



# 2

## *Death Stalks Me Once Again*

**W**hen I was six years old, my parents were divorced. After that, I did not live in one place very long. I lived with one parent or the other. I often went to live in the homes of different relatives. I traveled a lot, though not by my own choice. I did not know it then, but God was getting me accustomed to traveling. He knew I would need this experience later in my life.

Growing up in this manner has helped me to be a better evangelist. Traveling from place to place is now very natural to me. I have known no other way of life. Evangelists must enjoy traveling, or they will quickly become discouraged. An evangelist lives on the road. His ministry consists of traveling from church to church, wherever the Holy Spirit leads.

Before I graduated from high school, I lived in several states and went to seventeen different schools. I now consider it a miracle that I received a high school diploma. In the eleventh grade, I quit school. During the time I was out of school, I worked two jobs. But after a short time, I was ready to go back to school, and I earned my diploma.

I had studied heating and air-conditioning in vocational school while attending high school in Leeds, Alabama. My grades were good enough that I received a scholastic award when I graduated in 1980. I then went to work at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. I worked as a HVAC (heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) mechanic. I left that job after three years and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where I worked as a technician for a couple of fast-food chains. In 1985 I began my own business as a maintenance company contractor. Soon I was making big money. I began to spend that money on alcohol, drugs, and riotous living.

I had attended church as a child, and I was saved when I was ten years old, but I never really understood everything I was told about God. I knew He loved me, but I did not know why He loved me. I had attended a Baptist church with some relatives and a Pentecostal church with others. I could tell the two churches were different, but I did not know why.

Even though I had lived my life mostly without God, my conscience bothered me when I was at parties and took drugs. My business was booming, but I had no real peace or happiness. In April of 1986, I almost overdosed on cocaine. I could sense a war going on for my soul. I remembered the name of Jesus from the times when I had attended church as a boy. I asked Jesus to help me. I asked Him to deliver me from drugs, if He had the power. I asked Jesus to change my life. I asked Him to give me a testimony. I survived the overdose, but I did not give up the alcohol. The very next week I was drinking again, but I steered clear of cocaine.

## **A Head-On Crash**

That week I attended an all-night party. It was April 13, 1986. I was driving home around 6:45 A.M., and I went to sleep at the wheel. My Ford Ranger hit a brand-new Delta

88 Oldsmobile head-on! This happened near the airport in Nashville, Tennessee. The people who were in the car that I hit suffered broken bones and have recovered.



The Oldsmobile Delta 88 that I hit

The impact pushed the motor almost into the cab of my truck. I was in shock and unconscious. My chest had slammed into the steering wheel, causing it to fold backward. All the ribs in my chest were broken. One rib pushed through near my heart and punctured the aorta artery. My right lung was punctured and my spleen also. A vertebra in my neck was cracked. My left jaw, left hip, and right ankle were broken. Blood began to pour into my stomach. I was later told that the spleen holds two pints of blood as a reservoir in the human body.

The paramedics finally arrived. After working for some time, they freed me from my truck. I was then taken to Vanderbilt University Hospital. They have a top-rated trauma unit. By this time, most of my blood was in my stomach. I was still in shock, and the paramedics knew I was at the point of death. Nearly forty minutes had passed in which no oxygen reached my brain.

I was pronounced DOA (dead on arrival), but the main trauma doctor told me later that something told him to try to revive me. He then had me brought back to the O.R.



My 1984 Ford Ranger truck

My family was called in. Some of them lived in Tennessee, others lived in Alabama. My family was given no hope. I was considered brain-dead, since very little blood had been available to carry oxygen to my brain. Remember, forty minutes had passed by. Three liters of systolic solution were put into my veins intravenously.

A splenectomy was performed in order to remove my ruptured spleen. My aorta was sewn up. It later tore open and had to be sewn up again. A pocket of infection formed in my left side, causing a severe abscess. Tubes were placed in my nose to allow me to breathe. Later, a tracheal tube was put in my throat. Ventilating hoses were connected to this tube. My right eye had been knocked out of its socket. It was put back in place, but nerve damage had been done. My family was informed that, if I survived, a glass eye would be put in at a later date.

After the accident, I remained in a coma for twenty-seven days. My left leg was put in traction with a forty-pound weight until surgery could be performed. This was needed to keep the leg from getting shorter than the other leg. My situation looked hopeless. But I had some prayer warriors on my side. Praise God! Several prayer chains were



My truck from the driver's side



My truck from the passenger's side

called, including ones at *The 700 Club* and the Trinity Broadcasting Network. They interceded on my behalf. Many, many churches were praying.

My bones remained broken for twenty-five days. The doctors did not think it necessary to repair them when it seemed I probably would not pull through. I had so many internal injuries that bones were secondary, anyway. I received a total of 124 pints of blood. I caught hepatitis, blood poisoning, double pneumonia and jaundice. Later, my liver and kidneys stopped functioning.

The doctors called my family in to see me for the last time on three different occasions. The third time, funeral arrangements were advised. I had turned yellow and begun to smell. My dad later told me that he had to hold his nose the last time he came in to see me.

No medicine existed that could make my liver and kidneys start working again. All the up-to-date medicines and antibiotics were being administered. I was given morphine every three hours to make sure my body was free from pain. My body swelled to nearly the size of a fifty-five gallon barrel! My head was almost the size of a basketball. Every time the breathing machine pumped air into my lungs, blood would come out of my eyes, ears, nose and mouth.

