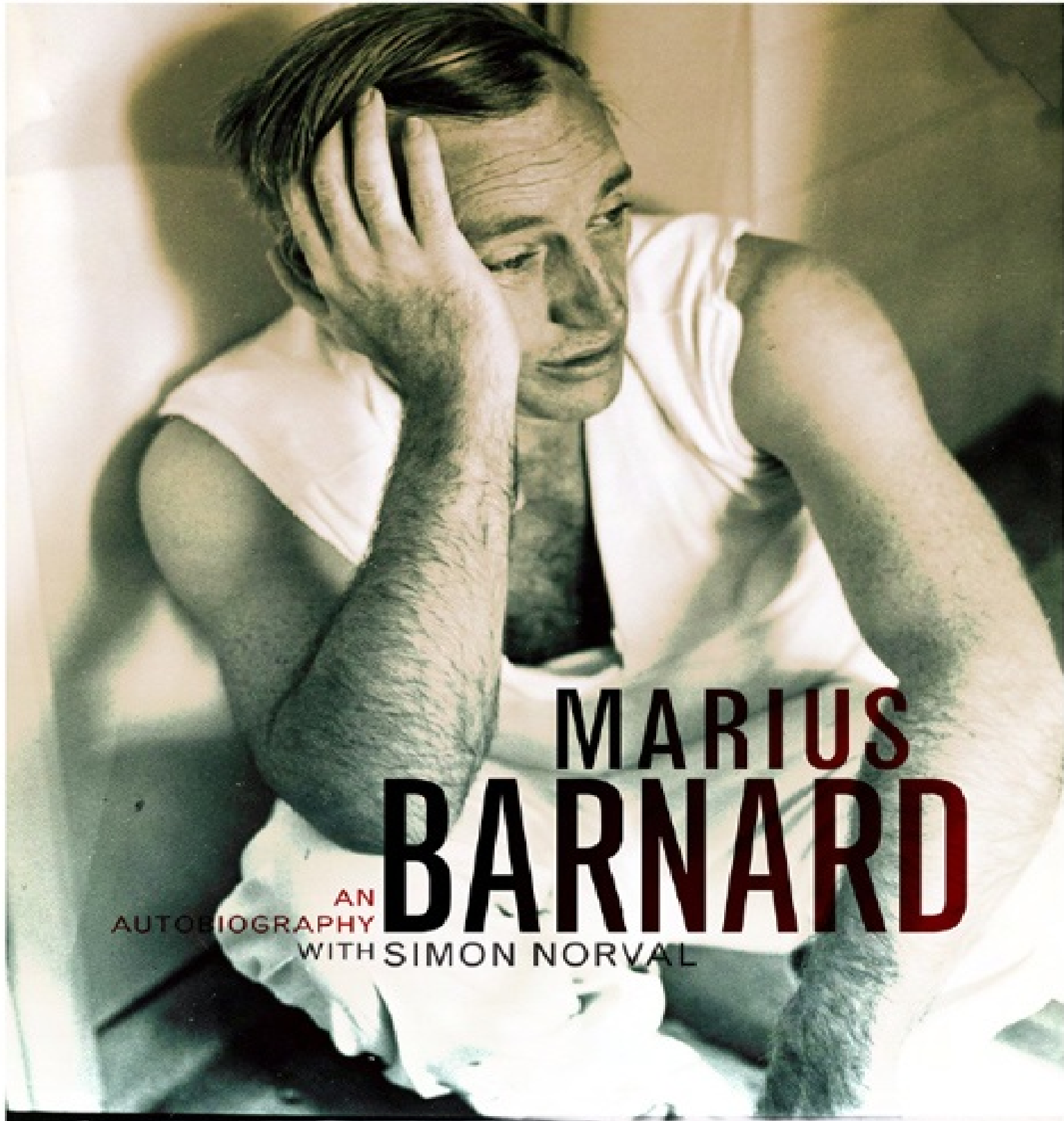


# Defining Moments



MARIUS  
**BARNARD**

AN  
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

WITH SIMON NORVAL

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

**MARIUS BARNARD**

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*To my beloved parents for the enormous sacrifices they made for me,  
and for their unwavering love and devotion;*

---

*to my beloved wife, Inez, who, with her guidance and loyal support,  
has endured me through thick and thin for sixty years;  
and to my brother Chris, without whom this book  
would not have been written*

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# Foreword

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‘SCALPEL!’

This single command sets the tone for the life story of my father, Dr Marius Stephanus Barnard.

Born to missionary parents of modest means in the desolate Karoo town of Beaufort West, he dreamt of seeing the wonders of the world and achieving great things, and these he certainly did.

*Defining Moments* follows his extraordinary life, beginning with his early days in racially divided Beaufort West and his medical studies in Cape Town and following him to Southern Rhodesia, where he practised as a general practitioner and started a family. It documents his surgical research at Cape Town’s Groote Schuur Hospital and in Houston, and tracks his return to South Africa, where he was an integral member of the surgical team, led by his brother Chris, that performed the world’s first human-to-human heart transplant. With candour and humility he describes the preparation, execution and aftermath of this historic operation – and those that followed – and reveals the full impact on his life and his family’s of being thrust suddenly onto the world stage.

As he recounts his triumphs and defeats, opinions and personal anecdotes, he highlights the defining moments of his life from three perspectives: medicine, politics and medical insurance. He tells of the experiences, frustrations and achievements of his life as a cardiac surgeon in communist Romania and Poland, a member of parliament in Cape Town and a critical illness insurance pioneer all over the world, commenting on his increasingly difficult and ultimately untenable relationships with hostile Nationalist Party government officials, hospital authorities and his brother Chris, with whom he had a complex and at times acrimonious relationship.

As the book reveals, he has also played the role of part-time writer, speech giver and raconteur, having been involved in the work of a number of organisations and has established or officiated over several worthy funds.

My father writes with searing honesty and his accounts, peppered with his typical sense of humour, are always underpinned by an unwavering religious faith. The book portrays a man with boundless compassion, relentless energy and dry wit, someone who has long courted controversy and shunned the trappings of fame to fulfil his father’s wish to treat his fellow man with respect, dignity and God-given love.

