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The Amazing Story of God at Work
in a Group of Dedicated Christian Women

M. BASILEA SCHLINK

Realities
OF FAITH

"This is a book for a prayer group, for it is so faith-inspiring. It makes wonderful reading for family devotions; your children will love the stories. And it is the best of all Mother Basilea's books for acquainting Christians with the spirit and mission of the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary; your life will never be the same after you've had a taste of REALITIES OF FAITH" — Larry Christenson

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OF FAITH
M. BASILEA SCHLINK

The following four chapters are an excerpt from the book

“Realities of Faith”

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FOREWORD

How did this book come about? I had once mentioned to my “daughters” in the Mary Sisterhood that I wished our experiences of answered prayer could be put in writing. It would help us remember God’s marvelous acts in our midst, so we would ever anew give Him thanks and praise and never forget His goodness toward us. My daughters quietly agreed to fulfill this wish of mine with a special birthday gift—and on my birthday presented me with a book in which they had written down many of our experiences of answered prayer.

One day, some time later, a woman from the United States wrote and asked if by any chance we had gathered together in book form some of our experiences of answered prayer. She knew something about us from other writings, and from having visited us in person. In her letter she wrote, “Through such a book would pulse the theme, ‘Praise be to God!’ The stories and incidents telling of the wonderful way God works would be an immeasurable help to the timid and uncertain in faith, as well as for earnest Christians who desire to learn the ways of prayer.”

Her letter brought to mind the birthday present my daughters had given me. The material they had gathered together served as a starting point for this book, in which we wish to tell you of the wonderful works of God—works we have actually experienced up to this very time.

In preparing this book, above all else I thank the Lord: His Name is “Wonderful!” He has allowed us to experience this in real and literal ways. I also want to express thanks to my daughters for the material which they prepared. And my special thanks to Mother M. Martyria, Sister M. Benedikta, and Sister M. Ruth for their help in preparing this book.

Mother M. Basilea Schlink

PREFACE

WE LIVE TODAY in a time like none before. The world is moving rapidly toward a peak of technological development. In all fields man is grasping after the tools of power and control. Yet at the same time we are hurtling toward unimaginable catastrophe. A fear and a horror of that which is coming has, perhaps to some extent unconsciously, laid its grip on mankind. The threat of an atomic war spreads a crippling fear over unnumbered peoples. Mankind stands in the face of the future with no answer. What—or who—will be there to help when catastrophe strikes? Scientists and statesmen have given no answer.

Yet for Christians the dark night of the future is lit by a brilliant star—*the goodness of God the Father*. In the midst of a fear-ridden age, a strangely contrasting word belongs to the Christian: “Rejoice in the Lord always!” Yes, rejoice, here and now at the beginning of the Atomic Age, you who believe in a *living* God who is a *Father* to us in our Lord Jesus. For in our time God, as a true Father, will show us His help and His wonders as never before—if we call out to Him in deepest need, trust Him, and in prayer *actually reckon upon His help*. For He stands ready to help those who believe in His love, who truly reckon upon His Almighty power, who truly reckon that He still works miracles today. In the day of catastrophe He can protect us. Through the horrors of an atomic war He can bear us. When we truly reckon with this almighty God, the Father of love, then in the midst of fear we can know the filling of strength and grace.

We have actually experienced the love and power of God, the God who works miracles. We are a small community in Germany, still quite young. Our community came into being through the experience of the war and the judgment upon our nation, especially through the heavy bombing of our city Darmstadt

in 1944. The reality of God in His holiness—but also in His forgiving love—had started a movement of repentance and revival in the girls' Bible classes which we were holding at that time. Over the following three years this led to the founding of our Mary Sisterhood.

From the very beginning, the Lord let us experience His miracles. He did this by time and again leading us, both inwardly and outwardly, to the end of that which was humanly possible. He taught us to wait patiently upon Him, in the certainty that the more difficult the times and the greater the need, the more magnificently He would demonstrate His love and power. We can never tire of praising and glorifying Him for His mighty acts in our midst.

