

DISRUPTING RELIGION

Revealing Mysteries and Exposing Deceptions
to Release God's Sons and Daughters

COLIN FERREIRA



Disrupting Religion: Exposing Deception and Unveiling Mysteries to Release God's Sons and Daughters.

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I dedicate this book to my nine children, Seth, Benjamin, Melody, Regan, Caleb, Jesse, Jedd, Raanan, and Samuel. It is my deepest desire that you will look past my flawed representation of a father and find your ultimate Father. I love you all so much!

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INTRODUCTION

We are in a season of severe shaking—a season of disruption! We are experiencing things at a global level that no one would have expected. Almost every day, we see and hear the unimaginable. There is a phrase that is becoming common during this season: *You couldn't make this up!*

I began writing this book on Friday, March 13, 2020, the very day President Donald J. Trump declared a National State of Emergency here in the United States in response to the fast-spreading coronavirus known as COVID-19.

Throughout the course of this writing, other social upheavals have been unfolding with protests, rioting, and anarchy taking place in various cities. Anger and fear appear to be rampant everywhere! The pandemic and the response to it have disrupted people's lives across the globe. Financial markets have experienced volatility not seen since 1929. An enormous amount of wealth has evaporated, and countless businesses either have already gone under or at risk of doing so. Tens of millions of workers have been furloughed or lost their jobs entirely. We have been instructed to *social distance*, as many states have locked down completely. We were later told that scientific models were wrong and the numbers of deaths from the virus were skewed. In short, we have been receiving mixed messages

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from the media and government authorities at many levels. It's hard to know who to trust.

As if this is not enough, here in the United States, we are probably entering into a time of political and social upheaval like nothing this generation has seen before arising out of a critical presidential election on the horizon. The future is extremely unpredictable.

In short, Everything that can be shaken seems to be shaking. As Stephen Covey said, one of the few constants is change.

As this has been unfolding, many churches have also been locked down. Christians have not been able to gather as they used to on a weekly basis. We have been given little choice but to reevaluate our spiritual lives and the thing we call *Church*. The unfolding events and the reactions to them reveal that we are at significant crossroads within both the global political arena and the Church.

For decades, there have been consistent efforts to dismantle our Judeo-Christian culture in order to replace our individual and national freedoms with what many call *globalization*—a one-world order of godless state control or statism. These are not just inconsequential random events degrading our societies, but an intentional agenda that has been unfolding over many years with the goal of replacing God, and our dependence on Him, with man's own power expressed in the State. This dismantling of our values has been happening at an alarming rate because we have allowed the secular world to control the key areas of cultural influence: government, courts, education, media, arts and entertainment, business, family, and even religion.

The majority of Americans—and a third of the world—claim to be believers, and yet we have been losing significant ground for the last few generations. While most hate to admit it, we feel powerless to change it. We have been given the mandate to take dominion over the earth, but for quite some time, God's Kingdom and rule seem to be

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shrinking instead of expanding. Sadly, while we seem to accept basic doctrines, we do not walk in our true identity or exercise faith in God's ability or His desire to do anything meaningful about this disturbing trend. Like the Scriptures say, we have a form of godliness but we deny the power thereof. (2 Timothy 3:5 NKJV)

Is this a book of doom and gloom? Certainly not. It is quite the opposite. I have a strong sense of positive anticipation because I know God is working this all for good in significant ways. I began this introduction the way I did because, in order to appreciate what is happening in the spirit realm, we need to acknowledge that the world has been heading in the wrong direction for decades. And let's face it, what the Church has been doing is, to put it mildly, not working well.

With the recent disruptions and lockdowns, God has placed His Church in a pit stop. Pit stops are used in car racing to pull a vehicle out of a race (off of its course) temporarily to effectively equip it for what still lies ahead. Without pit stops, the vehicle has no hope of achieving victory. Pit stops involve refueling, changing tires, making mechanical adjustments or even major repairs, and giving the driver instructions and a few moments of rest. However, this pit stop God has placed the Church in now is far more than for a quick refueling and new tires! This is more like an extreme makeover! I say this because the vehicle presently in this race will never see victory without a dramatic reformation.

