

## About The Author



Peter Hodge was educated at St Edmunds School, Canterbury. He has an Honours MA in Classics from St Andrews University; an MEd in Educational Psychology from Glasgow University and a Diploma in Religious Studies from the University of Cambridge.

For sixteen years he was Principal Teacher of Classics at Lenzie Academy, Glasgow.

In 1981 he had an overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit and was called into ministry in 1983 to *'proclaim the Good News, to heal the sick and suffering and set the captives free.'*

He served as a Deacon and Elder at Kirkintilloch Baptist Church and Counselling Co-ordinator at Kilsyth Community Church.

With his wife Andrea he was involved in pastoral ministry, counselling and discipling individuals and couples for over thirty-five years. They were blessed with four grown-up children and five grandchildren.

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over forty years*

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LEAVES IN FALL

PETER HODGE

# Leaves



# In Fall

from

The Journal of a Journey

PETER HODGE

# Leaves In Fall



Painting by Loris Zorina © Adobe Stock Images

*We live for 70 years, or 80 if we're healthy, yet even  
in the prime years there are troubles and sorrow.  
The years pass by so quickly and we fly away.*  
PSALM 90:10 ISV

*Teach us to number our days,  
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*  
PSALM 90:12 NIV

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To our son, for endless hours over the years spent wrestling with the big issues and not being afraid to agree to disagree, in spite of his upbringing!

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To the numerous individuals, with whom it has been a privilege to walk a mile or two in their moccasins at different stages of the forty-year journey. Their names in most cases have been changed to protect their anonymity.

Ultimately, as JS Bach wrote on every page of his music,

- S.D.G -

- Soli Deo Gloria -

*'Glory to God Alone.'*

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## **A Journey.....anda journal**

*Leaves In Fall* are leaves from the daily journal of a nobody named Simon, born a child of Adam, born again a child of God, and called to *'proclaim the Good News ('Your God reigns')*<sup>1</sup>, and *demonstrate its arrival by healing the sick and setting captives free.*<sup>2</sup>

If God is real, why is the world in such a mess and all man's efforts rendered meaningless by the pitiless march of death? How might one know for sure that death is not the end and God is knowable in reality, not just in theory?

Simon made up his mind he would believe in God, if he showed up in situations neither he nor others could control or manipulate. In short, in a supernatural intervention of some sort that could be verified.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of January, 1981, he heard an inner voice telling him to start a diary, saying:

*'You will see what I will do.'*

The diaries, from which these leaves have fallen, trace a spiritual journey searching for answers to the questions Simon posed. Over the years they have borne witness *not only* to the reality of the devastating results of Adam and Eve's disobedience in a garden, *but also* to the results of another Man's obedience in another garden, demonstrating that God is real and death is not the end. Above all, they show God wants a relationship with individuals, who are genuinely seeking him, and confirms he is real in words and actions that are verifiable.

The journey from a lost paradise to paradise regained is the story of human history - a journey each of us will take one way or another.

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 52:7    <sup>2</sup> Luke 4:18-19

# **Chapter One**

*The Journey Begins*



## **The Journey Begins.....***with a crisis and a supernatural encounter*

When Simon and Andrea met as students at St Andrews University, they were sincerely religious, and called themselves Christians, but they were unconverted. Andrea was from a Methodist background; Simon from an Anglican one. They were married in 1965, and moved to Lenzie, just outside Glasgow, a year later, when their eldest daughter was born. Two years later, Andrea gave birth to two more beautiful girls.

In May 1974, Andrea was diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis) and by 1975 was struggling physically. One day two Christian neighbours found her in tears and offered to pray for her. Somewhat reluctantly, she agreed, if it made them feel better! Some weeks later she was sitting in the sitting room listening to a Mahler symphony. In a vision she saw two mediaeval princes, one in white, the other black, jousting for her hand in marriage. She realised she had a choice - either to go with the White Prince (Jesus) or the Black. There and then she gave her heart to Jesus and experienced a peace she had not known before. A year later Andrea gave birth to a baby boy to the delight of the whole family.

