

CHAPTER 5

SOLITARY

In 1973 I had begun working for a local firm of Chartered Accountants

As I had grown up I had been very aware of the ‘defection’ of my elder brother and sister from ‘the fellowship’. In the early years my mother had often sat me on her lap and pleaded ‘you will never go away will you?’ The essence of the EB system is loss – loss of dignity, loss of self-respect, loss of educational opportunities, loss of employment prospects

Owing to this psychological blackmail, if indeed unintended, I was reluctant to leave the Brethren system

Instead I retreated into a world of my own. I had a large library – Tolstoy, Dickens, Austen, the Brontes, Dumas, Wallace – to this I added more modern authors: Hailey, Wilbur Smith, De Mille, Grisham, Winston Graham and so on

Also had a large selection of music – Wagner, Mozart, Chopin etc etc

I had been a piano player for many years and also had an electronic organ – sometimes I would play the old favourites when we got home from church for two or three hours at a stretch. My father would sit in the alcove of the lounge in the Hokianga Road home with his ‘ministry’ book – my mother would be nearby with the latest piece of fancy work she was working on – she was clever and creative – the most wonderful woman. They would listen totally entranced with the music – I would find myself elevated to a parallel universe of creative bliss

1974 was spent studying for University Entrance – apparently, before I could begin the professional ACA accountancy examinations I needed to pass this examination. I studied by correspondence with the Government correspondence school – passing all for subjects that year – English, History, Geography and Accounting

Every so often my father would get a phone call claiming that I had been seen ‘early 1972’ with ‘so and so’ at ‘such and such a pub’ with ‘a jug of beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other’

The local priests would make a visit; the matter would be ‘searched out’ – I would make an abject confession. Even to this day, I jump when the phone rings!!

Later on in 1974 I decided to come clean and confessed to the ‘act of sexual impropriety’ that had occurred a couple of years earlier. I had been weighed down by my guilt – guilt is a speciality of the EB system

One of my priests was the cold, clammy and revolting Bruce Miller – if ever there was a case in favour of drowning an infant at birth his was the one – he must have been responsible for turning dozens of young people away – I remember the following ditty in his favour: ‘There was a man so benighted, he didn’t know when he

was slighted – he went to the party, and ate just as hearty – as if he'd really been invited'!!! He had, late in life (after being refused by a number of eligible young girls who failed to perceive him as 'the Lord's servant') married the equally objectionable Beryl Beetham from Tauranga. I remember she stopped me once in the middle of the passage at the Gordon Street meeting room and complimented me 'on my film star hair'. I had noticed a number of grey hairs and responded to this tragedy by putting a black rinse through my locks!!

Bruce Miller maintained that I should be 'withdrawn from' for this isolated act of passion. His side kick was determined to err on the side of generosity so a call was put through to Neche, North Dakota and the advice of Mr Symington sought. His directive was that I should not be 'withdrawn from' but the matter taken before the Brethren publicly and 'forgiveness' extended

So, there I was sitting on the front seat as white as a ghost while the details of my carnality were hung out to dry for all to see. I was always a little grateful to Jim Symington that I had been spared the ordeal of being 'put outside the camp'. I suspect he got a clear impression that Bruce Miller was intent on pushing his own agenda and took a little, if not a lot, of delight in frustrating him. Len Simpkin's comment was 'a brand indeed saved from the burning'!! Can you believe these people in the 20th century?

The whole affair had a big impact on me and, from that moment, my mental health began to deteriorate

1974 came and went. I took on 4 accountancy examination in 1975 – Accounting 1, Economics, Commercial Law 1 and Commercial Law 11

I studied long into the night and was focussed on my studies. I turned down invitations to meetings in neighbouring Whangarei, Kaitaia and Maungaturoto – Maungaturoto was a place I had always disliked intensely. Kaitaia was 'governed' by the vile Frank Garton – a complete voyeur – he wasn't capable of an emotion above his navel. Whangarei was the province of one Robert Bill – a complete idiot whose love affair with the blarney stone was confused with spirituality – he couldn't take a pee without his wife's consent – she had by far more balls than he could ever hope to possess

These two along with Dargavaille's notorious Len Simpkin (he had got rid of all the 'bad boys' – I was the lone survivor) sat on the front row at the 'interchange' meetings scratching each others backs and parroting off each others perceived virtues - a pusillanimous, pettifogging, politically motivated, sycophantic trio of cocksuckers

I understand Robert Bill's son is the current leader in Whangarei – I bet the level of fornication and incest has risen five fold

1976 started off a difficult year. I was having trouble sleeping – was taking the prescribed drug Mogadon on a regular basis. Had also lost a lot of weight and was troubled with depression and paranoia

One night in September it was all to come to a climactic head