This book is about just that—reforming His Church through a major paradigm shift. I am certain that we have just entered a season of deep change within the Church. This is not a period of tweaking and adding a new coat of paint. It's not about embracing modern technology to continue doing the same thing. It's about tearing down and rebuilding, a time where nothing is off-limits. It is about the Father connecting with His children in a way they have never experienced before.

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No one likes pit stops because it requires a willingness to leave the crowd, to give up one's position in the race, and allow everyone else seemingly to get ahead. After this pit stop, however, it is my belief that the Church will re-enter the race very differently from how it left. It will be far more powerful and well equipped for victory—and the reformation has already begun.

A surge of hope is pouring out of many prophets today in the midst of evil and madness. Even as blatant evil unfolds before our eyes, God is moving in this particular time in history to bring about the greatest revival ever and through His Church—His Body. I am certain one of the prerequisites to this revival is a personal reformation in the minds and hearts of believers. Our thinking guides our faith and our actions. We cannot continue to think like we have been and expect to see meaningful change. Reformation must precede the coming revival.

I have not been given the mandate to speak to many of the facets of what God is doing today in this significant time. My focus is on a core set of issues and beliefs within the Church that clearly need to be addressed *now!* It is my hope that you will see with fresh eyes that there is a Gospel filled with mysteries that further unlock our hearts and release us to usher in the greatest revival of all time.

But to do that, God is disrupting religion.

“Behold, I will do a new thing, Now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it?” (Isaiah 43:19a NKJV)

Chapter 1

HOW ON EARTH DID WE GET HERE?

I am Trinidadian by birth. I have been living in the United States of America with my wife and nine children since April 2006 and am now a citizen of this amazing country.

As a person who lived in a developing country for the first forty-nine years of my life, I had the deepest respect for the United States. I will never forget the thrill I felt when, with my eyes glued to the TV, I watched the opening ceremony of the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. Neil Diamond sang his hit song *America*, and fighter jets did a low flyover. I would have done anything at the time to call myself an American.

When I finally did move to America, however, I began seeing signs of cracks in the nation's foundations that most Americans just could not see. They had bought into the belief that America will always be the greatest country on Earth—no matter what.

What I had not realized was the magnitude of the enemy's long-term strategy to control key culture influencers, particularly our education system, the media, government, courts, and the arts and entertainment

industry. It seemed to me as if a growing colony of termites had been eating the foundation of a magnificent building for decades. These termites have been multiplying at an alarming rate, moving up into the higher levels of the building and every room. In the past, their destructive activity was invisible to most, but lately, a simple poke with

It seemed to me as if a growing colony of termites had been eating the foundation of a magnificent building for decades.

the finger punctures what used to be a solid structure to reveal the destruction within.

For example, never in my wildest dreams would I think America would have same-sex

marriage, or illegal immigrants would be given more rights and protection than citizens. Never in my wildest imagination would I think socialism would be even considered by a sizable portion of the population of this nation, or biological men would be allowed to compete in a woman's sport by merely self-identifying as a woman.

Worst of all, over 60 million babies have been killed since abortion was legalized. In some states now, a full-term baby can be legally murdered just before birth, but destroying a bald eagle's egg brings a strong penalty. These are just a few examples of previously unthinkable developments we have now accepted into our society. These developments are beyond my comprehension. The framers of our Constitution never clarified these issues specifically because such issues were simply unthinkable to them.

One thing is not debatable: the Church is not functioning in the power and authority given to it. From the days of Adam, we have been placed on the earth to walk in close fellowship with God and take dominion over the earth. We all know well what Adam and Eve caused, but Jesus was sent to reverse it all—to save mankind, to restore our relationship to the Father, and restore our

authority over the earth. He wants to build His Kingdom rule here *as it is in heaven*.

The early Church started well, but a lot has changed since then. Presently, instead of being the counterculture we were intended to be, we have become a subculture, operating under and controlled by the growing secular culture. The stark truth is the Church has become the tail being wagged and not the head leading the way.

Yet the simple arithmetic just does not add up! Over two billion people in the world claim to be Christians. They are supposed to be filled with the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead, yet we are struggling, at best, in this battle for our nation and world.

