

Miraculous!



The **KEN HAM** and
Answers in Genesis
Story





I would like to dedicate **Miraculous**
to five very special people.

First, to my sweetheart Mally, without whom I could never have done what the Lord called me to do through Answers in Genesis, the Creation Museum, and Ark Encounter. Only God knows the sacrifice she has made over the years to enable this ministry to be where it is today. Her children and grandchildren comment on how selfless she is, and how she has such a generous and godly spirit. It would take a whole book (or many books) to write the account of what she has done over the years to support me in this ministry. As of the writing of this book, we are in our 53rd year of marriage and love each other more than ever. Her godly devotion to me and her family is evident to all. For her, it's always been God first, others second, and herself last.

Secondly, to two of the most outstanding, godly men you could meet, Mark Looy and Mike Zovath, who God brought into this ministry to make up the three founders He anointed to build an organization dedicated to honoring God's Son and proclaiming the truth of God's Word and the gospel to the world. Since the founding of the ministry in December 1993, the three of us have stayed the course together as we have climbed mountain tops and descended into valleys in this journey of faith that God has used to impact millions.

Thirdly, to two very special people God brought into our lives: Don Landis, who became our founding chairman, and the late Dan Manthei, who became a founding board member. They deserve much honor for the dedication and sacrifice they have given to the ministry since its inception.

being devoted to one
another in brotherly
love, giving preference
to one another in honor.
(Romans 12:10 LSB)

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Introduction

Some might say that the Answers in Genesis ministry began fifty years ago with “fire in the bones” of an Aussie science teacher named Ken Ham who loved God’s Word. And that would be true, but it’s certainly not the whole story.

The whole story includes parents who taught their children to stand on God’s Word, a wife who sacrificially loves Jesus, a myriad of men and women who were burdened to be part of proclaiming the message of biblical

authority, and a faithful God who sovereignly orchestrated everything that made Answers in Genesis, the Creation Museum, and the Ark Encounter possible.

As you read the story of this unique ministry and watch it grow from humble roots in Australia to what it is today, there’s a theme you’ll see highlighted again and again: God’s miraculous provision of resources and people at just the right moments. Even though there are certainly humans involved in the story—thousands of individual



humans in big and small ways—it's really the account of God's faithfulness. We could never have done this without His miraculous hand. And that's why I've always said AiG is not my ministry—it's God's ministry. He's the one who sovereignly built it, and He's the one who gets all the glory for what He's done through it.

It's a story about faith and the many lessons learned along the way in this exciting journey of mountains and valleys, encountering giants and Red Sea

events, and much more in this ongoing spiritual war raging around us.

So, as you read, be encouraged that we have a God who isn't distant or deaf to our cries for help. Rather, we have a God who is actively and sovereignly working and who answers the prayers of His people at just the right time and in ways we never could have imagined. It's all truly miraculous.

*To God be the glory!
Great things He has done!*

A map of Western Australia is positioned on the right side of the image. The map is a torn piece of paper with a textured, brownish-green surface, showing the coastline and some internal features. It is set against a background of concentric, wavy lines in shades of orange and brown, resembling a wood grain. The text "Western Australia" is printed in white on the map.

