# LET THERE BE LIGHT

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FROM EVOLUTIONIST TO CREATIONIST—
HOW ONE MAN LEFT HIS CANADIAN FARM
TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

# ROGER OAKLAND

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To Tyler and Bryce,

My two sons who have gone before me to their eternal heavenly home with Jesus Christ.

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And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. (Genesis 1:3)

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of the darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:6)

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

# PROLOGUE



THROUGHOUT the centuries, countless individuals have experienced dramatic, life-changing transformations that have forever altered the course of their lives. Clearly, the most incredible changes have happened to those who have had an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul was one such individual. As he traveled along the road to Damascus, his thoughts were consumed with ways and means of persecuting men and women who persistently proclaimed that Jesus is God. Suddenly and drastically, Paul's life was thrown into irreversible upheaval.

At midday, he saw a light from Heaven, brighter than the sun. As he fell to the ground blinded, he heard a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

When Saul inquired who was addressing him, he heard these words:

I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. (Acts 26:15-16)

So it was that Saul the Persecutor became Paul the Evangelist. At a later period of his life, Paul gave an account to his young friend Timothy about the amazing grace of God and how it had

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And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. (1 Timothy 1:12-14)

The book which you are about to read is written with one purpose in mind—to reflect the grace and the mercy that God made available to me and to show how the transforming power of the Gospel is relevant and active in our world today. Like Paul, I can now joyously proclaim: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

The Gospel—the "Good News" about Jesus Christ—transformed Paul's life. It has transformed mine. My prayer is that you will allow it to do the very same for you.

When Lighthouse Trails contacted me about the possibility of updating my biography, I knew right away this was something that should be done. However, autobiographies can be self-glorifying, which is not God-glorifying. We are never to elevate ourselves. As John the Baptist said: "I must decrease and He must increase." How then, is it possible to write about your life and the ministry God has given you and not look like you are egocentric?

In Paul's case, as indicated in the above quotation to Timothy, he lived under the shadow of knowing what his life was like before he knew Christ. I guess humility is just a matter of being honest before God and man in recognizing our need for God. So, it is with the grace and mercy of God in mind that I present to you this book.

**–**Roger Oakland



# LET'S CALL HIM TYLER

I looked at Myrna's tear-streaked face and snapped at her, "What's the matter now?" Even as I posed the curt question, I knew I didn't really want to hear her reply.

I glanced at the table and, before she could answer, barked impatiently, "Where's my lunch? You know I don't have time to waste. I've only got a few precious minutes before I get back to the field."

Myrna's drawn, tense face spoke volumes. I had been insensitive once again. But what was new? Our relationship had been deteriorating for a long time.

Besides, it was harvest time, and nothing was important enough to interfere with the task at hand. Any farmer will tell you that there is hardly a moment to spare, even for personal problems, when you head for the harvest field at six in the morning and work until midnight. Myrna needed to get my food before me quickly. Then, and only then, would I listen to her problem.

Ignoring my angry response, she pressed on. "I've just come from the doctor." Her voice broke with emotion. "The x-rays have come back, and it looks as if the baby has some major developmental problems. The doctor is sending me to the city for further tests."

Her words stopped me cold, and we stared at each other blankly.

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Myrna had a degree in nursing and majored in obstetrics. I'd spent nine years of my life studying and teaching biology at the University of Saskatchewan. Because of our backgrounds, we both recognized all too well that this was a serious situation.

"So, what's the problem?" I said, my voice slightly softer. "Tell me in biological terms what the doctor said."

Myrna took a deep breath. Her voice was barely audible. "He thinks the baby is an anencephalic."

For an instant I was frozen. Then a sick, sinking feeling rose in my stomach. This medical term meant that the baby's brain case was not developed, and therefore the baby couldn't survive birth. The infant could hold its own in the womb, with heart beating and limbs moving, but as soon as it was born, it would die.

I managed to keep quiet, realizing how vulnerable Myrna was at that moment. One ill-spoken word would devastate her. I was feeling rather vulnerable myself, numbly shaking my head, trying not to believe what I had just heard.

We already had two sons, Wade, age four, and Bryce, age three, but this child was to be special. This unborn infant was going to bring our collapsing marriage back together. We had planned it that way. But now that hope was disintegrating in the face of the tragic news.



ME WITH WADE AND BRYCE

I turned my head to hide my tears, then took my wife of nine years into my arms. I fumbled for something to say. "Maybe the doctor's wrong. Maybe he's been looking at the wrong x-rays. Maybe the tests were incomplete..."

Even as I spoke, my words rang hollow in my ears. This loss would probably spell death for our life together. I stared at my wife without moving, without blinking.

"They've already made the arrangements for further tests at the University Hospital in Saskatoon," she murmured, her voice trailing away.

While she returned to preparing my lunch, I stared out the window. I saw our two boys playing happily outside in the August heat. Little did they know that their parents' world was collapsing.

It was 1977. Our marital difficulties had been growing worse since I'd quit my job as a biology department assistant at the University of Saskatchewan. That job had involved both the supervision of instructors and teaching responsibilities. I had worked my way up from the bottom rung of the academic ladder, doing all the right things to attain to my position.

Before long, however, I had grown tired of the cynical university world. Power trips and egos seemed to dominate much of life there. True, I was a success at what I did, but as far as I was concerned, there was no future in continuing. It was a job, but I wanted to have money, real money. I just wanted to do what I wanted.

Sadly, during my studies and university teaching job, my marriage with Myrna had begun to unravel. Rather than being completely devoted to my wife, I had become totally devoted to myself. I was the center of my own universe; personal success had become my god.

What a change had taken place since I'd first entered that hallowed school of learning. My God-fearing, Bible-believing parents had instilled in me a system of values based on biblical principles, but after nine years at the university, my worldview had become centered around total trust in human reasoning. To me, Christianity was just a "myth" for "weak-minded people." I had been converted to the philosophy of the sixties: God was dead, and man would bring Utopia to the earth through science and technology. My trust was in humanity rather than in God.