Today, Dr Marius Barnard, my father, is eighty-three years old. His extraordinary life journey, with all its twists and turns, has been undertaken with determination, dignity and grace.

This is the personal account of a man who is finally at peace with himself and the world, and one that reflects the rich and rewarding legacy of his life’s defining moments.

ADAM HENDRIK BARNARD  
CAPE TOWN  
JANUARY 2011



# Preface

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*'You only live once – but if you do it right, once is enough.'*

– JOE E. LEWIS

I HAVE BEEN MEANING TO WRITE A BOOK FOR MANY YEARS NOW . AT last, it has become a reality and, as I look back, I really have to say, 'Boy, what a life it has been!'

I grew up surrounded by the beauty and wonder of the extraordinary Karoo and, paradoxically, endured intolerance and hardships during my youth in the small Karoo town of Beaufort West.

My years of medical training started at the University of Cape Town's medical school, after which I was engaged in medical research and practice in the United Kingdom, Southern Rhodesia, Cape Town and Houston before returning to Cape Town and later Johannesburg.

My active participation in the historic first human heart transplantation at Groote Schuur Hospital was an extraordinary moment in my life and gave rise to a number of unique opportunities. It paved the way for me to be able to improve cardiac surgery techniques, methods and standards in our country and in other parts of the world. I led highly competent teams of South African medical colleagues to Romania and Poland to pass on the knowledge and experience we had gained, at a time when it was considered politically unthinkable for a South African to enter and operate from behind the Iron Curtain.

My involvement in South African politics was largely circumstantial, but the injustices and pervasive wickedness of apartheid motivated my service as a member of parliament during one of the country's darkest periods.

What grew out of experiences with patients worldwide – and particularly during my time in private practice – was the realisation that a new protection insurance policy was required to provide financial security for patients diagnosed with life-threatening diseases. Eventually the concept of critical illness insurance became a reality, both in South Africa and abroad, and it remains a thriving policy today.

All of these experiences have been professionally and personally challenging, enriching and rewarding. I would like to think that I have been driven by a singular sense of purpose – to better the lives of people and to advance medical knowledge where I was able to do so.

But my greatest gift is to have received great love and direction from my missionary parents. My father set a wonderful example for me and his simple yet powerful statement, 'God is love', is an enduring truth that has been a guiding influence throughout my life.

So, too, have I been blessed with a lifelong marriage to my beloved wife, Inez. She has been the perfect partner, companion and mother to our three children, and has always supported me, through thick and thin.

For all these experiences – my defining moments – I give thanks to the Almighty God, who gave me life and made all things possible.

MARIUS BARNARD

'BERG 'N SEE', HERMANUS

JANUARY 2011

# Acknowledgements

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I WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE THOSE PEOPLE WHO HAVE PROVIDED both material and moral support in the compilation of this book, as well as the sources of information used.

My sincere appreciation is extended to my son, Adam Hendrik, for writing the foreword and for assisting significantly by digging out tracts of information which may otherwise have been forgotten and which subsequently proved to be of such importance to this book.

I also wish to thank my editor, Simon Norval, for his able support and persistence during this busy process.

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to Reverend Dr James Gray, for writing the introduction to [Part I](#) of this book; to Petre Ghidu, a previous patient of mine from Romania, whose letter to me provides an introduction to [Part II](#); to my friend and former colleague Ray Swart, for the introduction to [Part III](#); and to our great friend and critical illness insurance stalwart Marcia Johnson, for the introduction to [Part IV](#).

I would not have been able to write this autobiography without the able and willing assistance of my wife, Inez.

I also wish to thank Zebra Press of Random House Struik, not only for publishing this book but for making all efforts to expedite its release. Similarly, I would like to thank Zebra Press's editorial staff, in particular Beth Housdon, their editor, for her excellent efforts.

I wish to thank Dr Joe de Nobrega, a former medical colleague of mine at Groote Schuur Hospital, for his supporting information on Robert Sobukwe.

My special thanks go to Paul Thesen, one of Groote Schuur Hospital's heart transplantees, who kindly provided details of his operations, and to local television broadcaster e.tv, which interviewed Paul Thesen and myself at the Heart of Cape Town Museum, Groote Schuur Hospital, recently.

I wish to thank Hennie Joubert, curator of the Heart of Cape Town Museum, for providing invaluable information on the history of the heart transplants performed at Groote Schuur Hospital, as well as on Hamilton Naki. In a similar vein, I would like to thank Natasha Bolognesi, a researcher at the Heart of Cape Town Museum, for her permission to include her research material on the first heart-lung machine and immunosuppression drug development and applications.

I would like to thank Lieutenant Colonel Malcolm Fraser for providing me with a copy of *The War Cry*, official organ of the Salvation Army in South Africa, in which the article 'The Barnard Story' appeared on 10 February 1968. This material went a long way in confirming my father's activities while he served in the Salvation Army.

My appreciation is extended to Caroline Bedeker of the Beaufort West Museum for providing recent historical information on my father's church and its parsonage.

In researching the life of Louw Geldenhuys, *Die Afrikaner Familiënaamboek* (1954) and the *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa* (1972) were consulted, and in the description of my grandfather's background, a reference has been made to the titles of two books written by Daler Mathee, namely *Circles in a Forest* and *Fiela's Child*. The book *The Heart of My Child* by Cecil Anghelescu-Samarghitan is also referred to by name only, and Peter Hawthorne's *The Transplanted Heart* is referenced.

I have quoted from the book *Every Second Counts* by Don McRae. I have also referred to two books written by my late brother, Chris: *One Life* and *The Second Life*. For this, I thank him in absentia.

Two articles of mine, 'A Piece of Bread' and 'Soul of His Feet', which appeared in the *Reader's Digest* in February 1975 and December 1976 respectively, have been published in this book verbatim.

I have cited *Karoo*, a book I published with Anthony Johnson, who has kindly granted permission to reproduce some of his photographs in this book. Selected photographs have been reproduced with the kind permission of Don McKenzie, including the image on the front cover.