In 1980 Andrea was asked to host a prayer group for the Luis Palau Crusade in Glasgow the following year. The group met in September 1980 for the first time. On the 23rd of November, Simon asked for prayer for help to give up smoking forty to fifty cigarettes a day. Three days later a locum dentist asked: '*How long have you had these white patches in your cheeks?*' and indicated it might be a sign of cancer. Christmas dinner was a painful affair, because of the stitches they had used to sew up the inside of his cheeks after taking biopsies.

On Boxing Day 1980 everything fell apart. The telephone rang and it was Simon's mother to say his father was in hospital after an emergency operation, during which he suffered a mild heart attack and they discovered a tumour in his pelvis. Andrea burst into tears and admitted that she couldn't cope with a lively four-year-old son running rings around her because of her MS, and Simon was facing the prospect of cancer from his smoking. In desperation he went into the back room, fell on his knees and cried out:

*'God if you're real, I need you to show up, because this family is going down the tubes.'*

## **Delivered From Smoking.....with a word**

It wasn't an eloquent prayer - just a desperate cry for God to show up. In the middle of January the results of the biopsies came back from the Dental Hospital, Glasgow to say it wasn't cancer. But, in spite of the warning, he was still smoking heavily. Little did he realise that when God speaks, he always shows up to prove he is the LORD.<sup>1</sup>

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January, ten days after hearing the words '*you will see what I will do,*' Simon came out of a class on Christian counselling at St Mary's Parish Church, Kirkintilloch, and as he lit up a cigarette in the dark, cold winter's night, felt a hand on his right shoulder. He turned round to see who it was. There was no one there and he heard the inner voice say:

*'And do not grieve the Holy Spirit with whom you have been sealed.'*<sup>2</sup>

When he woke the next morning, he had no craving for the early morning cigarette he always had before going off to work. Over the following four days it gradually dawned on him he had been delivered from the addiction, that had kept him a prisoner to a sense of shame and failure for years. He still didn't realise, however, this was just the beginning of a journey and, to begin with, it caused him to wonder, when he had actually been converted.

When Simon was fourteen, he had been confirmed in the school chapel by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, and had taken vows to follow Jesus. But three days after hands were laid on his head, he was dismayed to find he was the same fallen adolescent he had been before. Disillusioned, he had concluded there must be another way to God, if he exists at all.

What Simon heard that January night was the first part of the verse in Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians*, in which God says he will seal his children with his Spirit '*for the day of redemption.*' It was just the start of God showing him that he is real and wants a relationship with those, who seek him with all their heart.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> God says this in several places in the Bible: eg Exodus 7:5; Ezekiel 7:27; John 14:20;

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 4:30; <sup>3</sup> Jeremiah 29:13

## **Baptised With Holy Spirit.....and with fire**

In the Gospel of Matthew, John the Baptist announces to the crowds, flocking to be baptised in the River Jordan and wondering if he was God's long-awaited Messiah:

*'I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'*<sup>1</sup>

A month after being delivered from his addiction to cigarettes, Simon went with a Christian friend to a conference on Revival being held in Shawlands Cross Parish Church, Glasgow. The minister, The Reverend Alistair Sandison, was one of a group of evangelical Church of Scotland ministers, who held a monthly *Festival of Faith* in different churches in the city. After a time of worship and some drama sketches Alistair talked about the conditions for revival. He emphasized that every revival over the centuries had been preceded by a hunger for God's Word and an earnest seeking of God in prayer, as a result of a sense of increasing spiritual desperation at sin in the society. He mentioned the Welsh Revival of 1904, when the young preacher Evan Roberts had prayed:

*'O God, bend me!'*

When he said that, Simon found himself bent double in the pew, and found it difficult to breathe. It lasted for perhaps two minutes, and then he was able to sit up and continue taking notes. He thought it was rather strange, but soon became engrossed in what the speaker was saying.

Towards the end of his talk Mr Sandison described the events preceding the revival in Lewis in 1948, under the ministry of The Reverend Duncan Campbell. In particular he told of how a number of deacons had met regularly for prayer in a barn to ask God to pour out His Holy Spirit in revival power. Nothing had happened for several months, until one night a young deacon had stood up and prayed the words of verses three and four of Psalm 24.

*"Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul to vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Matthew 3:11; <sup>2</sup> Psalm 24:3-4

Then the young man had cried:

*'O God, are my hands clean and is my heart pure? Bend me, O God!'*

With these words Simon found himself again bent double in the pew, but this time there was tremendous heat, and his eyes were like a couple of taps with water pouring out of them. This continued for what seemed ages, although it was probably only for four or five minutes.