When referring to the miracles He performed, Jesus said, “Greater things you will do.” So why are we not experiencing these *greater things* today? How could

our nation be saturated with Christian churches while our culture and values are pulled out from under us? The Bible says

The stark truth is the Church has become the tail being wagged and not the head leading the way.

that whatsoever we ask in His name, we will have it. But is that what the vast majority of Christians experience?

Even from these few questions, our answers indicate something is clearly wrong. There is a disconnect, and we all know it. Do we really believe that God intended this to be our experience? I do not think so.

Unfortunately, when we say we believe everything God says is true—and still feel that disconnect—then we each personally conclude, *Something must be wrong with me*. I, for one, felt for many years that I must be exceptionally broken, even as a Christian. The answers always seemed to elude me, like a butterfly flitting away just beyond my grasp.

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Now I am not claiming to have *the* answer, as I believe there are a number of issues that bring us to where we are today. However, I do feel strongly that God has given me clarity about some significant pieces of this puzzle.

God is moving right now in critical ways to bring about needed reformation within the Church. We are at a significant and historic period in biblical history. The Church is being given the opportunity not to reset, but to reform. This is not a time for tweaking and adjusting, or for going back to what existed—even if parts of it were good. We are in a time of metamorphosis. For example, we should not be seeking to return to the early church days. Jesus is returning for a mature Church that has grown up.

LIKE A CHILD

Just prior to beginning to write this book, I moved to Georgia, USA, after experiencing an intense wilderness-like experience in Iowa. The journey had led me from my birth country, Trinidad, to my wife's hometown, a little religious community in Iowa. During that experience in rural Iowa, which lasted over twelve years, everything drastically changed for me. After the initial excitement of the move had worn off, I began to feel lost and without purpose. My business was and is still in Trinidad, so I do not leave the house to work. Because we also homeschool our children, I began feeling like I was under house arrest.

The most challenging and unexpected change for me was the loss of my identity as I knew it. In Trinidad, I had been the CEO and owner of a leading optical business, a church elder, president of the Christian Chamber of Commerce, and leading marketplace ministry on a national level.

I walked away from it all at a time when it was all going very well (I will explain more later). However, I was not prepared for what

followed. As the years passed in Iowa, I felt a growing sense of deep loss. I struggled with periods of depression and hopelessness like I never felt before. I often wondered if my purpose and destiny had been shipwrecked, although my heart towards God had not changed. I was not wired for the culture or climate of rural Iowa, and certainly not prepared for the loss of purpose and my perceived value. My only hope was in prophetic words I had received years earlier (another story I'll share later), but even those words contradicted everything I was experiencing.

About four years into this difficult time, God used a young man at a conference to speak into my life. Within ten minutes of talking with him, he revealed I was struggling with an identity crisis. He told me God had separated me completely from my former identity so He could reveal to me my true identity. In a deep, heartfelt way, I suddenly realized all that really matters is that I am *His beloved son*. I cannot fully express the emotions I felt at the time. The experience was as profound as the day I was born again.

We all claim to understand that we are God's children. However, much of modern western Christianity sees this as a position rather than a specific, ongoing, engaging relationship with Father God.

Apparently, I had to die to everything I initially considered to be my identity so I could see more clearly something I really thought I already knew. That day I recalled the meaning of my name, a meaning I never cared for as a boy. But that day, it meant everything to me. In Gaelic, my name *Colin* means *child*.

Over time, I came to realize that the Church is filled with servants of the Lord, but very few who truly act like His sons and daughters. We all claim to understand that we are God's children. However, much of modern western Christianity sees this as a

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position rather than a specific, ongoing, engaging relationship with Father God. Too many of us see it like receiving new citizenship to another nation or having our last name changed. It is perceived as something officially or technically true, while engaging with our heavenly Father all day, every day, as a kid in a healthy home environment seems foreign to us.

As a matter of fact, most of us are not clear on how exactly to relate with the Father because we have been taught primarily about our relationship with Jesus. We have lost sight of the fact that it was the Father who sent Jesus to restore us to an intimate relationship with Him. We all claim to know that the Father wants us to be *like Jesus*, but what does that really mean? Religion says it is all about character—doing the right things—but that is not true. The Father wants us to walk in relationship with Him *just like Jesus did*. He wants us to fully understand our identity in Him and enjoy the same complete confidence Jesus enjoyed. And He wants us to have the complete faith that comes from engaging in this relationship with Him—just like Jesus demonstrated.