A selected stanza from the poem 'The Blind Boy' by Colley Cibber has also been included.

I have taken the liberty of including a recent email sent to me by one of my previous patients at the Red Cross Children's Hospital, Cindy le Roux, who coincidentally re-established contact with me during the process of writing this book. I have also incorporated two letters sent to me by a former Romanian medical colleague and long-time friend, Dr Daniel Constantinescu, as they add value and substance to the accounts of my time spent in Romania. Similarly, I have incorporated several excerpts from a manuscript written by a former Romanian medical colleague and friend, Dr Theodor ('Dora') Petrila, which provide considerable insight into the socio-political situation that prevailed in Romania during my visits.

Supporting information relating to critical illness insurance has been very kindly provided by the wonderful insurance friends I made during my roadshows: Alphonso Franco from Canada; Marco Johnson from the United States of America; Peter Dodd from the United Kingdom; Johnny Timpson and Jane Flett from Scotland; and Howard Davy from Australia.

I would like to thank our special friend, Tessa Marks, for reviewing and providing critique of sections of the manuscript.

In verifying certain medical facts, concepts and terminology, the following websites were consulted, for which we make formal acknowledgement: the American Heart Association, Medline Plus, a service of the United States National Library of Medicine Science and the National Institutes of Health; New York State Department of Health; MedicineNet.com; and bestdoctors.com.

In confirming key historical facts regarding South African history, [www.sahistory.org.za](http://www.sahistory.org.za) and [www.southafrica.co.za](http://www.southafrica.co.za) were consulted. When researching historical information concerning the admission of black medical students to the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, I have quoted from the medical faculty board minutes of 12 May 1927, discussed in 'Truth and Reconciliation: A Process of Transformation at the UCT Health Sciences Faculty' published by the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town.

Selected headlines and article excerpts have been quoted from the following local and overseas newspapers and referenced where appropriate: the *Cape Times*, the *Cape Argus*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Sunday Tribune*, the *Star*, the *Zoo Lake Advertiser and Hillbrow News*, the *New York Times*, *Die Vaderland*, the *Guardian*, *The Economist*, the *Chicago News* and the *Scottish Herald*. The newspaper *Die Burger*, the *Citizen*, the *Daily Dispatch*, the *Rand Daily Mail* and *Rapport* are mentioned by title only, and single headlines and article extracts have been quoted from the following international magazines: *Life* magazine and *Money Marketing*. They have been referenced accordingly.

*Die Burger* and *Rapport* have generously granted permission for the reproduction of cartoons.

To the best of my knowledge, this book is an accurate representation of my life and all the events that have taken place in it.

# *Editor's Note*

---

WHEN I WAS FIRST APPROACHED BY MY FRIEND AND FORMER schoolmate Adam Barnard to assist with the compilation of his father's autobiography, I was astonished that it had not already been published.

Initially I was daunted by the prospect, but I was driven by an overwhelming sense of urgency to ensure that the extraordinary life of one of South Africa's great sons was brought into the public domain, both locally and internationally.

Throughout my twelve years at school with Adam, which commenced in 1965, I was aware of his father's activities and achievements. During Adam's sporting events, at which Marius was always an avid supporter, I would observe this larger-than-life figure from afar with great admiration. Adam's classroom orals and playground conversations invariably touched on his father's exploits, travels and triumphs.

Even as an adolescent I was aware of the immensely supportive role played by Adam's mother, Inez. Her devotion as both wife and mother was obvious to me and to anyone else who visited the Barnards' home in Newlands during this period.

In parallel with the above, I was able to monitor Marius's professional achievements closely via the local press. My late father, Ronald, held various editorial positions on the Cape Town daily newspaper, the *Cape Times*. Through the flow of his pen and those of others, the roles of Dr Marius Barnard both as pioneering cardiac surgeon and as anti-apartheid politician were revealed. My awareness of his activities, which are forever etched in my childhood memories, was an integral part of my upbringing.

Marius's invention of critical illness insurance has filled a niche in the worldwide protection insurance industry. Stemming from his acute awareness of and concern for his patients, the development of this essential and successful policy has justifiably bestowed on him international recognition and gratitude.

In addition, he has made significant contributions to medical science and has to his name an array of awards and honours and lists of humanitarian initiatives – too many to cover in one book.

This account chronicles the traits, opinions, beliefs and inherent nature of Marius Barnard, the man. His writings reveal a life of professional dedication and excellence as well as a fearless championing of the oppressed, an unflinching commitment to healing and supporting the sick, and ceaseless dedication to justice and fair play.

Equally evident are his fond memories of his beloved parents; his enduring love for his wife, Inez; his family and his fellow man; and, ultimately, his recognition of and love for his Creator.

SIMON NORVAL  
CAPE TOWN  
JANUARY 2011

*'Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can,  
At all the times you can,  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can.'*

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— JOHN WESLEY, CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
CLERIC AND FOUNDER OF THE  
METHODIST CHURCH

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# Heritage

---

Many South Africans associate Beaufort West with coffee and petrol. En route to the great cities they stop, fill their tanks, grab a cup of coffee and move on. To some, the Karoo town reminds them of the question once contemptuously asked of Jesus Christ and his home village: ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’

Marius Barnard’s fascinating book answers that sneering question. Beaufort West may not be the destination of choice for restless youth, but like so many dusty villages and *dorpe* of the South African *platteland*, it has produced countless people who have made significant contributions to the life of the nation.

Growing up in a conservative Karoo town was never going to be an easy experience for the bright young Marius, who bristled against much of what he witnessed. Much to the chagrin of the status quo the Barnard family did not conform to the expectations of a culturally narrow and politically exclusive community. Marius’s father, Adam, was a fighter who could no more turn a blind eye to injustice than he could deny his God. He loved the coloured people among whom he worked and stood up to those who looked down their noses at them. He was a true shepherd of his despised flock.

In a town like Beaufort West, such stands on behalf of the voiceless had profound consequences, not least for the children of such a fearless man of God. Two things often strike me about Marius: he remains in awe of his beloved father, and he has never quite worked through the sadness he feels for what the Afrikaans establishment of Beaufort West did to his Afrikaner dad.