This book, therefore, does not deal theoretically with the idea of a God who works miracles. It is a factual report of that which the living God has actually done. It tells when and how God answered prayer, how He “led us through the deep waters,” how He saved and protected us, how He intervened in impossible situations, how He changed human decisions and altered situations and relationships in answer to prayer. It not only tells of answered prayer in common, everyday situations, but also shows God's wonderful intervention in times of crisis and all but overwhelming distress—such as the official decrees from high public offices which seemed to close every door on necessary projects for our service in the kingdom of God. Or again, it tells of miracles in our business affairs, which would baffle any normal system of accounting! A whole complex of buildings on the grounds of the Mary Sisterhood stands today as a testimony to how real God's help was in our business affairs, how literally He answered prayer. These buildings cost great sums of money. We had no savings, nor did we receive any subsidy from official sources. They were built and paid for only through prayer and belief in God's help. And so, through the entire book, this theme resounds: We have

a God who works miracles, we have a God who helps! (Psalms 68:20, 72:18).

With a fulness of joy and thanksgiving we share the news: He who trusts God is independent of the shifting tides of politics or economics, or a coming catastrophe. His future depends on God alone, in whose hands are all things, who speaks a word and brings to naught the hurt or misfortune which would have come upon us by human reckoning. Yes, should even crops and water become poisoned, we can literally reckon upon the words of Jesus: “and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them” (Mark 16:18).

Such is the “Song of Songs” which we sing in this book—a life dependent upon the heavenly Father, a life set loose from the many securities of earth, a life bound to God in childlike trust, a life utterly dependent upon prayer.

As I gathered these stories together for the printer, it overwhelmed me anew how safe and certain such a life is—yes, despite all the battles and difficulties of the continuous building projects, the problems of providing daily necessities for many people, and establishing and maintaining various branches of our work with no financial security whatsoever.

These true stories and incidents from our own time confirm that God still stands by the word He spoke thousands of years ago: He who waits upon God will not be put to shame; he who seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness will have all other things added unto him; he who gives will receive again in abundance. In short, these stories tell us that he who wagers everything on God, fully trusting in His love and power, will inherit all things. Even here on earth such a faith will inherit all things—a faith which has learned the discipline of obedience, a faith which presents a thing to God and then is able to relinquish it, offering it wholly to God for Him to work out. In times of need you will experience the lack of no good

thing. You are a child, utterly dependent upon your Father, utterly trusting Him—and everything is indeed added unto you. For God has compassion upon the small and needy. Like a true Father, He takes their need upon Himself.

And so, the theme of this book is indeed, “Praise be to God!” May it give all who read it the courage to become truly God’s *children*, for to such belong the kingdom of heaven. Children believe what they pray for, because they trust their Father. Children have no other thought in their hearts, but that He loves them—and therefore, of course, trains and disciplines them as a true Father—but always sends help and responds to their prayers. And so children truly experience that God is love, pure love, and that He does good to those who wait expectantly upon Him. Children are allowed to experience His miracles. Children here on earth literally experience a foretaste of heaven.

GOD HEARS BELIEVING PRAYER

1. *God Seeks Those Who Will Pray—
A Chapel Out of Nothing!*

IN DARMSTADT, on State Highway 3 between Frankfurt and Heidelberg, stands a small chapel. It looks no different than many other chapels. And yet it is different. Why?

At the side of the driveway leading to the chapel billows a large flag on which are written these words: “Built alone through the help of the Lord, who made heaven and earth, through faith in Jesus Christ.” This chapel, you see, was built in the name of the Lord—who is called “Wonderful!” It was not built in the usual human way of professional contracting and clearly stipulated financing. It was built, rather, according to the ways of faith and prayer. It happened this way:

In May 1949 the Lord gave me the inner guidance that a chapel should be built—a chapel to His glory in which He would be worshiped and adored. What a strange idea! Shouldn’t I first be thinking about some way in which the Mary Sisterhood might obtain a house? At the time, twenty-six Sisters were living in the one-family dwelling of my parents—together with my parents and several renters who had been bombed out of their homes. Every square foot of floor space including the attic was being used for straw sacks and mattresses. It was impossible to accept any new Sisters for sheer lack of space. But the Lord had not said, “Because of your cramped quarters and seemingly impossible situation, I will help you build a Mother House.” No, the talk was not of our house, but of His House. He burned into my heart the ache in His own Heart—that so few truly worshiped and adored Him.