The chief reason the Christian Church today is so weak is this: we misunderstand the true nature of our relationship with the Father.

As we sought to name our nine children, we looked for names that had a positive meaning because we believe names can have a prophetic element that speaks into one's life. I often wondered, what was the prophetic element to my name? As I pondered this, the Lord brought to mind the name *Elijah*, which in Hebrew means, *My God is Yahweh* or *the Lord is God*. At first, I wondered how that phrase could have anything to do with Elijah's destiny. Then I realized what Elijah's ultimate challenge on Mt. Carmel was all about. (1 Kings 18) He revealed to all Israel in a profound way that the true God *is Yahweh*—the Lord *is* God.

Through those difficult years in the Iowa *wilderness*, I developed a strong passion to help the Church understand the significance of living in our true identity as children of God. This passion within me is like what Jeremiah described: “His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary holding it back, And I could not.” (Jeremiah 20:9 NKJV)

CHAIN MAIL DISTORTIONS

In this book, I’ll be unraveling a number of distortions prevalent throughout modern Christianity. I pray they will shift how you see God, yourself, and the Good News in significant ways that affect your experience as a Christian and increase your peace, faith, and authority. If your experience is anything like mine, you will probably wonder why you could not see these distortions before! The answer is simple: forces of darkness and deception have infiltrated the Church for centuries to form what I describe as *chain mail*.

Chain mail is a form of armor developed in the Middle Ages. It is made of small metal rings firmly linked together to form a strong garment-like protection for a knight’s vital organs. Yet Satan has flipped this image to weave distortions like chain mail around the hearts of believers. Instead of keeping threats out, these distortions have combined over time to block truth and cut us off from truly understanding the love of our Father. It is my hope that the truth I share will destroy enough of these rings of lies to dismantle this chain mail and allow the sword of Spirit, the word of God, to reach our hearts in new ways.

This chain mail analogy also suggests another reason we struggle to receive truth: we’re not open to receive the mysteries of God. God intentionally allowed many truths to be hidden in mysteries *unless* our hearts

are truly open to receive and understand them at all costs. The ability to see truth transcends positions, titles, academic achievements (even religious ones), and all other benchmarks assumed by worldly thinking. This reality is so important that I will be focusing specifically on it in chapter 4, but Jesus' choice of the twelve apostles is one undisputed example.

As we come to see the deception of the enemy and begin to understand more of God's hidden mysteries, I pray it will begin a chain reaction of new revelation that continues long after you have read this book. I am also confident that this chain reaction will cause faith to increase and the world to see a manifestation of God's love and power like never before through the revealing of His true sons and daughters. "For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God...because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Romans 8:19-21 NKJV)

THE PROBLEM AS JESUS DESCRIBED IT

Jesus best explained the problem we face in the parable of the prodigal son found in the Gospel of Luke. (Chapter 15:11-32) There is a lot to discuss in the story, some of which I will revisit later, but to put the parable in proper context, we need to read the entire chapter.

The chapter begins with the reason why Jesus gave the three parables we often refer to as The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son. The Pharisees and other teachers of religious law were complaining because Jesus was associating with tax collectors and other rejects of Jewish society. The parables, particularly the last one, were Jesus' direct response to their complaints. Each of the parables is similar in that what was lost was precious to someone and worth every effort to retrieve.

However, the last parable introduced another significant dimension which made it stand out from the others—the elder son. Giving three similar parables, but with a unique addition to the last one, caused the added piece about the elder son to become Jesus’ focal point. It is the elder son who best reveals the religious mindset of the Pharisees that each of us still wrestles with today.

The elder son represents the vast majority of the Church throughout the centuries. Bear in mind, he *was a son* (parallel to any born-again child of God), already a member of the father’s household. He was not a servant. All that the father had was his, but he drove himself anyway to slave in his father’s fields to earn or deserve his inheritance. With all his long hours slaving in the fields, he probably spent very little time developing a healthy active relationship with his father.