Shortly afterwards, the meeting came to an end, and they all decamped to the hall for tea. Simon found himself shaking, in need of several cups of sweet black coffee, and wondering what on earth had happened - was it some kind of psychological disorder heralding a nervous breakdown?

The next day he was taken by a Christian friend to see The Reverend David Black, Pastor of Bishopbriggs Christian Fellowship, who was known to move in the gifts of the Spirit. After listening to his account of what had happened, Mr Black said:

*'Well, it sounds to me, Simon, as if the LORD has baptised you with His Holy Spirit. After delivering you from smoking, He is now cleaning you up inside.'*

### The Scientific Proof of Deliverance & Healing Forty Years Later

Stobhill Hospital: Diagnostic Imaging Report Page 1 of 1

Ref. Locn.: GP PRACTICE DoB: [REDACTED]  
Referral: Dr David Gilmore CHI. No.: [REDACTED]  
CRIS No.: [REDACTED] Cur.Ward: G107HAU

VERIFIED Verified By: Dr Gregory O'Neill 23-Sep-2020 1514.

Clinical History :  
cough for 8 weeks

XR Chest :  
The heart is not enlarged. The lungs are clear.

RECEIVED  
- 5 OCT 2020

NORMAL

The proof of this miracle of grace came on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, almost forty years after prayer for deliverance, when the GP reported a chest x-ray showed Simon's lungs were 'Clear' and 'Heart Not Enlarged,' as shown in the report above.<sup>3</sup>

One of Simon's Bible readings for that day was headed: *Are you salty?* and quoted Mark 9:49 *Everyone will be salted with fire!*

<sup>1</sup> TodayGodsFirst October 19, 2020 *Are you salty?*

## Blaise Pascal's *Night of Fire*

Blaise Pascal was a brilliant seventeenth century French scientist and mathematician, famous for inventing the *Pascaline* - a forerunner of the modern computer - and for experiments in physics, resulting in a unit of measurement - the *pascal* - being named after him.<sup>1</sup> When Pascal died, inside the lining of his jacket they discovered a note, referred to as his Memorial, in which he described an experience of being overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit of the Living God. The note read:

*'The year of grace 1654, Monday, 23 November, feast of St. Clement, pope and martyr, and others in the martyrology. Vigil of St. Chrysogonus, martyr, and others. From about half past ten at night until about half past midnight,*

*FIRE!*

*GOD of Abraham, GOD of Isaac, GOD of Jacob not of the philosophers and of the learned.*

*Certitude. Certitude. Feeling. Joy. Peace. GOD of Jesus Christ.*

*My God and your God. Your GOD will be my God.*

*Forgetfulness of the world and of everything, except GOD.*

*He is only found by the ways taught in the Gospel.*

*Grandeur of the human soul.*

*Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you.*

*Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.*

*I have departed from him: They have forsaken me, the fount of living water.*

*My God, will you leave me? Let me not be separated from him forever.*

*This is eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and the one you sent, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ.*

*I left him; I fled him, renounced, crucified.*

*Let me never be separated from him.*

*He is only kept securely by the ways taught in the Gospel:*

*Renunciation, total and sweet.*

*Complete submission to Jesus Christ and to my director.*

*Eternally in joy for a day's exercise on the earth.*

*May I not forget your words. Amen. '<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> <https://sciencing.com/pascal-unit-8714810.html>;

<sup>2</sup> B.Pascal Memorial <https://ccl.org/ccl/pascal/memorial/memorial.i.html>

23:11:1654

\*

there was a fire that night  
that set pascal ablaze -  
the God of abraham, of isaac and of jacob  
in epiphany so overwhelming  
his whole body soul and spirit  
blazed with light and joy  
to show him that the heart  
has reasons of which  
reason of itself is ignorant –  
a blow to egotistical expressions  
of belief in man's ability to reason  
God out of all our logical equations

perhaps his own near-death  
experience in an accident and  
visits to his sister in the convent  
softened his proud heart to open up the door  
and let the Spirit in to settle things -  
no need to bet a wager any more  
upon the possibility of God's existence  
but to now stake everything on Jesus  
as the priceless pearl worth all the treasure  
in the field of human exploration  
he'd been seeking in his physical experiments  
and mathematics all those years

the dice was thrown the matter settled -  
he would wager both his life and death  
on Jesus Christ to gain the crown  
of life eternal and find grace and  
peace in Him alone -  
to know the one true God and Jesus Christ  
whom He had sent whom he had fled  
renounced and crucified  
in years before now found  
in unconditional surrender  
to be lost no more