A little later the thought of building a chapel was posed from another quarter. Mother Martyria and I asked for a Scripture-Word as confirmation. We have a collection of about a thousand Bible passages printed on small cards. After a time of prayer, we each drew out a card.* These are the verses which we found written on the cards:

Take heed now, for the Lord has chosen you to
build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it.
(I Chronicles 28:10)

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in
their midst. (Exodus 25:8)

So God had clearly confirmed our commission to build the chapel. But the desire to bring true worship and adoration to the Lord burned but faintly in our Sisterhood. This was painfully apparent at Christmas, 1949. Christmas is surely the time when hearts should be inflamed and tongues loosed to join the shepherds and the wise men in bringing endless adoration to the Child in the manger. But it was a sad Christmas. The Baby Jesus waited in vain for adoration.

Afterward a great grief swept over the Sisters. How apathetic they had been in the presence of the Christ Child's love! And then, out of the ashes of repentance, flamed up the petition, "Let the chapel be built."

With the fire burning in all our hearts, we began to pray in great earnest about the chapel. Our first object of prayer was that the Lord would give us the land where the chapel should be built. We prayed for the most part as a group—prayed that we would get a piece of land, though we had no prospects whatever. The more impossible the situation seemed, the harder we prayed.

*In this and similar ways, Scripture repeatedly gave us the clear guidance as to the path we were to follow—somewhat similar to the practice followed in the Herrnhut Brotherhood, whose *Losungen* (Daily Scripture Selections) are well known.

Then one forenoon the gong rang out through the house. Mother Martyria and I had returned from a walk and our daughters stood around us. The sun streamed into the room, glancing off the large iron key which I was gaily swinging in my hand.

“A key—a key for what?”

One of the girls burst out, “For a piece of land!”

“Yes, our piece of land!” I went on to tell them, “It’s on State Highway 3, by a stretch of wooded land. It’s close to the city, but has meadows and fields near-by. It covers about one and three-quarter acres—and it’s been given to us! The land isn’t under cultivation. We can do some planting. And it already has some fruit trees, and even a garden house. Where did it come from? The father of one of our Sisters put it at our disposal.”

After weeks of petition, the answer had come. The piece of land was there. It seemed that God had waited until we were aflame with the desire to build Him a chapel where He would be worshipped and adored. Our lukewarm hearts had to burn with a desire for His Kingdom before our prayer could be “earnest and effectual.” We stood there together, overcome—overcome to realize that God had hearkened to our petition and guided the heart of that father to give us the land where we could build the chapel. Overjoyed, we broke into song:

Now, thank we all our God,
With heart and hand and voices;
Who wondrous things hath done,
In Whom this world rejoices!

Then I prayed to the Father in heaven. If He had given us this land as a promise that we could build upon it—without money, and without subsidy from any foreseeable source—would He now give us a word from Scripture as confirmation? That would be solid ground under our feet, a promissory note, which we could take

to Him in every need, and which He must redeem. I drew out this verse:

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8).

At this we broke out in a new song of joy and praise. With this Scripture God had truly given us a promise that included everything. It was worth far more than money. Would it be harder for God to bring our chapel and then a Mother House into being, than to create heaven and earth? Surely not! In that moment, the assurance struck deep into our hearts—how easy it must be for such an almighty God, a God who made the heaven and the earth, to bring to completion this building! To us it might seem big, but for Him, how little!

Indeed this encouragement from His word so strengthened us in that hour that we scarcely gave a thought to the state of our treasury—which at that time contained only 30 marks!

With this unforeseen gift of a piece of land, we learned that God hears believing prayer, when it is prayed in earnest.

GOD ANSWERS PERSEVERING PRAYER

2. *Words of Scripture Fulfilled Today*

OUR SISTERHOOD WAS SMALL. We had been in existence barely three years. Most of the Sisters were quite young. We had already encountered opposition from various quarters. We had no influential contacts. We had no money. We had no construction experience. We had no legal advice. We had few friends. Were

these the kind of qualifications that would bring the chapel into existence?