For had he been close to his father, he would have learned slaving was not what pleased his father. Working harder was not what earned his father’s love, blessing, or inheritance. Had he been intimate with his father, he would have expected his father to respond exactly as he did when his brother returned home. Had he truly understood his own identity as a child of his father, he would have genuinely joined his father in celebrating the restoration of his brother. He might even have gone to look for his brother to bring him back to the father, as Jesus did for us.

This subconscious avoidance of true relationship with the Father is one of the main causes why the modern Church is so weak, and why our culture has declined. We judge our spirituality and whether we are deserving of blessing by what we do for God.

One of the biggest mistakes we tend to make when reading about the Pharisees and other religious leaders of that time is to think of

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them as an evil religious sect that persecuted Jesus, and yet fail to see our own similar tendencies. However, their stories were recorded through the intentional inspiration of the Holy Spirit to reveal how easy it is to live religious lives focused on performance rather than enjoying genuine relationships with our Father.

This subconscious avoidance of true relationship with the Father is one of the main causes why the modern Church is so weak, and why our culture has declined. We judge our spirituality and whether we are deserving of blessing by what we *do* for God.

At this point, you may be nodding as you read, thinking what I have stated is pretty obvious. But what I have just explained is a lot more difficult to discern as we go about our daily lives, and it is having a tremendous influence on what we know as “church” today. A lot more will be said on this further on in this book.

A TIME OF REFORMATION

From man’s fall beginning with Adam, humanity lived in a general state of lawlessness and sin, not clearly knowing specifics of right from wrong until the Law was given to the Israelites through Moses. With a keener knowledge of right and wrong, they tried to do better but without success. They became stuck in a constant cycle of conviction, failure, and condemnation. God brought them to that place to reveal their need for redemption. God’s promise of a redeemer was their only hope. Eventually, God sent Jesus the Redeemer to provide full restoration *purely by grace through faith* and to give all who believed the amazing privileges of becoming His sons and daughters.

This broader reality parallels my own personal experience in an unexpected way. Until I accepted Jesus, I was living a life of lawlessness

and sin without much conviction. After receiving Christ, I had a deep desire to know God, read the Word, and attend church. But as I read the Word and attended church, a lot of my sin was exposed—but without proper teaching and understanding of the full extent of grace and my identity in Christ.

This absence of clarity resulted in decades of mixing faith with works, seeking to please God by better effort, and building my identity through the ministry I did for God. My life, even as a Christian who was born-again and given full access to grace, often looked more like that of the frustrated Israelites

after they received the Law. As I read the Word and listened to messages in church, I was convicted to *do* better, but I did not understand how to fully rely on faith and grace to bear the fruit of the Spirit. It was not easy to see this error at the time because

there was always some truth mixed in with it. There were a lot of successes in the midst of it all, but they often came at an unnecessary cost and probably still did not achieve the levels God intended. Sadly, I see various measures of this same *old covenant* behavior with most Christians today.

I have been hearing the words *reformation* and *revival* bantered about a lot lately. The resurgence of those terms is especially interesting to me because seven years ago, when God was reprogramming my understanding, I told my wife with excitement, “This is all about reformation!”

What I will be sharing with you in the pages to follow has the potential to shift our thinking similar to the Reformation triggered by

God is moving once again within the Church now to bring a simple yet deeper revelation of our true identity as His children in order to bring about the revealing of the sons and daughters of God—the mature Church.

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Martin Luther in the 1500s—*seriously!* That reformation was based primarily on one simple but profound revelation that we are saved *only* by faith in Jesus Christ and not by good works.

God is moving once again within the Church now to bring a simple yet deeper revelation of our true identity as His children in order to bring about the revealing of the sons and daughters of God—the mature Church. Revival will take place to the extent that this reformation of understanding takes root in the hearts of God’s people. When we experience it, we will begin functioning from a much greater level of rest, confidence, and faith as our perspective shifts from *servants* to *sons and daughters*.

If we must strive, let us not strive to gain acceptance from our Father, but rather let us strive to enter into true sonship and rest and remain there. But as the writer of Hebrews noted, that may take far more intentional effort than we realize: “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.” (Hebrews 4:1 NKJV)

The intensity of present events and the manifestation of evil is placing America, the Church, and even the world at a crossroads. It is no longer business as usual. Everything is being shaken, and the shaking is forcing believers to stop and face the issues, not only on a natural level, but even more so on a spiritual level.