Western
Australia

1951 – 1963

1 | LIFE DOWN UNDER

Northern
Territory

Mount Isa

Cairns

Sarina

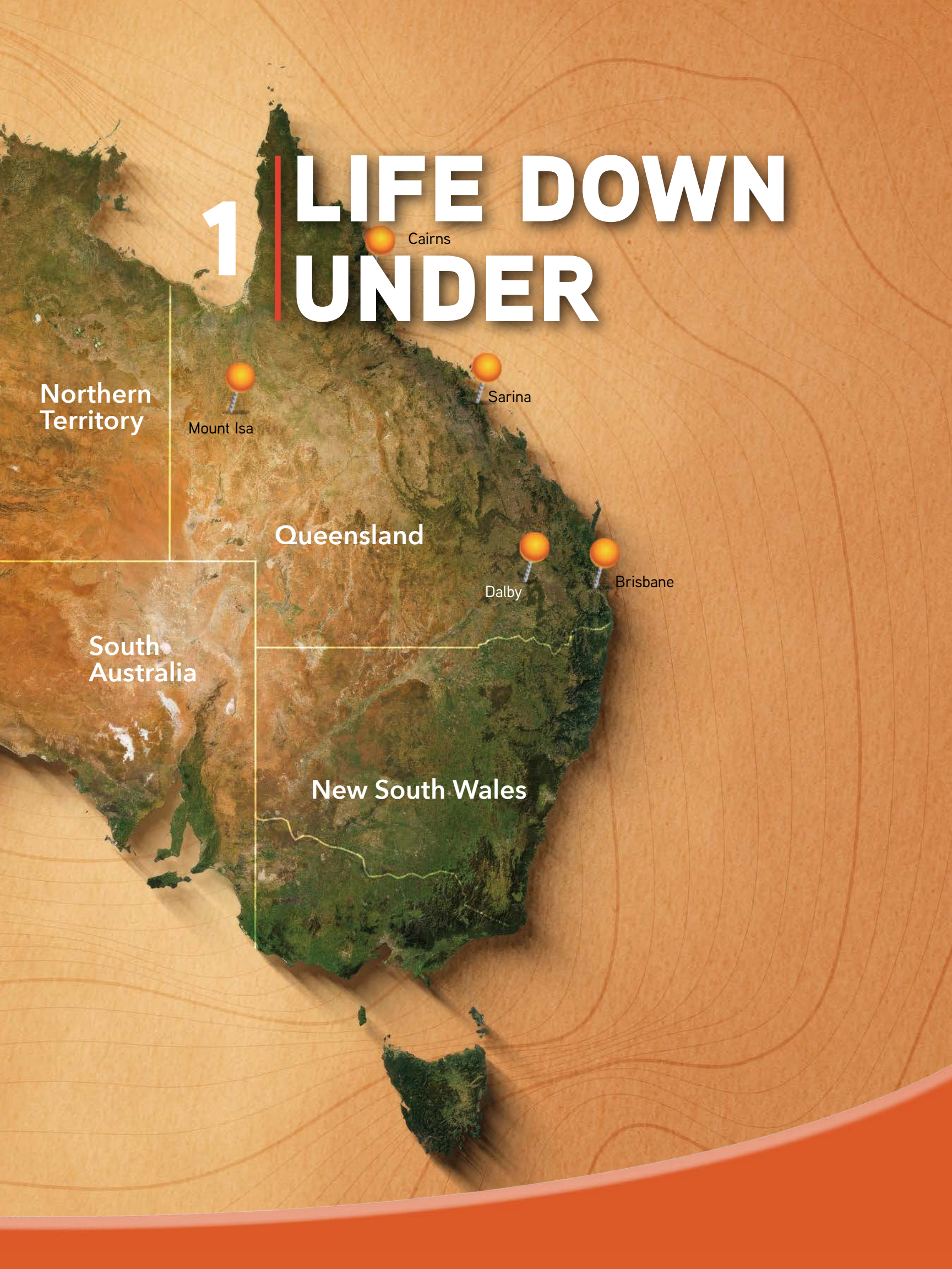
Queensland

Dalby

Brisbane

South
Australia

New South Wales



AUSTRALIA IS NOT LIKE AMERICA

Embarrassingly, I found this out shortly after we arrived in America and I kindly offered to nurse someone's fussy baby. The awkward silence informed me I'd made a faux pas. Turns out, nurse means breastfeed a baby in America, not hold a baby like it does in Australia! I certainly never made that mistake again!