We stood before a mountain of questions, uncertainties and impossibilities. Further, the cofounder and spiritual father of our Sisterhood had passed away several weeks earlier. Would the Father in heaven now prove Himself to be a God of the “widows and orphans?” Would He give His children clear guidance? Would He speak to us, and, if so, how?

One of the first hurdles was the Building Authority. We had to apply for a permit to build on this piece of land. Result: “Under no circumstances can you be issued a permit to build a chapel and living quarters [our Mother House] on this lot. The land is not ready for building. There is no sewage system available to it, and a dug-in drainage system can’t be used in that kind of soil. However, there is a partially bombed out lot within the city limits which is comparable to yours and could be traded. In fact, an old house could probably be included in the trade, with about 38 square feet of living space per Sister.”

True it is, “with God nothing is impossible.” But should Christians yield right away? Should they let themselves be redirected? Should they renounce what they have begun? Should we persevere with the prayer of faith until the decision of the Building Authority be reversed? Or should we offer to trade this land—this land which we had described in the diary of our Sisterhood as “wonderful, wonderful, wonderful?”

Had not God given us this land directly in answer to our prayers? Was it not like an inner certainty in our hearts, “This is to be the land”?

We called upon the Lord. If this inner certainty were from Him, He could confirm it. His Word could enlighten us in this situation. And He gave this word:

O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, . . .
possess thou the west and the south.

(Deuteronomy 33:23 KJV)

We went to the window. “Our” land lay directly to the southwest. The land they had offered to trade us lay in exactly the opposite direction. With this word began an earnest week of prayer among all the Sisters. Our heavenly Father already knew that He would need more than one and three-quarter acres for us. Eventually, He would need ten times that much—the whole of “Canaan.” So here He was not waiting for His children to renounce their plan and be redirected. Here He waited for their faith, which would battle toward a promised goal.

But all our petitions appeared hopeless. The Building Authority was flooded with building applications, and especially with petitions for new sewers. Every request, every application, every telephone call proved in vain. We could not get in to speak with the building director himself. Our petitions got no further than the outside office, where they received the standard reply—we would never get a building permit for this piece of land.

God’s hand lay heavy upon us. We couldn’t go forward, but neither could we go backward. His promises obligated us to stand firm. God wanted to test our faith and train us in persevering prayer. But finally the day came when the Lord devised a plan to answer our prayer. It was the end of March, 1950, when the miraculous happened. Mother Martyria tells it:

“I planned to go to the Building Authority yet another time. I prepared myself with much prayer that morning, praying that God would intervene. And then I drew out this Word of Scripture: ‘(Christ) is the head of all rule and authority’” (Colossians 2:10b). I shared this with the Sisters during morning devotions, and added: “It must be that the Lord is going to put a high city official in my pathway today. And then He can prove that Jesus is the Head and Lord of all authorities. Jesus will turn the heart of this official to see our petition as a request for His Kingdom.

“It was a good 45-minute walk from the old Mother House on Steinberg Way to the office of the Building Authority. As I was walking along Steinberg Way, brakes screeched behind me—a motorcycle almost caused an accident. A car came to a stop beside me. The gentleman at the wheel kindly offered me a ride, as it was still quite a distance into the city. It flashed across my mind, *This man is the ‘high official’ of our city, that the Scripture word spoke about.* And he was, in fact, none other than the mayor! During the five-minute ride I was able to tell him about our request.

“This time, when I came to the office of the building authority, my visit didn’t end with hopeless waiting in the outer office. The Chief Building Director interrupted a meeting on my account—he had already learned of our situation from the mayor. The mayor had more than fulfilled his promise to ‘mention it to the Building Director when the occasion arises.’ He had interrupted his many duties and telephoned at once. And what happened? What had been impossible became suddenly possible. The mountains of difficulties melted like wax before God, the Lord of lords. I could scarcely believe my ears. Then and there the Chief Building Director assured us that we would receive permission to build on the plot of land that had been given to us.

“When I returned to the house, I found a letter from the Building Authority in the mailbox. It had been mailed the day before. It was another official *No*.

