

CHAPTER 2

THE EARLY YEARS

My mother was a wonderful woman – gentle, kind and aristocratic. My father was hardworking and sincere – a great sense of humour, able to categorise and criticise everyone around him – secure in his own righteousness and respectability and quick to see a fault in anyone else

The farm at Waihue was an average dairy farm for the time – as a toddler I would accompany my mother on rambles about the farm – I grew to love nature and the bush – at a very early age I knew the names of all the native trees, grasses and plants– it was, in some respects and idyllic childhood

However, the idyll was about to be shattered

My sister Helen decided to leave home and go her own way – she was followed a year later by my brother Dennis – in the process of time they were both ‘withdrawn from’ – family life was shattered

My mother was continually distressed and my father distracted – there was constant pressure from the Exclusive Brethren – we were classified as ‘a divided home’. We were ‘apart’ not only from the rest of the world but from the rest of the Brethren fellowship

As a child I felt isolated and alone – completely unable to comprehend the atmosphere of tension and despair – my father had ‘lost his two children’ but they were not physically dead. My parents sought to find answers to this calamity within themselves

The doctrine of ‘separation from evil’ meant they could not correspond or converse with their two children who drifted further and further away – my sister becoming a radiographer at Hamilton Hospital and my brother studying for an Engineering Degree at Victoria University, Wellington before going to live in Christchurch

We were indeed a ‘divided family’ – this loss of family loyalty and unity was going to remain with me throughout my adult life. Other Brethren families put family first – our family was sacrificed on the altar of ‘the truth’ – we lost loyalty and togetherness forever

It was not a good environment for a 5 year old to be growing up in

Just as I was regaining a measure of equilibrium a bacillus of extreme toxicity invaded the Exclusive Brethren fellowship in Australasia – the vile and venal Bruce and John Hales partnership, known as ‘The System’. A whole chapter devoted to its evil will never encapsulate the damage done by these ecumenically-challenged clowns to the peace and prosperity of the Exclusive Brethren.

Sadly, ‘the young men who escaped on horses’ were to return towards the end of the 20th century to create more business-orientated blasphemy