The Karoo is a unique place. It is a place you have to ‘feel’. It is a vast and empty landscape, but it is filled with presence. It is a silent place, but those with ears to hear may yet discern the ‘still small voice’. Nightly, the Karoo sky stretches both the eye and the imagination to unrealised worlds of endless possibilities.

That is the beauty of the Karoo: it instils a sense of ‘otherness’ in her children. It allows them to dream dreams. The Karoo is a deep and formative place. In the socio-political and ecclesiastical cross-currents of life in Beaufort West, so acutely felt in the Barnard home, a young life was being shaped; a dream was being imparted. In that godly home in the Karoo was born a hunger to see right prevail.

That hunger has remained with Marius throughout his life and, although life has presented him with challenges, what he learnt from his father in that hardy Karoo landscape will anchor his soul for the days of uncertainty that may lie ahead: ‘act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God’ (Micah 6:8).

REVEREND JAMES GRAY  
UNITED CHURCH, HERMANUS  
JANUARY 2011

## *Humble Roots*

THERE IS A PART OF OUR COUNTRY THAT I FIND MORE BEAUTIFUL than any other in South Africa, if not the whole world. Having visited many places during the course of my life, I have to say that not one of them surpasses its exquisite beauty. I am, of course, referring to our famous Garden Route. I do not, with certainty, know where its exact geographical boundaries lie, but if one drives from Cape Town, starts at George and ends at the Storms River Mouth.

It is not possible to describe here all the towns, villages and hidden seaside resorts within this area but Victoria Bay, the Wilderness, Brenton-on-Sea, Knysna, Knoetzie, Plettenberg Bay and Nature Valley are a few. Add to this the spectacular coastline along the Garden Route as well as the majestic inland mountains and forests, and one has scenic wonder and perfection on earth.

This stretch is blessed by God to be the only area in South Africa with both winter and summer rainfall, which has resulted in the vast indigenous forests known as the *Tsitsikamma*, a Khoi word meaning 'place of much water'. The tall, ancient trees of these sprawling forests form an immense canopy of branches, which prevents the sun from shining through and conceals within its dark shadows the diverse habitat below. Many of these trees were living organisms when Christ walked the earth, the most famous of which are the stinkwood, yellowwood and ironwood. I owe a lot to the trees of these forests: with their solid trunks and entwined branches, they were crucial to my forefather's existence, providing them with shelter and work. It was among the trees of the nearby Knysna forest that my grandparents lived and raised their eight children, the youngest of whom was my father, Adam Hendrikus Barnard.

During my father's youth, small deer such as duikers and tawny bushbuck lived in the forests, as well as wild pigs aplenty, which often destroyed the vegetable gardens. My father, whom I affectionately referred to as my *Deddie*, related to me how the mighty African elephant roamed in abundance then. He told me many a story of his narrow escapes, including how he was stormed by angry cows protecting their young.

Tragically, owing to man's greed, these giants were destroyed, shot for their ivory and the damage they wrought on properties. Some people claim that there are three or four elephants still roaming the forest, but the most reliable evidence suggests that there is only one ancient cow remaining. So much for civilisation.

The trees did not fare better: they were indiscriminately logged to supply wood to shore up the roofs of mines, to provide telephone poles and sleepers for railway lines, and for crafting into elegant furniture. Sculpted from these ancient trees and treated with oils and varnish, such furniture remains in great demand today and is, in many instances, priceless. In large areas where there was forest, there now exist vast plantations of pine and bluegum trees, sourced from as far afield as Australia.

In my father's time, the dense, lush foliage and high branches provided the haunt and breeding grounds of a variety of birdlife, including the famed Knysna loerie, a large, beautiful green bird with a short bill and brilliant red wings. This bird, as well as the emerald cuckoo, the narina trogon, the Knysna and olive woodpecker, the chorister robin and many other feathered species, still inhabits the forest today.

I never knew my paternal grandparents, Johannes Wilhelm and Anna Dorothea Elizabeth Marthinus Barnard, both of whom were born in 1836. I do, however, know that my grandmother's maiden name

was also Barnard. She and my grandfather must have been related in some way; possibly they were cousins. It was joked in those days that if you walked down a street in Knysna during this period and you knocked into a pole or a tree, you had to say, 'Sorry, Mr Barnard!' The woodcutters of Knysna formed a small community and intermarriage was common practice.

My father described to me his family's daily struggle to eke out an existence. My grandfather and his kin were part of a group of people who were uneducated but hard-working and God-fearing. They were known as *poor whites*. Incidentally, we never spoke about *poor blacks*, as it was accepted that the vast majority of black people were poor. As a youngster, I never let on that I had originated from such stock when people referred to 'poor whites' in derogatory terms. In those days I was ashamed of my forefathers; today I am extremely proud when I hear talk about 'poor whites'. I never hesitate to tell anyone who wants to hear that my grandfather and his family were classified as such.

Although I was told little about my grandfather, I was at least informed that he was powerful and well-built, as one could expect from a man who swung an axe for most of his life. Felling the trees and the working with the wood was labour intensive, requiring great precision. It has been said that the craftsmanship of these men surpassed anything produced by machine. My grandfather had very little education and could barely read, but he and my grandmother lived by the Bible and, when he was discovered dead outside his humble dwelling early one morning, the Holy Scriptures were lying open next to him.

I recently discovered from the South African Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries that a permit had to be obtained during those times to cut down stinkwood and yellowwood trees. The permit cost £4 and, in addition, a span of oxen was required to remove the logs from the dense forest. There were, of course, no roads leading in and out of the forest in those days. It is amazing that so many people who signed those contracts were Barnards. Although I have examined a list of permit holders dating back to 1899, I have not been able to recognise or identify the names of relatives or my grandfather. I am certain that they were among those permit holders, however.

One of South Africa's best-known authors, Dalene Matthee, wrote several books, including *Circles in a Forest* and *Fiela's Child*, about the lives and daily struggles of the woodcutters and craftsmen who existed in this forest. It is perhaps appropriate that the main characters in *Circles in a Forest* were also Barnards. In fact, if I had the ability, I could have written those stories myself, because the characters and places were just as my father described them to me.