“But Christ had changed that *No* into a *Yes*! On this day of rejoicing, He indelibly inscribed upon our hearts that He is indeed ‘the head of all rule and authority.’ In our day also, He has power to change a written *No* of the highest authorities. Such a *No* was meant to test our faith. In the face of it God meant for us not to withdraw in fright, but to hold on in faith. For when His hour came, He acted decisively, and with power.”

GOD WANTS FERVENT PRAYER

3. *Repentance Clears the Way— Even for a Building Permit*

LET US have no wrong conception about miracles. The granting of a petition never follows mechanically, as in a telephone booth when you drop in the second nickel and get a dial tone. To experience miracles means to come in touch with the living and holy God—with the consuming fire which is incompatible with our sins. Since we entered into the realm of this wonderful God through practical discipleship, we discovered that His glorious intervention was almost always preceded by painful judgments and chastisements.

And so it was at this time—before we could actually start with the building of the chapel and Mother House.

“The Lord is near.” This call meant an inner adjustment for us during the interim before the building began. We had very little time to get things accomplished, and every day the postponement of the starting of the building was a very heavy load. Was it not necessary in our time, which already bears the signs of “the last days,” to achieve in days, that which formerly took months and years?

After we received our building permit, we submitted our drawings. Naturally our requests were mired down in the official procedures of the land register, surveying office, and similar official places, together with the requests of many others. Always something was missing or interfering so that we could not get started. During the continuous trips to the authorities, begging for permission to build, some of us began to get discouraged. Our spirits changed from the original eagerness to something like this: “One just has to wait like everyone else; we cannot push others all the time.”

Sister Eulalia, who then had charge of everything

connected with the building, remembers this situation especially well. She relates:

“After a serious discussion with our Mothers, I understood that this was not a matter of human restlessness; it was an inner response of obedience to God’s urgency. However, if we Sisters would stand against God with our reasoning, saying that waiting was the proper course, then how could He intervene?”

“I was driven to deep repentance concerning my resistance. I cried anew to God, confident that His might and help could redeem our hopeless situation. A few hours later—it was July 25, 1950—I stood again in the office where we had gone so often in vain, but now with a different heart, pleading penitently and steadfastly to God for His intervention. However, I experienced the same headshaking as before. ‘It does not go so fast. Half a year is the minimum time to process a building petition. Indeed, it often requires a whole year.’

“Then the door to the inner office opened for just a moment. The supervisor of the building department passed out some papers. The door almost closed again when he added, ‘What does the Sister want?’

“The secretary: ‘The Sister wants to build at all costs.’

“He: ‘Tell the Sister to come in for a moment . . . If you absolutely want to build, I don’t want to stand in the way.’

“This was followed by a few telephone calls, and all at once I actually held the permit in my hand. It was absolutely incomprehensible. In the Mother House there followed an outburst of joy and thanksgiving. How our hearts rejoiced! We praised the God who works miracles. He had only waited until we put our misguided human judgment to death with Christ and made room for the love which furthers and believes in His cause.

“Later on we heard what was said among the build-

ing officials. Such a thing had never happened in Darmstadt as long as the building department had existed, that a building permit was issued without the completed plans being inspected—and so fast!”

Naturally we did not have a financing plan to submit, as is normal with all new construction. We could only witness to what had become a certainty in our hearts: the Lord Himself would take care of the financing. In this case it meant that the Father in heaven would provide the missing \$61,990 for our \$62,000 building. What a spate of unsolved problems we dropped in the lap of those authorities! Unfortunately for this department, the official statutes nowhere provided that the “proven financial source” would be the Father in heaven.

From this time on, however, it must have become an unwritten law. We completed the Mother House and chapel, and dedicated them debt-free. Later we were processing an application to build our “Jesus Workshop.” When it came to the question of financing, they said a little wryly, “We assume you have the same financial backer you had the last time?” They approved the application without hesitation. Indeed, the saying went around. “With a backer like that, how can they go wrong? It will be in the safest hands!”

Had we continued to follow the voice of our human judgment, God never would have been glorified in the eyes of the building authorities and contracting firms. Had we stopped pursuing the goal we believed in, had we not stormed heaven with our prayers, then the living God could not have performed His miracles.

This experience etched deeply into our hearts our responsibility to hang on in faith when a situation seems hopeless. For then the name of the Lord can be glorified before many people.