My mother spent every night at the hospital the entire time I was there. She only left during the day one time. I remained in the intensive care unit (ICU) for thirty-three days. I was in the hospital a total of forty-nine days.

## **Broken Neck Healed**

One of my uncles began to pray that God would heal my broken neck. God spoke to him and told him that my neck was healed. Praise God! He called my family at the

ICU waiting room to tell them that my neck was healed, and that he was standing on the Word of God. Praise His name!

Later, a CT-scan was taken to see where I was losing blood. Dye was put in my blood to find the leak. That's when they discovered that the aorta had torn loose again. This is also when they discovered the abscess in my side. Exploratory surgery was performed. The films revealed that the vertebra in my neck was healed.

The doctors removed the brace from my neck. Now I could be rolled and rotated on the bed. The abscess had been removed, and the aorta was again repaired. I was still considered brain-dead, but miracles were happening. God was answering prayers because people were believing.

I had eighteen tubes in my chest. Seventeen were for draining, and one was a feeding tube. I had no water in my mouth for over thirty days. But my God is merciful. I could have been left for dead, and I would have gone to hell, where I would never have received another drop of water.

Three people were believers in my family: my mother, my aunt Audra, and my uncle Joe. When everyone else was arguing about where to bury me, these three had decided to raise the dead. These three believers came in and anointed me with oil and prayed the prayer of faith. The Scripture tells us to do this:

***Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:***

***And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.***

(James 5:14-15)

Some of my family and friends had never seen a miracle. Two of my friends became born-again believers as they began to pray for me. Others could not understand how to believe to bring about a miracle, because they were not born-again. They had no personal relationship with Jesus.

As I lay there, stinking and turning yellow, and organs not functioning, the doctors advised the family to make funeral arrangements again and explained that the machines would be disconnected. The three believers continued to intercede in the prayer room. My mother told me later that my body had become as hard as a rock.

A man named Rodney Lindsey came 200 miles to pray for me. After anointing me with oil, and praying the prayer of faith, he told my family what the Lord revealed to him. Brother Lindsey said, “I know you were told to make funeral arrangements. The Holy Spirit told me Richard will be raised up, and he will preach God’s Word all over the world.”

Brother Lindsey then held up his Bible, and said, “Thus saith the Lord God, I will perform this miracle before your eyes.” My family stood there looking at Brother Lindsey in total amazement.



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY MEDICAL  
DISCHARGE SUMMARY  
VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

ATTENDING PHYSICIAN

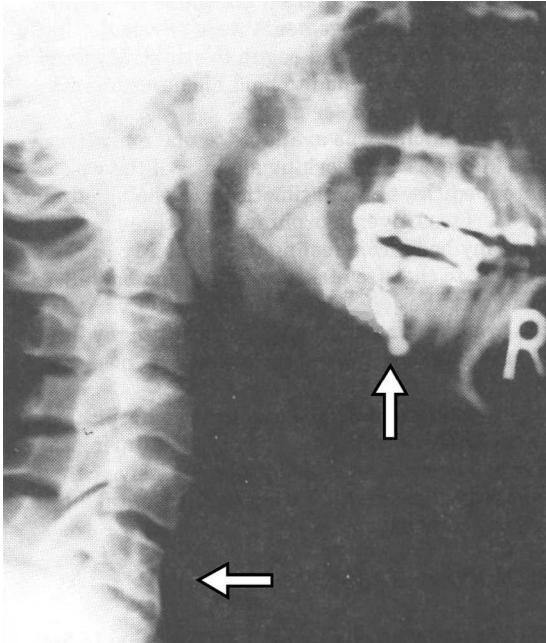
Kenneth Sharp, MD  
MCN

PATIENT: MADISON, Richard  
ADMITTED: 4/13/86  
UNIT NO. 91 73 73  
DISCHARGED: 5/31/86

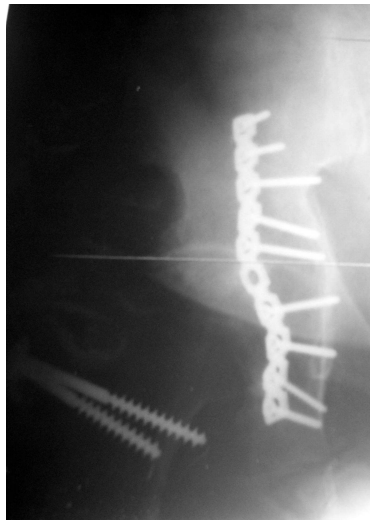
DISCHARGE DIAGNOSIS: (1) Multiple trauma  
secondary to motor vehicle accident.

SECONDARY DIAGNOSIS: Ruptured thoracic aorta;  
Splenic rupture; Left acetabulum fracture; Right  
trimalleolar ankle fracture; Left subphrenic abscess.

OPERATIONS: (1) Exploratory laparotomy,  
splenectomy, tube gastrostomy, left chest tube  
insertion, left subclavian central venous pressure line  
insertion on 4/13/86. (2) Repair of ruptured thoracic  
on 4/13/86. (3) Exploratory thoracotomy with  
control of hemorrhage on 4/14/86. (4) Open  
reduction, internal fixation of right trimalleolar  
fracture on 5/8/86. (5) Open reduction and internal  
fixation of left acetabular fracture on 5/8/86. (6)  
Drainage of left subphrenic abscess on 4/28/86. (7)  
Open reduction and internal fixation of mandibular  
fracture on 5/8/86.



X-ray of C-5 vertebra and plate in jaw



X-ray of hip