\*

## **A Promise Of Resurrection.....for a dying man**

Over the course of 1981 Simon's father's cancer gradually progressed and it was clear that he was dying. He and Simon spent long hours on the telephone sharing their thoughts about life in general and their different experiences of God. His father in particular admitted that God had done a sovereign work of grace in his son in a letter, in which he said *'you and Andrea have clearly had a conversion experience.'* This was something he had never said before and came as something of a surprise to Simon, who could not remember ever hearing his father using that sort of language.

Simon grew up as an only child in a Christian family, where his father was an Anglican minister for nearly fifty years, who had met and married his mother out in Singapore, when she was working as a Sister in a T.B. (tuberculosis) hospital run by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) before the Second World War. They had returned to Britain in 1948, where his father had been Vicar of several country parishes in Kent and Hertfordshire. When Simon had shared his experience of deliverance from smoking and baptism in the Spirit, his father confessed that he had no experience of such things himself. His faith was founded squarely on the Word of God, although there were whole areas, where he confessed to being agnostic.

When he heard his father saying this in early January 1982, Simon was worried and consulted an Anglican minister in Lenzie to ask if such questions about faith were common, when we are approaching death. He said it was quite common, but that God is faithful and we can trust him, even when we ourselves cannot hold on. As Simon trudged home through the snow and ice on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, he heard the inner voice again saying:

*'Hosea 6:2.'*

It seemed bizarre because it felt just like the game of charades (*'Think of a Book'*) they had been playing a few nights before. He knew Hosea was one of the Minor Prophets in the Old Testament, but had no idea how many chapters it contained, nor what the verse said. In any case, he was cold and he dismissed the thought until after tea and the usual hustle and bustle of bath-time were over.

When Simon did remember later, his first thought was to look to see if it made any sense before he shared it with Andrea. But immediately, he realised that if it really was from God, it would be obvious, and so the pair of them sat down to read the verse together. They were not prepared for what they read in Hosea verses 1- 2.

*'Come, let us return to the LORD. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence.'*<sup>1</sup>

Verse 2 is a specific promise of resurrection on the third day - a promise especially precious because both Simon and his father realised he was dying. On Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup>, Simon received a phone call from his mother to say his father's situation had deteriorated and he had been admitted to hospital again. Simon travelled down to Lancaster the next day and went in to visit him. The following day he took his mother in to the hospital to visit and, while they were there, his father said at one point:

*'I see a man with his hands out towards me.'*

This was a most uncharacteristic remark, because he always said his faith was based upon the Word of God and not on special experiences. When Simon asked his mother if she would like to visit again that evening, she said she was finding it too difficult. And so Simon found himself going into a strange hospital on his own at night, not knowing how he would cope, if he was there when his father died, but also wanting to be there so he did not die alone.

When he got to the ward, it was clear there was a real battle going on. He approached the bed, took hold of his father's hand and said:

*'It's OK, Dad. I love you, Andrea loves you, the children love you and God loves you.'*

As soon as he said that, the battle seemed to cease, as if his father realised he could let go, and there was a sense of peace. To all appearances his father was unconscious and unable to engage in any conversation. Five minutes later, however, he announced out of the blue:

*'It's marvellous!'*

Simon asked him what was marvellous, but got no reply.

<sup>1</sup> Hosea 6:1-2

Five minutes later Simon found himself repeating the first verse of a Psalm over and over again.

*'Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name.'*<sup>1</sup>

As he repeated the words over and over again - something he had never done before and has not done since - his father appeared to hiccup three times and died in front of him.

The ward was busy with visitors, but eventually a nurse arrived. She drew the screens around the bed, she took his other hand and said:

*'He was a lovely man!'*

Simon looked at her and said:

*'Are you a Christian?'*

'Yes,' she replied. And there in that busy ward of a strange hospital, Simon saw the Father's loving-kindness in meeting his needs as an only son, as he gently took his earthly father to be with him.