We simply cannot continue as we did and expect different results. However, moving forward effectively requires a retooling, a transformation of our minds, replacing Satan’s chain mail of religious lies with a greater and clearer understanding of truth that we have just not seen before.

God in His wisdom has intentionally placed a lot of this truth in the form of mysteries that He reveals to His children under the right conditions. But before I get deeper into some of these mysteries

How on Earth Did We Get Here?

as well as some of the enemy's carefully-crafted deceptions, I think it will help you to hear more of my own journey which led me to what I am about to share.

Chapter 2

A LEAP OVERBOARD

I am a very practical person, so anything I get involved in has to be relevant, practical, and attainable. I feel the same way about spiritual things and am usually disturbed by things that, though they sound right, seem unattainable. I am certainly not saying I lean on natural understanding, because I often make decisions only on faith when everything seems impossible. I do so *if* I believe whatever I am pursuing is attainable. This may sound contradictory, but it really is not, because if God guided me, it must be attainable.

When I first committed my life to Christ, I began experiencing a tangible relationship with Him. From the very beginning, because of my practical nature, I made a personal request to Him: “Lord, I just stepped away from a life of empty religion filled with hoops and loops that failed to reveal you or change me. I now know you are real and personal, but I need to see your direct relevance to my day-to-day life—at my job where I spend my waking hours and have my greatest challenges. I need to see you there!”

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And God did just that. As the CEO and owner of the leading optical business in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago at the time, God led me down a path of intense trials, faith, and revelation that launched me into becoming a well-known leader of the Faith at Work movement in the Caribbean. I had a deep passion to share my experiences and help people in the workplace understand their calling and authority to bring the Kingdom of God into day-to-day life and business. As I experienced God in so many relevant ways, I simply had to encourage others to believe in order to experience more.

My involvement led to hosting meetings and conferences both in Trinidad and abroad. At a local level, I was the president of the local chapter of the International Christian Chamber of Commerce and produced a radio program called *God at Work*. I shared biblical workplace principles and experiences that spoke to a wide spectrum of believers, from store clerks to bank executives.

My influence expanded beyond denominational walls and led to my hosting a national event in conjunction with the Global Day of Prayer in May 2005. Over eight thousand people, including bishops and leaders of all Christian denominations, came together to humble ourselves and pray in unity for our nation. Never before had all Christian denominations come together in genuine unity. It was a tremendously moving and successful experience. It was even positively reported by all of the local media and on the front pages of the three national newspapers.

In short, I was seeing results! I was poised to take this first step of unity to the next level. The various denominations looked for me to lead in the next step. It all meant a lot for me because I had desired for years to see the Church become more effective through putting aside differences and coming together as His Body. I wanted to see tangible evidence that things could really change in my country. As a neutral

body, the Christian Chamber of Commerce had drawn everyone together in a way that one denomination could not do.

Everything I was working for was coming together after many years of hard work and sacrifice. Bear in mind that during all of this, I ran a company with 160 employees; I was a senior leader in my church; I produced radio broadcasts three times a week, and I was a father of seven children under the age of eleven at the time. The truth is, I was in a state of chronic stress. I slept very little and had dark circles around my eyes for a number of years. (Seriously, I looked like a raccoon.)

However, immediately after that unifying event, something unexpected happened. The best way I can describe it would be that someone shut off my power switch. I felt like God's grace had completely stopped flowing. Everything I was used to doing suddenly became extremely difficult to do. I felt like I was swimming in thick mud. To put it mildly, I became really confused.

GO AHEAD AND JUMP!

In an effort to solve the problem, I began making adjustments to my life. I took an extended rest, put all ministry on hold, and delegated most of the running of my company to others over the next six months. But still, nothing changed. By then, I was really baffled. There were time-sensitive decisions to make regarding this new unity effort. Confused, I started crying out to God for answers in January of 2006.

As I sat in my office praying one morning, a thought suddenly and clearly popped into my head, *Go talk to Johnny*. Johnny Enlow pastored a prophetic church in Atlanta at the time. I had met him earlier through some marketplace ministry events. I was in Trinidad at the time, so I shook off the thought. After half an hour, it came again—abnormally sudden, distinct, and clear: *Go talk to Johnny!* This time I paid attention!