The inhabitants of the forest had little chance of a better future. The agents who bought the wood that they logged were far better educated and exploited them unmercifully. Owing to the dishonest system used by the buyers, my grandfather's people were always in debt and had to sell timber at a low price to buy provisions and other necessities.

Adam Hendrikus, my father, first saw the light of day on 20 March 1875. At the time of his birth his parents were already approaching forty. They died around the early 1900s, never having left the forest dwelling. Of the rest of his family I have little knowledge, although I am aware that four of my father's cousins died while fighting in the First World War, at Flanders and Delville Wood. I do recall meeting an uncle of mine, Oom Koos, who worked at some time or another as a 'tug pilot' in the Knysna harbour. He wasn't a tug pilot in the conventional sense of the term: his particular brand of vessel was a rowing boat. He would leave the harbour, row out to sea and guide the steamships over the shallow sandbars, through the narrow, dangerous channel between the famous Knysna Heads and into the safety of the placid lagoon.

Being a difficult port to enter, a harbour pilot was employed in those days to assist large vessels. The best-known harbour pilot during this period was, of course, John Benn, a shipwright from Moss Bay who came to Knysna in 1868 to direct the salvage of the *Musquash*, which had been wrecked at the Heads. Although the ship broke up before he could rescue her, Benn decided to stay in Knysna.



when he was offered a commission to build a new ship, the *Rover*, for a local merchant.<sup>1</sup>

~~I have never established whether Oom Koos and John Benn worked together. I doubt this was the case as Benn would have been considerably older than my uncle, whose services were possibly motivated by Benn's retirement or death.~~

In describing his birthplace, my father always spoke of an area just north of Knysna called *Ou Plaas*. If one passes the turn-off to the Heads today, one ascends a small incline on the N2, which passes through Knysna, and this particular area is situated on the immediate left-hand side of the road. My father must have spent most, if not all, of his youth there.

While my parents were still alive, we visited my father's relatives in the small shacks that my grandparents and their fellow forest dwellers had previously occupied. The small, two-roomed corrugated-iron dwellings would have offered little comfort. With ten or more people crowded in such confined spaces, the rigours of living on top of one another and the lack of privacy must have been barely tolerable. The dwellings were, therefore, home for only a few reasons: they provided shelter against the elements and protection against hostile intruders and wild animals. There was, of course, no running water or electricity, and my memories of such visits are limited to the cramped, harsh conditions and dense smoke.

But living in that area could not have been without some fun. My father told me how he frequently sighted ghosts while walking back to *Ou Plaas* after a night on the town, and of how he ran away when he saw these apparitions. As a boy, I would dream about these ghoulish figures throughout the night; I could not believe that my father – a man of God – would ever lie to me. Now, of course, I know it was simply his way of amusing us. Whether he actually ever saw them, I will never know.

I never really knew the reason for our visits, but I have an idea. When my father heard *boeremusiek* he would start dancing and, much to my mother's disgust, demonstrate how one danced the *sitoe*, the *vastrap* and the *Hotnot's riel*.<sup>2</sup> It was below my mother's dignity ever to join him. My deduction from my father's antics was that the old man had been a bit of a 'lad about town' in his youth.

I remember well how my father pointed out to me the factories in which he had worked when growing up. Thesen's wood factory was located on the island bearing the same name along the Knysna lagoon, while another factory, Parkes, was situated near to the town's main street. I will always remember the special, unique smell of the wood and the noise made by the machines while cutting and shaping spade and pick handles. The crafting and smoothing of the wood was a sight that amazed me and my Deddie would show me where he had stood and what he had made, telling me of the long hours that he had spent on his feet.

At home, my father was an expert when wood had to be chopped for the hungry *Esse* stove. I loved watching him, but he always admonished me by saying that it was better to watch a dog urinating against the trunk of a tree than a man chopping wood with an axe. I didn't see the connection then, nor do I see it now, but it was his way of warning me of the danger of flying woodchips and protecting me from losing an eye.

My father told me many stories about the ships that entered the harbour to deliver all kinds of provisions and then, loaded with all the precious wood, sailed to far-off, unknown destinations. I met many interesting people during these years in Knysna, and it is no wonder that all three of my aunts were married to seamen. The men must have found either their beauty, or the beauty of Knysna itself, too much to resist, and jumped ship. I can still remember their surnames: Stopforth, from Scotland; Iverson, from Norway; and Thomas, from Wales. We actually stayed with all of them for short periods of time on different occasions. Thomas in particular was notorious in my family for living up to the reputation of a sailor: he was often inebriated and apparently could tell wild and woolly stories about his life on the high seas and the experiences he had gained all over the world.

When staying in Knysna we never failed to visit the picturesque Heads. Perched on the rocks, m

father would explain the difficulty that boats experienced when entering the lagoon through the dangerous channel, describing Oom Koos and his rowing boat and the shipwrecks that litter the treacherous coastline.

But my father's greatest joy was when he and I fished from the wharf on Thesen Island or at the Heads. Even then, fish were scarce – or possibly we were just poor fishermen – as I cannot remember catching a thing. We had better luck when we went onto the lagoon by boat at night. Under a full moon, with the tranquil waters lapping at the sides of the small vessel, we would cast our nets into the clear night air and pull in a fish or two.

My father's other great love was the forest and he could identify all the trees and vegetation. Between Knysna and Plettenberg Bay was a small area through which one could walk in the dense indigenous Outeniqua Forest. Today, its name is still the *Garden of Eden*. As a child raised on readings from the Bible, I could imagine the biblical Adam walking there and hiding from God in the many concealed places. Today, this area and its surroundings represents to me a small piece of heaven on earth.

In December 1957, I visited my father and mother while they were living in Knysna. On the day prior to our departure, I took my parents, my wife, Inez, and our two daughters to the Keurboom River, near to Nature's Valley. We had a picnic in the Garden of Eden and stopped at the Heads for a short while. My father's cancerous body could hardly manage the walk up the tricky steps, but he remained steadfast and so brave, beaming with pleasure at his beloved surroundings and at being able to enjoy one last opportunity with his family.

