write notes. We began to plan in around May 1991 with an opening date of the first week of September. I wrote notes everywhere – on beaches, in buses, when I was waiting in the car. I wrote every moment I could get and when John would go out on Neighbourhood Watch at 2am in the morning I would get up and write then for a couple of hours each night. Amazingly and by God’s incredible grace we were ready by September and welcomed the first 12 students. The College had been running every since and we have seen many hundreds of students come and go off to fulfil their destiny. We have also seen international students take up places at the Academy from America, Brazil, and Uganda. It is our desire to see people equipped to serve where God has put them.

The church grew from 12 to well over 80; we were experiencing incredible blessing with an average of 50 people in a mid week meeting. We saw people equipped and sent out and people grow in God.

God has been so incredibly gracious and has taken me so far on the greatest adventure that any one could ever want. Even thought there have been hard and difficult times God has never abandoned me. When I didn’t think there was a way out – God made one. When I had lost hope God never lost His firm grip on me.

Without Him I am nothing and could do nothing, but through Him and because of Him He will make me like Jesus.