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I realized God was speaking to me. I booked a flight and was sitting with Johnny in his office in Atlanta the next afternoon.

God used that time together to open my eyes enough to see that He wanted me to get off the speeding train and stop everything I was doing. It meant resigning from leadership of the business chamber, resigning from the board and ministry of my church, discontinuing my radio program—everything! It meant completely shutting down everything I thought I was supposed to be doing, everything I had prayed for as it related to ministry. It was a 180-degree turn, but it felt right in my spirit.

Something specific happened that day with Johnny that I will never forget. After I informed him that I was coming to Atlanta, he had asked a couple of his prophetic intercessors to pray for me and seek the Lord for direction on my behalf. By the time I got there the following morning, one of them had sent him a response. This is what she said:

I saw Colin on a pirate ship. He was walking the plank. He was not doing so because he had committed a crime or was being forced off the ship. He was doing so because he saw it as a way of escape from the crowd of people on the ship who were all pulling at him to get involved in their different organizations and ministries.

Then the Lord showed up and told Colin, “Jump! Go ahead and jump off the ship! Because I’m about to do something very different going forward. It will not be through all of these organizations and people. It will just be you and Me.”

I cannot tell you how relieved I felt at the time! For many years, I had been exposed to a lot of gifted prophetic people and had been given

prophetic messages that spoke of seemingly never-ending training and stretching. So when the Lord showed up, I expected to hear, *Man up! Stay on the ship!* But instead, He said to jump, even if it meant into the vast ocean by myself. Although this message seemed opposed to all I had been working towards, my heart leapt with relief.

I made the decision to stop everything and will never forget the overwhelming peace I felt at the time. Then Johnny said something so profound it has become a phrase I often use to express my core message.

“Do you realize what she said?” Johnny asked. “She said the ship was a pirate ship! Pirates go after legitimate treasure in illegitimate ways!” He went on to stress that pirates do not chase after fool’s gold and costume jewelry; they go after the real thing but in illegitimate ways.

I began to see how this described what has been happening to the Church to a significant extent. Countless ministries desire to see God’s Kingdom built. They desire to see everyone come into a life-changing relationship with God. They desire to see miracles. They desire to see God move in their midst. All of these are genuine treasures to seek after, but so many of them are going about it in the illegitimate ways of natural man.

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They have overly-structured institutions with huge budgets and unnecessary assets that were never built at the direction of the Spirit of God. Many try to control and manipulate followers in order to build their own empires. As those empires get built, the focus becomes keeping the plates spinning rather than seeking the Spirit’s direction for His Kingdom.

AN UNEXPECTED MOVE

One week after my trip to meet with Johnny, I was having a discussion with a friend who mentioned his desire to emigrate to Canada. In an instant, an overpowering chain reaction of thoughts consumed me. Right then and there, the idea was born to emigrate to a small town in Iowa, my wife's rural hometown.

Naturally, the idea seemed ridiculous. It was impractical, illogical, and not something I had considered before. Not only was I already walking away from all the ministry I had felt called to, but this move would mean walking away from everything else that defined my life. I would be leaving behind the day-to-day leadership of my business, friends, culture, and country.

Within a week, however, my wife and I were both sure the move was God's leading. We made the decision on a Sunday. The very next day, a construction company had been scheduled to start a major remodeling of an old house we had bought. I called the contractor who had worked with me for years building optical stores for my business and told him my predicament. He graciously understood, and the project was immediately canceled.

By the end of that week, we had found the house in Iowa we would eventually buy. It was a very large house, but it was offered at a good price. It was not even yet on the market, but we were able to view it fully online because it was a bed and breakfast inn at the time. By the end of the same week, someone also signed a contract to buy our house for exactly what we wanted with no realtor involved. By this time, our heads were spinning!

When we made the decision to move to Iowa, I had told my wife, who was three-and-a-half months pregnant with child number eight, that we needed to do this within four months because I was concerned about her not being able to fly during the later stage of pregnancy. But we were completely naive as to the realities of me as a Trinidadian obtaining

permanent residency in just four months! It was only when we landed in the U.S. four months later and were greeted by the receiving immigration officer that we fully understood what God had done.