That was the last time I saw my Deddie. He died the following year, on 18 July 1958, aged eighty-two, four days after his grandson – who carries his grandfather's name, Adam Hendrik – was born. I think the knowledge that his name would live on through my son is the last thing he experienced on earth.

\* \* \*

From an early age my father had aspirations of bettering himself and seeing the outside world. I believe it was then that he felt the need to serve his God. So he turned his back on his youthful woodcutter existence to seek God's teachings. The image of my father walking out of the Knysna forest, and the profound significance of that decision in his life, remains one of my own defining moments.

On 10 January 1899, my father entered the Salvation Army ranks in the small Karoo town of Oudtshoorn as Cadet Adam Hendrikus Barnard. Six months later, on 15 June 1899, he was promoted to the rank of Probationary Lieutenant.

It is fascinating, but not surprising, that my father joined the Salvation Army, a Christian organisation founded by one-time Methodist minister William Booth and his wife, Catherine. The decision of my father's was to have the greatest influence on his spiritual life, and it is fitting that during the final months of my mother's life she was lovingly nursed in the William Booth Memorial Hospital in the suburb of Gardens, in Cape Town, where she subsequently died.

But my father wasn't to stay in Oudtshoorn long: with his promotion came a posting to the Claremont Corps in Cape Town. Around this time, British and Imperial troops were already massing in Cape Town in anticipation of the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, which finally began on 11 October 1899. It was a bloody war that raged for nearly three years, and one that left emotional scars and enduring antagonism between the Afrikaner and the colonial British.

Despite such upheavals, my father's career continued to develop. More appointments followed, both from within the Corps and socially. After lying extremely ill with typhoid fever in East London for

two months, he recovered in time to serve at the Kimberley Soldiers' Home while guns were still booming between Kimberley and Mafeking.<sup>3</sup>

On 5 July 1900, my father was promoted to the fully commissioned field rank of Lieutenant. Before her departure to the relieved town of Mafeking, one of his female fellow officers was quoted as saying that my father 'was a real friend of the children', as he was enthusiastic about anything concerning children's work. His devotion to his four sons would later be proof of this.

My father's first appearance 'in print' was, perhaps, the *War Cry* issue of 25 August 1900, in which he provided an obituary notice for a soldier of Kimberley. '[T]he death angel,' he wrote, 'has taken from us our dear comrade ...' And in Kimberley he is recorded as having testified that he was 'saved at an early age, and that grace had kept him'. I forever thank God that this was indeed the case.

In 1902, my father was promoted to the rank of Captain and put in charge of the Kenilworth Corps in Cape Town. During this turbulent period he would regularly visit Bulawayo in what was then Southern Rhodesia, travelling through British lines to reach the town, which was several hundred miles away. With martial law still in force, travelling was restricted. However, he found himself in possession of a military rail permit that allowed him a certain degree of freedom of movement. I can remember my father showing me the 'passes' that the British army issued to him allowing his transit through the border posts. On completion of such visits, he would return to Cape Town, passing through Mafeking and Kimberley. My father loved telling me about his experiences of working in Bulawayo. When he visited us while I was practising as a general practitioner (GP) in what was then Salisbury, he would recall his memories and express how he loved that particular part of the world.

From the time of his taking charge at the Kenilworth Corps, enthusiastic reports of his activities were heard and, during November of the same year, he was leading Salvation Army open-air meetings in the suburb of Mowbray. In this very area, on a Sunday morning sixty-five years later, his two doctor sons would make medical history.

A month later, in December, ill health saw him boarded and he was compelled to take leave of the Salvation Army. This may well have been due to the after-effects of his previously contracted typhoid fever. In any event, my father was never able to resume the extremely exacting and exhausting life of a Salvation Army officer.

A valedictory speech from the Kenilworth Corps speaks of the high esteem in which my father was held:

... we are sorry to say that it was the farewell of Captain Barnard who is leaving on furlough<sup>4</sup> through his health failing him. The farewell meeting was a very touching one as the comrades, one and all, testified to the fact of how God has made him a means of blessing to many a soul, and which we will miss the Captain very much, the prayers of all the comrades and of many Christian friends in Kenilworth follow him and, one and all, pray that God may spare him and use him to the salvation of many a precious soul.<sup>5</sup>

This He did, as the following chapters testify.

## *My Father, the Missionary*

IN 1903, AFTER FIVE YEARS WITH THE SALVATION ARMY, MY twenty-seven-year-old father set out to resume his formal education at the Missionary Institute in the Western Cape town of Wellington.

He travelled via Knysna to Cape Town by tramp steamer. Departing in very rough seas, the ship navigated with great caution through the treacherous Heads. It waited patiently between the large swells, keeping well clear of the countercurrents that threatened to drag the ship and its passengers onto the jagged rocks. Then, at just the right moment, it headed at best speed over the bar and out into the open ocean. Once well clear of land, it headed west. But the mighty Cape rollers buffeted the small vessel mercilessly and my father was horribly seasick all the way to his destination.

I never established how my father's studies were funded, but I suspect it was by a certain Dominicus Louw from the Little Karoo town of Robertson, a man who apparently played a significant role in the formative years of his life. Many of the early pupils of the Missionary Institute had received no formal education; they were admitted simply because they exhibited a need to serve God. This need, recognised by those in charge, ensured that no applicant was ever turned away.

Those who were still in the throes of boyhood were sent to the public school to further their education. Some, however, were already grown men and it was deemed unfair to expect them to study and learn among young boys. The education of the older men was, therefore, undertaken by the Institute.

My father realised that his education was limited, but he would take no credit even for the little he'd already received. Years later he related to me how, on his arrival, they had asked him where he would like to start. He simply stated: 'From the beginning.' It seems that he took just one year to complete his schooling to the required level. To embark on his tertiary education at the Institute he was then required to take a year out to prepare for an admission exam. His subjects included Dutch, English, Greek, general history, the history of theology and school administration. Although I struggled with Greek, he persisted with it. He duly wrote the exam the following year and gained entrance to the Missionary Institute.

The next four years were spent focusing on theological studies, on completion of which the graduates had a choice: they could become either teachers or missionaries.

