

Revival & REFORMATION

The Official “United in Prayer” Weekly Blog and Prayer Requests
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Remembering the Reality of God’s Call

By Gerald Klingbeil

[This is part two of a testimony of answered prayer and God’s leading. To read part one, read last week’s United in Prayer blog.]

Fourteen months down the road, I was still waiting for direction from God. I spent hours thinking and praying about my future— alone, with family, and with friends. God seemed to be silent on this issue, and I wondered why. I had nearly finished my civil service and had two weeks of vacation coming my way. It was early October—autumn in Europe— and my best friend Mathias and I had decided to climb and hike in the Swiss Alps. We had little cash, but equipped with two full backpacks, an old tent with iron poles, and plenty of enthusiasm, we hitchhiked our way to St. Moritz in Graubünden, Switzerland. The first week was pure bliss: blue skies, sunny days, cold nights, icy water, and high mountains to scale. We spent the week climbing and hiking at the 3,000-meter (c. 10,000-foot) elevation.

Friday afternoon, as we huffed and puffed up a steep path to the location where we wanted to spend the Sabbath, the weather suddenly changed. Clouds rushed over the mountains; a cold wind reminded us that this was autumn. We reached our mountaintop location, close to a small and shallow lake full of glacier water. Soon our old tent, iron poles pointing to heaven, had been set up and our sleeping bags unrolled. A refreshing and icy dip in the lake, together with some warm soup, and we were ready to welcome the Sabbath. After five intensive days of hiking and climbing, we were ready for a restful Sabbath and soon fell asleep.

I woke up in the middle of the night and in the middle of a horrific storm. Our exposed location was precarious. Rain pounded the small tent. Lightning and thunder chased each other through the sky. Counting the time lapse between lightning flash and thunder, I realized that the thunderstorm was right above us. I was terrified. I could not move in my sleeping bag. For the first time in my admittedly young life I was afraid of dying. I knew that we were close to the mountaintop in a tent with iron poles pointing into the sky—a perfect magnet for a lightning strike. I could imagine what the area would look like after a lightning strike. It was dark. It was pouring—there was nowhere I could hide.

I don’t know how long I lay there motionless. Somehow I could not pray; fear had locked me down. It seemed as though hours passed—most likely it wasn’t more than 15 minutes. Then something inside me clicked—and flood-gates opened. I poured out my heart to the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth and thunderstorms and rain and life and beauty. I considered my life and weighed my thoughts and actions. I confessed all that separated me from the Sustainer of all life. And then it happened. Without much reflection, I cried out to God: “Lord, if it is Your will for me to serve You full-time, please make this storm stop when I say amen.”

Where had this come from? I hadn’t thought about *the* big question for weeks; I had been enjoying my vacation and the exhilarating feeling of climbing a mountain. But there I was—and I closed my prayer with the A word. Amen.

A deep silence engulfed our little tent. Lightning, thunder, and rain stopped as if somebody had turned a light switch. I guess Somebody did! As I lay there in the Swiss Alps at nearly 10,000 feet I began to realize what had happened. I shook my friend to tell him what God had just done for me. The Creator of the universe had heard the desperate cry of one of His children. He was interested in my future; He had given me my marching orders.

We spent a wonderful Sabbath on that mountain. A soft misty fog surrounded our tent, and we spent hours talking and praying together. The next morning we continued our hike. The weather had changed. Winter was arriving, and

snowflakes touched the mighty mountain peaks around us. Nights were colder now. We made it back to civilization and found kind drivers who didn't mind taking home two smelly backpackers.

I was nervous. I highly valued the counsel of my mother. Her perspective mattered—and I knew her opinion about studying for the ministry. How would she react to my mountain experience? What would she say? As I made my way to our third-story apartment and rang the bell I prayed a silent prayer. The door opened, and my mother embraced me excitedly. (Only a mother could have hugged this smelly mountaineer.) “Mama, I need to tell you something. God did something really incredible for me,” I blurted out. My mom hesitated for a brief moment, and then she began speaking, not allowing me to continue. “Gerald,” she said, “I have been praying so much about your future. You have less than two months before you will finish your civil service.” She looked straight at me now: “I don't know why, but it seems as though God has been telling me that you should study for the ministry. You know what I have been telling you, but God seems to have a different plan.”

There it was! My mouth dropped open. I hugged my mom and told her my experience on the mountaintop. We laughed and cried together. The Master of the universe had come through. Realizing the magnitude of the moment, we both knelt down and prayed; a prayer of gratefulness and a prayer of dedication and commitment.

God's marching orders did not resolve all issues before I started studying theology at Seminar Schloss Bogenhofen in Austria 10 months later. Yet in spite of many challenges, I knew where I was going. I knew where I was going when I went to South Africa to finish my degree. I not only got a degree but also met a wonderful life partner there on the campus of Helderberg College. Studies, finances, ministry opportunities—God took care of them all. And every time as I struggled and wondered, in future days about my calling, I received a reminder that I was at the right place—His place, doing His business, extending His kingdom one little step at a time.

God is still calling today. He needs those who are willing to listen to the soft, small voice and are not afraid when He speaks out of the thunder.

Gerald A. Klingbeil still enjoys climbing mountains and loves listening to God's voice. He currently serves as an associate editor of Adventist World and lives with his wife, Chantal, and their three daughters in Silver Spring, Maryland, U.S.A. This testimony was originally published in the July 2013 edition of Adventist World, and is reprinted with permission.

World Church Prayer Requests

November 10 - 17, 2019

- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for the Total Member Involvement event scheduled for Papua New Guinea in May 2020. Please pray for all of the logistical details that are being arranged.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Please pray for church members in Japan who are making plans for outreach at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. Pray that God would even now prepare the hearts of those competing in and attending the games, that they would discover that God has called us to run an even more significant race—not for a gold medal but for an eternal reward.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for ADRA Colombia, and the Adventist churches in Bucaramanga and Medellin, Colombia, as they seek to help Venezuelan refugees who have migrated to escape instability at home. Pray that God would give peace and courage to the many believers trapped in difficult living conditions in Venezuela.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray for our young people who live in countries where there is religious persecution. Pray that they would stand strong for the faith, and that they would be mighty witnesses for God's glory.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray that God will give each one of us an extra measure of His Holy Spirit, and that He will show us how to be more effective witnesses for His glory.
- **PRAYER REQUEST:** Pray that God will pour out an extra measure of the Holy Spirit upon your local church. Pray that He will work in such a way that people will be drawn to the church to see what God is doing.