But it's not just the wildly varying weather, strange food (why do Americans have such an obsession with chicken?), and differing vocabulary (no one here says slacko, whinger, or bludger, all classic Aussie insults – oh that's another difference. We Aussies show affection by insulting each other!). The differences extend to our nation's histories. Australia was never a Christianized nation like America. We don't have the rich

"Probably only about 1% of 20 million people in Australia are truly born again." *Ken Ham Daily*, p. 280

history of God's Word and Christian principles Down Under like in the U.S. While there are churches and Christians (and nativity scenes used to be displayed in shopping malls at Christmas), Christians have never had the influence they hold here. There is a need for missionaries to preach the gospel far and wide to reach those who've never heard the good news.



MUM AND DAD ON A MISSION

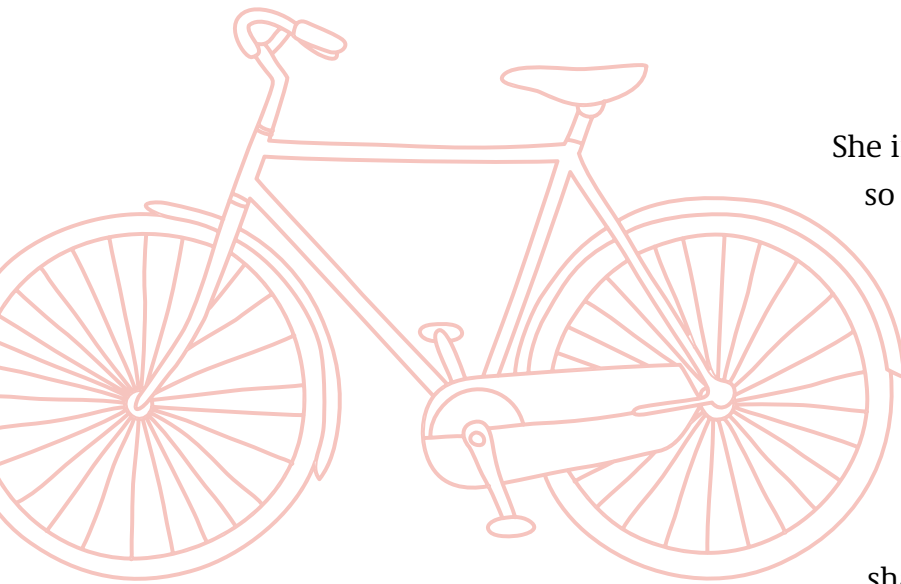
My parents had a heart for the calling of these missionaries. When I was a child growing up in Queensland, a large state in northeastern Australia, Open Air Campaigners (a mission organization founded in Australia) would host evangelistic outreaches, to reach both churched and unchurched children. My mum and dad supported these missionaries financially and opened their home to host them so they could run programs in our local area.

My father, a primary (Americans would say elementary) public school principal, worked hard at his job, striving to please the Lord. His hard work meant he was promoted every three years, so we moved from place to place across Queensland. No matter where we moved, my parents would immediately try to find a church that preached God's Word faithfully and, if there was no Sunday school for the local kids, would get involved starting one.

A few years before she went home to be with the Lord, I interviewed my mother and asked her to give the details of a story she had told me as a young boy when visiting her parents in North Queensland. As a teenager, my mum was burdened for the lost and decided to start a Sunday school to reach the local kids. About 30 kids, from little ones right up to teenagers, showed up the first Sunday at the country hall a mile from her house. Mum wasn't expecting such a response, but several parents stepped up to teach the older ones and she taught the little ones from God's Word.

Norma Elizabet Ham
1928 — 2019





But there were two girls who lived two miles from the hall and were too little to come by themselves. My mother was so burdened for them to join she put a cushion on her bicycle handlebars, pedaled up to their house, put both little girls on her bike, and delivered them to Sunday school. Afterwards, she'd load them up again and cycle them back before going home herself – a five-mile round trip every week! Years later, in her 80's, she met those girls again, now as elderly women. One was still following the Lord because she had been so greatly impacted by those old Sunday school days. The other said she'd gotten away from the Lord but was coming back.