BELIEVING PRAYER MOVES THE ARM OF GOD

4. *Twelve Baskets Full!*

AUGUST, boiling hot! Our Sisters came back from the rubble dump where they had been permitted by the city authorities to gather stones from the bombed out houses. The sight of them dismayed me. They were not only physically exhausted, but their faces wore a look of sad discouragement. After searching at length, they had found hardly a single whole brick. At the same time I knew that the Sisters at the building site were feverishly waiting for a load of stones, so that they might continue work on the wall. What to do?

I prayed and laid this great need before the Father in heaven. The architect urged us to purchase building stones at once. But we had no money. In spite of much prayer supplication during these days, hardly anything came in. So it became clear to me that God wanted to help us in another way. He wanted to give us the bricks by special ways and means. How He would do this I did not know. But that He would do it, I was certain. For after earnest prayer to the Heavenly Father, asking that He would help His children in this predicament, I received this word of Scripture: “. . . and blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord” (Luke 1:45). In the Spirit I sensed that He had blessed us by beginning to supply us with bricks, and that now He would continue until the building was finished. A great joy welled up in my heart at this promise from His word, and with it a song which I wrote down at that moment and which then became our daily “building song:”

Faith is a royal power divine
That makes the song of victory mine;
Before it, even boulders move,

And open doors I find—

With God nothing is impossible.

The Sisters who had been gathering bricks were also gripped with a new expectancy that God would perform a miracle. They received new strength in prayer, for now they were driven by the faith that can move mountains, according to Jesus' word.

A few days later the feeding of the five thousand came up in our daily Bible reading—the miracle of changing little into much. This inspired a great joy in my heart and a new courage to believe with certainty that we would experience such an increase of building stones. I went out to the building site during the lunch hour. I told the Sisters that I had a great gift, and would unwrap it in front of them. I told them to try to guess what it was. And one of them did, too. It was the word: “. . . and they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over” (Matthew 14:20 KJV). I told them we should apply this in faith to the building stones, and when our chapel was finished there would surely be “baskets full” of stone left over, too. In the present situation, however, this seemed like an impossible thing to the Sisters. Far and wide there seemed to be no building stones to be had. Nevertheless, their faith and courage were much strengthened by this word.

No one could imagine how this “rain of stones,” this multiplying of bricks could take place. Yet God always stands by His word, that nothing is impossible for the prayer of faith. As I came home in the street car, a gentleman “by chance” sat down across from me. He asked me about the Sisters who were working on the building, and about our entire situation. I told him our story. A few days later a call came. The same gentleman introduced himself as an architect. He said that the day before the city administration had met and it was suggested that some burned-out

military barracks be torn down. And suddenly the thought popped into his head: “Give these barracks to the Mary Sisters—they are building and I am sure they can make good use of these stones.” The suggestion was accepted. We were given permission to tear down the barracks, and keep the building materials. We found some especially good cinder blocks for the walls of our chapel, and with the left-overs we were able to cover the floors of all our cellars.

In this testing God let us see that He assuredly answers the daring prayer of faith. But further, that He holds back His word of promise until faith is actually ready to “see” its fulfillment. And so we learned that because God is a great God, He manifests Himself in great and majestic ways. Our hearts must see His greatness, and await great things from Him in prayer.

Since then we sing with greater fervency and certainty:

Faith takes hold of God's sure Word
And moves His mighty arm;
Before Him melt the needs and wants
That could our hearts alarm.
Money may fail and days look black
But boldly faith will answer back:
With God nothing is impossible!

These four chapters are an excerpt from the book
“Realities of Faith”

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"This book does not deal theoretically with the idea of a God who works miracles," says the author. "It is a factual report of that which the living God has done. We have actually experienced the love and power of God, a God who works miracles."—M. Basilea Schlink

A handful of young Christian women in the midst of war-torn Germany with a shining faith made all the brighter against the backdrop of a nation in despair—here is the incredible but true story of Mother Basilea Schlink and the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary. From their fragile start in an attic home, this dynamic ministry for God now reaches across Europe into Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America. This thrilling story is a modern-day demonstration of faith and hope and an inspiring testimony to

Realities **OF FAITH**

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