“Welcome to America, Mr. Ferreira!” he said. “It must have taken a long time.”

“What do you mean?” I replied.

“I’m sure it must have taken you at least two to three years to finally get through the process!” I was taken by surprise.

“Actually, it was all done in under four months!” It was his turn to be surprised.

I could fill an entire chapter with the obvious miracles that got us through the process in that incredibly short time. Suffice it to say, God flung doors open repeatedly in ways only He could have done to get us to Iowa on time.

Often in hindsight, I understood why God wanted to do it through so many miracles. I was about to enter the most intense desert experience in my life. Only the miraculous testimonies of how we got there would give me the faith to believe I had not made a mistake and become shipwrecked amongst never-ending cornfields.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ABORT

Moving to a new country was quite refreshing at first. Everything felt new—fresh experiences, a different culture, and a radically different climate. I began to rest and make up for lost time with my family after some intensely busy years. However, it didn’t take too long for reality to begin to set in.

The first year and a half after I moved away, my company in Trinidad experienced a host of negative events. Flooding, an air conditioner unit exploding in a store, employee cars being stolen just

weeks apart, a key employee being physically attacked by a homeless person on the city street—and the list went on. There were so many and seemingly so unrelated to each other that I began to sense they were part of some sort of attack by the enemy. I became very weary. After moving, I felt somewhat disconnected from the business and with the recent events, so I wanted to sell it and move on. I felt that after decades of managing the business through countless crises, I was ready to be done with it all.

A few months later, on a morning in early 2008, I got an unusual call from an American businessman who had been involved in establishing chains of successful optical businesses throughout the United States. He was interested in buying my business. After much prayer and consultation with some financial advisors, I agreed to engage in the process to sell.

Once we had established our confidentiality agreement, the audited financials were shared with him. His response after reviewing them was, “These financials are pristine!” In hindsight, that year was by far the peak of my company’s performance to that date. We were in excellent financial condition and debt-free.

We agreed to meet in Trinidad for him to physically view the business, but during the visit, I began feeling a check in my spirit about selling. I felt the Lord saying that He had not yet fulfilled His plan and purpose for the business or the promises He had made. To sell it now would be like aborting a baby. There were a lot of specific things prophesied about the company that had not yet come to pass, but I was weary and tempted to cash in. On the other hand, I have always tried to seek after God’s perfect will as opposed to His permissible will. I wanted to see exactly what He had in mind all along, not settle for what might be acceptable. As I mentioned earlier, when we refuse to settle is when we are most blessed, as His perfect will is allowed to be fulfilled.

During that visit with the potential buyer, I pulled the plug on proceeding any further with selling. I remember him saying, “But you don’t even know what I am prepared to offer!” My response was that the amount was irrelevant because I did not feel I was supposed to sell.

We all know what had happened within a couple of months of that time—the global financial crisis of 2008.

A DOWNWARD TURN

Prior to that time, Trinidad and Tobago was the largest supplier of natural gas to the United States. We supplied over seventy-five percent of all of the natural gas imported by the United States. Hard to believe, but true! As a result, Trinidadians have often been called the Arabs of the Caribbean with a considerably stronger economy than most of the other Caribbean islands.

Then came fracking, a new technology developed in the United States to extract oil and gas from previously unreachable deposits. This turned the U.S. into a major producer overnight and cut imports from Trinidad. It also slashed the global prices of oil and gas. The economy there has been struggling ever since these developments in the oil and gas industries.

Adding to all of this, our Caribbean university, the University of the West Indies, opened a school of optometry for the Caribbean about six years ago. Unfortunately, almost all of the students are Trinidadian and want to work in Trinidad, creating an all-new crisis for my company. The number of optical stores on the island has doubled over the last ten years. With our poor economy and the doubling of competitors, the business situation had already become extremely difficult. Now that we have had to shut all of our stores due to COVID-19, the situation appears impossible.

Has it crossed my mind lately that I should have sold the business at that seemingly perfect time in 2008? Well, how I view this impossible mountain I seem to be up against at the time of this writing has everything to do with the central message of this book.