She impacted me (and all her children) in so many other ways too. I can still hear my mother's voice telling me, "God first, others next, yourself last," and "It's only what's done for Jesus that lasts." She not only drummed that into us, but both she and Dad lived by it. They never had much in the way of material goods, but they shared whatever they had. Sometimes when missionaries would stay with us, the missionaries wouldn't have enough money to travel to their next destination. My mother would go through her purse and my father's pockets, looking for what they could give them to help those missionaries continue impacting children in other places. They constantly sacrificed for the sake of the gospel.

It wasn't just money; they were generous with everything. If they replaced a piece of furniture and the old one still had use, they could never sell it. They would always find someone to bless with it (to this day my wife, Mally, and I can never bring ourselves to sell anything of ours – we always give it away, just like my parents).

As a young child, when I first heard Mum tell me about this Sunday school she had started and her weekly trek with those two young girls, I remember thinking, "If my mother did that to reach people with the message of Jesus, what can I do to reach people?" It's something I've never forgotten. What an impact just that one action by my mother had on me and my life.

A PRINCIPLED MAN

My father was a serious man, firm in his convictions. Serving as the school principal meant he was always my principal, and he was well-known for his strictness. Never wanting to be accused of favoritism toward his own children, he was even stricter with us at school, disciplining us more than the other children. I would come home and complain to mum who would chide dad, but it didn't work. Next time I misbehaved, I'd again feel the sharp sting of a "wait-a-while" vine cane on my hand! (Yes, in those days the principal would hunt the tropical rainforest for the perfect cane for firmly, but kindly, administering discipline when needed.)

Dad was openly a Christian at

work, holding his pupils to Christian standards of morality. Everyone knew his convictions and he took to heart – and quoted often – Colossians 3:23: "and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (KJV). He had high academic standards for the children in his care and high personal standards

because he knew whatever a Christian does should be done with excellence so as not to reproach the name of Christ.

He loved God's Word. I'll never forget the way his voice thundered as he quoted "thus saith the Lord," "have ye not read," or "it is written." He loved verses that emphasized the authority of God's Word.



Mervyn Ham, in front of his home at Kelceda St., Sunnybank Hills, Queensland.

One of my favorite photos is him sitting in his chair with his Bible open on his lap as he taught those who gathered at our home for a Bible study. Before my father passed away in 1995, my brother Robert asked why he loved God's Word so much. "My father died when I was 16 years old," he said. "I was without an earthly father, so I turned to the words of my heavenly Father."

God's Word says it is strength to your bones, and he saturated himself in it and found God's strength.

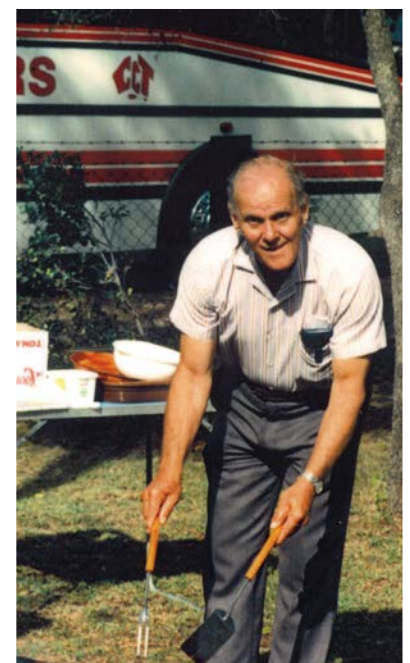
And he didn't just love God's Word – he knew it and he loved to teach it. Another of my favorite pictures is him on vacation, sitting in a lawn chair outside our

Caravan camper, again with an open Bible in his lap. He was always reading and studying God's Word and knew it well. Romans 8:28 says, "and we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good" (LSB). It doesn't say all things are good – my grandfather dying when his son was just a teenager was not good. But God used that tragedy to drive my father to study and love God's Word and his love for Scripture impacted me (and my siblings) greatly.