While at the Institute, my father had been required to undertake short periods of community service during the holiday breaks. The intention of this was that the pupils of the Institute would apply practically the theory they had learnt in their classrooms, so they were sent to various outlying stations of the church.

During a practical session that took place in the small town of Joubertina in the Eastern Cape, my father met a young woman named Maria Elizabeth de Swardt. She was a teacher in the town as well as the organist of the church in which he'd been sent to work. Elizabeth was ten years younger than he was, a tall, good-looking woman with brown eyes and striking features. Her parents were well-to-do farmers from the Blanco area near George, a town not very far from Knysna. A courtship in the manner typical of the time soon followed: circumspect, restrained and discreet.

My father's spirits must have soared as the pair became better acquainted. Aside from their disparate upbringings, they had much in common. Maria too had trained in Wellington, at the sister school of the Missionary Institute – the Huguenot Seminary for Women – and, like my father, she was

deeply religious. A well-educated woman, she was also well versed in the skills required of the wife of a future missionary. As tends to happen, they fell in love.

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But prejudice knows no bounds. For my parents, it was a union literally made in heaven, but, for Maria de Swardt's family, their future son-in-law was not quite what they had in mind. For a start, my father's background was frowned upon. Their daughter was, after all, from far superior stock than that of Adam Hendrikus Barnard. How, they wondered, could a man of such humble credentials provide the kind of future they desired for their daughter? One can only imagine the murmurs of concern and the chatter of prejudiced minds. But my father was not one to give up when he had set his mind on something, nor was his sweetheart easily dissuaded. In 1908, after a short courtship, they became husband and wife.

My parents' marriage took place at the Dutch Reformed Church in Robertson. The reason they chose this town in which to get married remains something of a mystery to me. The *dominee* who married them, Dominee Louw, is also an elusive figure in my inherited memory of events. I know he was important to my father, who saw him as a surrogate parent, I think. My mother's parents and family felt that *sy het benede haarself getrou* – she married beneath her station in life. Coincidentally years later I gained the impression that my wife's parents felt the same way about me.

Two years later, my father graduated from the Missionary Institute at the relatively advanced age of thirty-two and decided to become a missionary. My parents moved to the Eastern Cape town of Graaff-Reinet, where my father served as an assistant missionary in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church.<sup>1</sup> He started on a stipend of £4 a month – a pittance, even in those days. The life of a missionary, though spiritually rewarding, would never see him earn the kind of money that would make him financially comfortable. Although my father would certainly find himself earning more than his own father had, our family always struggled to make ends meet. On his meagre monthly income, he had to support a wife and, some months later, a son – my eldest brother Johannes.

The birth of Johannes brought with it an unfortunate casualty: Johannes's twin, a girl, was stillborn. The death of an infant in our family was to be followed by another – my brother Abraham. Throughout their lives, the deaths of these two children remained a source of enduring sorrow for my parents.

## *Beaufort West*

IN 1911, MY FATHER WAS CALLED TO MINISTER TO THE COLOURED community of the town of Beaufort West in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church. He was now a fully fledged missionary with his own congregation. Although it didn't occur to me during my youth, I realise now that by the time my father arrived in Beaufort West it was a town already divided.

The last few decades have seen numerous divided cities and countries: Berlin, until recently, was separated into East and West by the Iron Curtain; North and South Korea remain divided by ideological hatred; and the sabrerattling by communist China towards Taiwan is ongoing. But Beaufort West, in the heart of the Karoo, was already divided when the people of Berlin were loyal standing together, their right arms diagonally raised with flattened hands. Beaufort West was split long before the people of Korea experienced the wrath of communism.

The town of my childhood was carved in two not only by the Gamka River, but also along racial lines. From the time my father entered its precincts, he took a stand against everything he perceived to be an injustice suffered by those in his own congregation and others. Poor was poor, regardless of skin colour. To my father, these were the people who required the most help: they needed comfort and they needed ministry, and he believed it was an essential part of his calling to provide such services. The objective of the Salvation Army was to minister without discrimination, and this principle was forever his guide. My father's uncompromising stand against racial prejudice meant, however, that he soon found himself subjected to much hostility and tireless attempts from certain sectors of the community to have him banished from his church.

\* \* \*

The Gamka River is like the Karoo itself: dry and dusty, with minimal vegetation along its banks. When good rains fall in the catchment area, the river – for a day or two – becomes an angry torrent of brown and muddy water rushing headlong towards the sea many miles away.

On one occasion during my childhood, after a cloudburst in the mountains, the river, no longer able to contain its gushing flood, burst its banks and came pouring through the town. Strangely, no rain had fallen in Beaufort West itself. I remember the incident well because it happened on a Sunday morning. Whereas motor cars a few hours earlier had raised clouds of dust behind them, Donkin Street – the main street of the town – soon became a fast-flowing river. Petrol drums, outside lavatory buckets and all other forms of flotsam and jetsam were swept down the streets in the flood. With most of my father's congregation unable to get to church, he had a rare morning off.

But aside from this occasion and other isolated incidents like it, the Gamka was dry and of little practical use, except to serve as a haven for the town's wine and brandy drinkers. They would buy their bottles of courage from a hotel situated on the river's edge and then hide from a disapproving society – as well as an alert police force – under the few trees and bushes that grew along the banks of the river.

The geographical divide created by the river was mirrored in the town's racial divisions. To the east of the Gamka was an area occupied by the privileged white society. It boasted the main business centre, the magistrates' court and the post office. To the north, east and south of this important hub



stretched Beaufort West suburbia, consisting predominantly of large houses with spacious grounds.

The west, by contrast, was occupied by the poorer, less privileged coloured people, living in the uniformly distributed flat-roofed square houses set on bare, postage-stamp-sized plots. The location was a bleak place with no electricity. The streets were uneven, potholed and without pavements, and no trees adorned their edges.

But on both sides of the Gamka River there were pockets of land occupied by members of the other group. A large section of the western side's northern territory was taken over by the South African Railways. The railway station was situated just west of the Gamka, and further to the west were the houses built by the Railways for its white workers. Uninteresting dwellings on small plots, the exteriors of these houses were all coated black with soot from the passing coal-burning locomotives.

