

A LEAP OF FAITH ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Ray Langan and his wife Jean have faced many tests to their Christian faith during their life. Perhaps one of the biggest tests was when Ray awoke one morning in 1968 feeling certain the Lord wanted them to go to New Zealand. He had no other explanation as to why he felt this way.

“I just knew the Lord wanted us to go,” explained Ray.

“I wasn’t as keen on going,” admitted Jean, who had more than one reservation about uprooting her family to start a new life. They had three young children to consider. “No way did I want to go. I prayed about it and told God if He wanted us to go there, He was going to have to give me some kind of sign.”

Later she accidentally dropped her Bible and when she picked it up she read the pages where it had opened.

“It was the part where it says a man should leave his family and cleave to his spouse,” Jean explained. “So I knew God was telling me ‘yes’, He wanted us to go to New Zealand.”

Of course the trip wasn’t as easy as wanting and doing. There was a lot to prepare for such a trip. A trip that wasn’t going to be just a vacation, because they knew they couldn’t afford that. They had to go there to live.

“But everything fell together,” said Jean, who tells how she had begun writing to several pen friends in New Zealand to learn more about the country. “I was actually starting to get excited about the trip.”

They hit a dead end as they applied for their visas.

“It was an uphill battle to get there,” explained Ray. “In order to get our visas we had to have a permanent residence and a job lined up for once we got there.”

Ray continued to explain that they had plenty of unskilled labor in New Zealand; that what they needed were professionals. However, his own work history had been eclectic.

Even though he was unable to find a job in New Zealand, Ray explained that God kept pushing. They finally learned that an alternative to finding a job, was to put one year of wages in a bank in New Zealand.

“So we sold our house,” said Ray. “The first people who came to see it, bought it.”

“After that everything went like clockwork,” added Jean, telling how two of her pen friends had even gone so far as to find them a home to rent, paid the first month rent, furnished it and even stocked their future home with food. “When we arrived at the airport in New Zealand our new family was waiting for us.”

The Langans have many stories to share about their time in New Zealand, but when asked why they think God wanted them to go there, Jean’s response is swift.

“To find Steven,” she explained, of the son they adopted while living there.

They had been working at an orphanage at the time, living with, and responsible for, nineteen youth. Jean explains they had decided they wanted to have another child.

“We knew how to do that,” she explained with her effervescent good humor. “We realized when we didn’t conceive that God must have had another plan.”

They thought about adoption and even went to the receiving center of the welfare department to meet some of the children.

“I decided if God had another plan for me, he’d have to show me,” Jean explained, telling

how He did just that. One child had stood out from the others. They were told he'd had a rough time and been pushed from foster home to foster home.

"He sat there rocking back and forth, mumbling," Jean said with a wistful look on her face. "But when he looked up and saw me he said, 'Mommy,' then ran over and gave me a hug. That was when I knew beyond a doubt Steven was going to be our's."

While in New Zealand the Langans touched the lives of many people, even helping bring several closer to the Lord. Perhaps no story was more dramatic however than the one where a friend came to their door with her family, proclaiming she was going to kill her husband.

"Ray was sick in bed with a migraine headache that morning," Jean explained with animation. "But I knew I was going to need his help. So, I grabbed a bottle of cooking oil, because that was all we had, and I took it into the bedroom and dumped on his head, saying 'In the name of the Lord, you are well'. Then I told him I needed him in the kitchen."

"When I got out to the kitchen I was better," added Ray. "A bit oily, but I was feeling better."

The two prayed with the family.

"I went to the door and opened it," said Jean with conviction. "And we told the demon possessing the woman to get out of her."

The Langans explained that by the time the other family left, there was a peace about the woman they knew had to have come from the Lord.

The Langans agree, that finding their son, Steven, and helping several people find the Lord was only part of their reason for being in New Zealand. Even Ray's purchase of his first motorcycle might have been part. But there were even more personal reasons.

"The whole experience taught us to be totally dependant on God," explains Ray.

"I believe it was to prepare us for what was ahead," Jean adds.

Besides being injured from one motorcycle accident, Ray had another where he sustained serious, even life-threatening injuries. Twenty-five years ago Jean also faced her own health trauma when she had breast cancer and was told she might lose the use of her right hand because of the procedure done to cure her of the disease.

Today she not only maintains the use of her hand, she uses it to continue with God's work, making needle point handouts used by their CMA Chapter, the Agape Riders, as part of their ministry.

"God even provides the money to make them," Jean said with a smile. "I haven't had to buy any supplies ever."

In spite of their interesting life, the Langans take no credit for anything they do. They give all credit to the Lord.