As we moved around, Dad was always asked to serve as an elder or deacon once we were settled in the church. He and mum were always serving, starting Sunday schools, teaching Bible studies, my Mum cooking up a storm for a church event. Dad was also a lay preacher, often filling the pulpit when the pastor was away. He, like his father and grandfather, was a teacher and there was no better subject for him to teach on than God's Word (you can see where I get it from!). And he hated compromise; he would never knowingly compromise the Word of God. He loved God's Word too much.

I still smile when I remember that, whenever Dad preached in church, someone would inevitably come up afterward and ask if he could be the full-time Bible teacher. He was such a great communicator and had an ability to explain things so everyone could understand.

Mervyn Ham camping near the Tweed River in New South Wales studying his Bible – one of my favorite photos of him.



Mervyn doing some grilling for a group of Christian tourists.

Mervyn Ham
conducting a Bible
study at a home in
Brisbane, Australia.



But his love for God's Word at one stage handed him the nickname "Merv the Stirrer" (his name was Mervyn). In my five decades of ministry, I've noticed when controversy arises, many people just want to smooth it over, not ruffle any feathers, and keep everyone happy. Not my father; he loved God's Word far too much to allow liberal theology to creep into the church.

I remember him leading my mum and all us children, Bible in hand, up to the front of the church after a sermon to challenge the pastor on a point of teaching that whiffed of liberalism. Whether it was evolution added to Genesis, a devotional the church distributed that taught a local flood, or naturalistic explanations for miracles – one pastor taught that the feeding of the five thousand happened because one little boy decided to share, which made everyone else open their lunches and share too – my father would open God's Word and stand up to false teaching.

He had what I call a "Nehemiah anger" about compromise on God's Word. In the

Old Testament, the prophet Nehemiah grew righteously angry when he saw things that were very wrong, and he immediately set out to make them right. It's the kind of anger that says, "Why won't someone do something about this?" Dad would step up and do something – and that often got him into trouble, but he never minded. God's Word and its authority were more important.

I inherited that same "Nehemiah anger" from my father. As a science teacher touring children through secular museums, I would wonder, "Why must all museums teach evolution? Why won't someone build a creation museum?" I was righteously angry to see God's creation being used to promote naturalism (atheism) – and I did something about it! People sometimes get frustrated with me (as they did with my father) because I like to jump on problems straight away. But if I have the ability to fix something, why not do it straight away? I've always had that sense of urgency (like my father had) in dealing with issues.

SOME CHURCH HISTORY



In many parts of America, even small towns will have five or six church choices. In the rural towns I grew up in, there were often only one or two options, but my father would choose the church with the most faithful preaching, regardless of denomination. So, I was brought up Presbyterian-Methodist-Baptist-Brethren. I now see this as a gift from the Lord.

In Australia when I was growing up, denominational lines were not strong. With so few Christians and churches, denominations had to work together, or nothing got done. I found Aussie believers were much more accustomed to working with those of differing theological views.

Not so in America. In the U.S., you must be careful, as denominations are taken much more seriously. By growing up in a mix of denominations, God was preparing me for the unique, non-denominational work of running Answers in Genesis. Because I know how to “walk the denominational line” without getting into trouble, I’ve spoken at all sorts of American churches and been able to help the AiG ministry stay non-denominational. Knowing where to draw the lines between black-and-white “thus saith the Lord” and more gray denominational differences is hard, but my philosophy has always been, “Is this disagreement arising from differing interpretations of the text itself, or is it from bringing something from outside Scripture into your interpretation?” In other words, “Is it a biblical authority issue?” And that’s how we draw the line; it always goes back to the authority of the Bible and God’s Word vs. man’s word! And if the disagreement starts with man’s word, we’ll stand on God’s clear word.

Small seaside township of Sarina Beach on the Coral Sea, Queensland, Australia.



More Faithfulness

Queensland is a large state with miles of gorgeous sunny coastline, lush tropical forests, arid deserts, and acres of farmland, many growing that state's primary crop export: tall bushy sugar cane.