In the *Bo-Dorp* – the 'Upper Town' – of the eastern zone, and spread along the banks of the outflow of the dam, the better-educated coloureds clung desperately to small areas, where they lived in better homes and under better conditions than those in the location. These people – the Wepenaars, the Standers, the Morkels and the Van der Rosses, among others – were well respected by the whites. This was perhaps due to the fact that they could often claim more 'white blood' in their veins than some of those living in the 'pure-white' areas. This is not an insignificant truth: the degree of 'whiteness' or 'blackness' in one's blood has always been a factor in South Africa, and it was no less so in Beaufort West in those days. An interesting facet of our history is that some of these coloured people succeeded in having themselves reclassified as whites in later years, during the apartheid era.

I remember my father telling me of one such instance during a holiday spent in Cape Town after he had completed Standard 6 (today's Grade 8). One Sunday morning, my father returned from church smiling to himself. I asked him what had happened, and he told me that he had gone to the *Groote Kerk* (also called the *Mother Church* of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa) in Cape Town, Adderley Street.<sup>1</sup> To his surprise, he observed that the man who had been his head deacon at the coloured mission church in Beaufort West was now the head *ouderling* – the head elder, a necessarily 'white' position – of this exclusively white church!

But the houses of the better-off coloured people in Beaufort West were not the only 'intrusions' into the white area. Situated in the best part of the town were two other isolated 'invasions'. The first was the coloured primary school in Bird Street, opposite the back of the Dutch Reformed Church. The second was the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and its parsonage. They were situated in the middle of Donkin Street, sandwiched between the town hall and Beaufort West's largest shop, Mortimer and Hill (later to become the Merino Co-Op), and opposite the magistrates' court and post office.

Although the Dutch Reformed Mission Church and its parsonage occupied a central position in the town, they could not compare in size or magnificence to the Dutch Reformed Church and its parsonage. Situated a block further north, this white church was on the same side of Donkin Street as the coloured church. But here the similarity ended.

The Mother Church was built in the shape of the holy cross. It seated at least a hundred more people than the narrow, rectangular coloured church and it possessed a magnificent steeple that rose high above the town. The steeple is an important landmark of many small towns in South Africa: it can be seen from great distances and, for travellers, it is a recognisable indicator that they are soon to come upon some form of civilisation. In our town, the steeple served other functions. To the citizens, it was a constant reminder that they should remain wise to the laws of their God. It was also the place that housed the only functioning public clock in the town. Dutifully, the clock struck the quarter-hour, the half-hour and the hour, day and night, summer, autumn, winter and spring. If the clock ran slow, all of Beaufort West proceeded at a pedestrian pace; if it ran fast, the town distinctively speeded up its life and activities.

On Sundays, the bells of the Dutch Reformed Church pealed for so long and so loudly that the

drowned out those of its competitors, the Anglican and Catholic churches. The Mother Church offices were separated from the church itself and a large hall was used for social gatherings, bazaars, concerts and, on occasion, political events. These buildings were all surrounded by spacious grounds that contained one or two monuments in memory of past well-respected and loved *dominees*.

Compared to its white counterpart, the mission church was an also-ran. It was significantly smaller and had no steeple, no clock or bells, and no church hall. Not even its organ, which my mother played every Sunday, was able to rise to the same volume as that of the Mother Church's organ during the singing of psalms and hymns to the glory of God.

In the same grounds as my father's church, connected to the vestry as if by an umbilical cord, was the parsonage. Number 77 Donkin Street was a roomy house with large bedrooms and living rooms set in a sizeable garden that stretched from Donkin Street to Bird Street at the back. Our family lived here rent-free, and it was the house in which I, as well as two of my brothers, was born.

With the house came a car: a black Model T Ford. As a teenager in the 1940s I was ashamed to be seen in it because by then it was already of vintage classification. It was also the car in which I later learnt to drive. There were no automatic gears to glide smoothly into place; instead, foot pedals had to be manoeuvred to change gears. A lever on the side of the steering wheel provided for the accelerator and, on the other side, there was one for the choke.

Starting this car was quite an experience. One first had to advance the choke and then, with the car in neutral, run to its front to turn the crank handle as fast as one could. Once combustion was achieved, the engine would splutter to life and one had to then rush back and jump into the car to advance the accelerator and retard the choke. The crank handle was, unfortunately, very unforgiving. If the engine didn't start while one was building up compression, its handle would swing back rapidly and forcefully. If a hand or arm was in the way, a fracture or severe bruising could very easily result.

I wonder how many people today can, like me, claim that not only did my early driving experience take place in a Model T Ford, but I actually obtained my driver's licence in it. My driving test was supervised by the local hairdresser, who didn't have his own car nor could he drive. The test took the form of his telling me that I had been spotted driving the car around the town. When I admitted to this he gave me the licence. It remains valid today – nearly seventy years later.

Although my father possessed a licence, he didn't drive the Model T. He said that he never felt confident behind the wheel, which was hardly surprising, since he'd had several hair-raising experiences. In the last of his near-accidents, he turned off Donkin Street to enter the garage of the parsonage. Something went drastically wrong, however, and he found himself steering the car up the steps and through the front doors of the church. This was the first and only time that he entered his church by car.

After that experience, my father never again touched the steering wheel of a car. The Model T was placed in the hands of a driver, Jan ver Hoog. My father's assistant and sometime friend Oom Frederik Bastiaanse, however, made the most use of the vehicle, as it was his duty to transport my father to outlying farms when he conducted his services there.

\* \* \*

My father was referred to as *meneer* by the members of his church and as *eerwaarde* by those whites who respected him. But he was also known as *die Hotnot predikant* – 'the Hotnot minister' – by those whites who disapproved of him. The term *Hotnot* was, and indeed remains, a derogatory term used by some whites when speaking of a member of the coloured population.

The *eerwaarde* thus ministered to the coloured community and the *dominee* ministered to the white, largely Afrikaans, community. Whereas the position of *eerwaarde* was considered inferior to that



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