On one such farm, at the foot of the highest mountain in Queensland, Mt. Bartle Frere (a mountain I summited as a boy – the view from 5,285 feet is stunning), lived my mother's parents, in an old-fashioned farmhouse up on stilts. Nanna loved God and had a fervor for proclaiming His truth. During one holiday visit, we were visiting on the veranda when two Jehovah's Witnesses stopped by. They began sharing their message, but my 70-something-year-old Nanna pulled out her Bible and began preaching at them. They gave up on their message and started walking down the steps, but Nanna just went after them. I can still see her today, Bible in the air, preaching at them as they ran for their lives!



Mt. Bartle Frere



Grandad, David, Ken, Nanna, Norma, Robert, Rosemary, Beverley – taken at Mt. Bartle Frere, North Queensland.

When we were visiting my grandparents, my Nanna would often take my hand, squeeze it tight, and give me a big smile. When she let go, there would be some money in my hand. My grandparents never had much materially and lived very simply. Nanna didn't even own a washing machine – she cleaned clothes in a big copper drum filled with water that was heated with a fire underneath it, and she stirred the clothes with a large stick. But she loved giving us something so we could buy some lollies (candy) or put it toward something we wanted. I've never forgotten that generosity and love she showed, and to this day whenever we give our grandchildren something I feel my Nanna squeezing my hand with that special gift in it.

When Sunday came round, my Nanna and Grandfather would dress up for church in what they called their Sunday best. I remember asking my mother why we had to get dressed up for church. Her reply (which I'm sure she was taught by her mother) went something like, "If you went to visit the Queen of England you would put on your very best clothes. We are going to specially worship the King of kings, so we should not dress any less than we would for visiting the Queen."

My grandfather was a quieter, gentle man. He and Nanna were from Belfast, Northern Ireland. He had worked in the shipyards back when that city was known for its massive shipbuilding industry. It was there that the *Titanic* was built (but my grandfather never worked on that doomed ocean liner). They immigrated Down Under because of strife between Northern Ireland and Ireland at the time, eventually ending up on a sugarcane farm at the foot of Mt. Bartle Frere.

Grandfather played the fiddle and would play and sing Irish ditties to us Ham kids. I still remember one he taught me:

That's as far as I want to go, oh as far as I want to go, I found a button in my stew and a pair of braces too. Said he, "oh won't you finish it?" I said "no, I don't want to find the braces, that's as far as I want to go."



Ken, Rosemary, and Beverley

In his eighties, when he was losing his eyesight, I remember him telling me how much he was ready to go and be with the Lord. He had a faith in Christ that sustained him as his body failed and death drew near. That faith, of Nanna and Granddad, was passed on to my mother, who, together with Dad, passed it down to me, and it now lives in each of our five children who are passing it to their children who are now passing it on to their children! It's a legacy of faithfulness over six generations.

A Special Plan

During these holiday trips to the sugar cane farm, my Nanna would tell me, "God's got a special plan for you, Kenneth. You're going to be a preacher one day." She told me that so many times. As a young child, and later as a teenager, I was often very sick, dealing with serious health issues, and needed to be hospitalized more than once, beginning with an operation to remove my chronically re-infected tonsils and adenoids at a very young age.

When we lived in a very small isolated country town in the north, I once again needed a hospital, but the river had completely flooded the roads. During the rainy season in North Queensland I have experienced it raining an inch or two (25–50 millimeters) in just an hour. We experienced many floods, and I can remember my father driving a small car on flooded roads. But this one time the floods were so bad, my parents had to find someone with a rowboat who was willing to row me across a swollen river to get me to the hospital. After events like these, my mother would echo my Nanna, "God has something special for you, Kenneth. You're going to be a preacher someday."



Nanna

Oddly enough, this pronouncement kept happening. When I was about 12 years old, a family friend having tea with my mother shared, "You know, Norma, God's got a special plan for Ken. He's going to do something special one day." At the Presbyterian church we attended in Brisbane, I would be asked to read the Bible before the congregation sometimes and one specific lady would tell my parents, "Every time Kenneth gets up to read the Bible, God impresses on me that he's got something special for him." I heard this so many times from different people as I was growing up it almost seemed like God was telling me to get ready for something He had planned for my life.

During one of the children's outreach programs my parents helped organize in one of Australia's wettest towns, Innisfail, when I was about 10, I was burdened to commit myself to being a missionary for the Lord. The Open Air Campaigner missionary my parents had brought in to run a program in the church had a challenge for the children. He challenged us to ensure we committed our lives to the Lord and were willing to go wherever God wanted us to go and do whatever he wanted us to do. The missionary had a piece of paper with those words on it and asked those who made that commitment to sign that paper. I responded and said in my heart, "Lord, I am willing to go anywhere You want me to go and do whatever You want me to do." My sister Rosemary made the same commitment at the same time.

Little did I know, around the same age, a young girl called Mally (you'll meet her in the next chapter) likewise went forward at a Sunday school meeting saying, "Lord, you died on that cross for me. You did that for me, so I want to do whatever you want me to do and go wherever you want me to go." We both made the same commitment at about the same age! And God brought us together as His plan for the Answers in Genesis ministry. I've said it many times, and I'll say it again in this book, the ministry of Answers in Genesis, and the two attractions, the Creation Museum and the Ark Encounter, that impact millions of lives each year around the world, wouldn't be as they are if it wasn't for Mally being such a wonderful, godly, dedicated wife and mother. She has truly been one with me every step of the way – but I'm getting ahead of myself, more on that later.



Ken and Rosemary

Mervyn and Norma camping with four of the children: David, Beverley, Robert, and Rosemary.



There's no doubt various events in the 60's were pivotal to God preparing me for a ministry beyond what I could have ever imagined.

Yes, God was calling me to be a preacher — not a pastor like two of my younger brothers would eventually become, but a teacher of His truth in churches all around the world and a missionary halfway across the globe, in America.

God called me to this ministry, but ultimately it has nothing to do with me. God is the one who entrusted me with the ability to teach, opened doors of opportunity, and placed me in a family with a legacy of faithfulness that they passed on to me.

The story of Ken Ham and Answers in Genesis is really not the story of Ken Ham. It's the story of faithful parents and grandparents, a very special wife, and, above all, of a faithful God who took a boy from rural Queensland who loved His Word and used him to help pioneer the biblical creation message in Australia and, eventually, take it around the world. As I've always emphasized, this ministry is God's ministry, I'm simply a messenger.



Ken Ham at a beach in North Queensland.

Daily, as Christians, we are in an immense spiritual battle. We battle with the world and, sadly, we struggle with much of the Church too." *Ken Ham Daily*, p. 279



Beverley, Rosemary, Ken, and Robert taken at Mundoo, outside of Innisfail, North Queensland around 1961 — about the same time Ken committed to do what God wanted him to do and go wherever God wanted him to go.



Mervyn, Ken,
Norma, Rosemary
– 1955, taken at
Mackay, North
Queensland, while
Dad was teaching at
a school in a town
called Sybil Creek

Ken's baby picture;
he's probably around
9 months old.



Ken as a
young boy.



Ken in school uniform for
first year in High School
1965 Sarina, Queensland.



Born in Cairns, Australia
October 20, 1951.



Mervyn and Norma Ham with their car and caravan they used to go camping. Taken in Carbethon St., Manly Brisbane where Dad's mother and sister lived.



Norma and Mervyn taken at Sunnybank Hills, Brisbane mid-1970's.

Robert, Ken and David taken in Sarina, Queensland around 1964.



Ken, Beverley, Robert, David, Rosemary – Siblings – taken in Sarina, Queensland.



*There is a very small percentage of what we would call evangelical Christians in Australia. It is quite astonishing that my grandparents and parents were both outgoing born again, mission-minded Christians. I would call that **Miraculous!***