

Mind The Gap (A testimony)

In London we have an underground railway system that is a vast web of railway lines and stations. It is very old now, and within this system, some of the stations have curved platforms. Because these platforms are curved, sometimes there is a gap between the alighting place when the doors are opened of the train and the platform. So for safety reasons to avoid a passenger stepping forth and putting their foot down the gap, and twisting an ankle or breaking a leg, a voice can be heard booming over the station's p.a. system, "Mind The Gap". This got me thinking. I'm sure if God had a divine p.a. system that could reach our human ears, that's exactly what he would be shouting at us, "Mind the Gap". "What gap", we respond. "There's a gap"? "Oh yes there's a gap alright a huge gap. Of course I see no gap, but I can see how you are seeing the gap, and not even knowing that such a gap exists".

Well this got me thinking about how God has been dealing with me for the past 32 years, and how he initially woke me up from my carnal slumber, when He gently called, "mind the gap", and to this very day He can still, (and does), get my attention when he says, "mind the gap".

I realise far greater these days, what a wonderful job God has done, in lovingly and gently, and bit by bit, been closing down 'the gap', that has existed between me and Him in my inner seeing.

At first, 32 years ago, when I was not even interested or bothered about God, if I *were* to think about such a person, my inner sense of Him would have placed Him way across the other side of the universe. Alpha-Century or further. Somewhere out there, for that was all I had ever been taught, from a little kid, that God was way out there somewhere in this place called Heaven, and somehow He watched over us, making note of all the good and bad stuff we do, adding it up in his divine diary, awaiting the day when I was to be judged. Of course like most I was hoping the pluses were going to outweigh the minuses, and I would get a pass mark to enter the here after, if there was such a thing as the here after. I neither knew nor particularly cared, after all I was only 30 years old, I had plenty of time to think about that kind of stuff. But in spite of that mindset that I had then, something still niggled at me, especially as living on planet Earth seemed to be getting tougher as I was getting older. All the things that I looked forward to as a kid that I thought were going to bring meaning to my life actually didn't. By then I had tried many different things to fulfil myself in life, from playing abroad in a band to marrying my late beautiful wife and having 3 wonderful daughters, and everything in between. I loved it all and I loved them all, but in spite of all these blessings I was unfulfilled. There was still something within me seeking for rest, peace and fulfilment. No matter what I tried, nothing satisfied me, that I was able to sit back and say, "Oh, that's it, now I'm ok, now I'm whole, now I'm complete, now I can quit looking. Nothing helped.

Little did I know or realise at this point, God was calling to me and saying, "Mind the Gap". I didn't have ears to hear that back then, but He was. Somehow he caused me to start looking into the story of the man on the cross. Of course I knew the story. I'd heard about it when I was a kid, but it didn't have anything to do with me, that was after all 2000 years ago. What could that possibly have to do with me? Well to cut a long story short, circumstances occurred over a period of time and I found myself accepting Jesus as my Saviour in a local Pentecostal church. I'd put my hand up at the altar call, and asked Jesus to come into my heart. That's all I was told and that's all that I knew, but everybody else was telling me that's the right way to go. What did I know? After all I wasn't religious, I'd never been to churches in my life, they didn't interest me.

After this I spent a few months attending the church, listening to members of that church saying, they knew God. Saying they knew Him personally, and even though I'd been through the act of putting my hand up to receive Him, all I could say at that time to the other church members was, "well I don't know Him. He never says anything to me. I cannot hear Him etc. How do you do it?" I needed a formula or a password, or something that would switch God on, so I could hear Him. Of course I felt it was a tall order, after all He had to speak from way across the universe, so how I was meant to hear from there I do not know, but I figured, well after all He is God, so I guess somehow he can manage it. Well time passed, weeks passed, nothing, no voice, no anything, except the reassurances of the church that it was actually possible to hear God speak to oneself. I remember at the time asking fellow church members about the cross and the dying of the man Jesus for my sins etc, and I said, "What I don't understand is, what was it that I did that was so terrible in my life that caused another to be pinned to a cross and killed"? I knew I hadn't been a perfect person, and I could recall some things that I had done in my early years and even later years, that I knew God (if he existed at all), wouldn't be too pleased about, but I felt that none of these things were so bad that they warranted the sacrificing of another on my behalf. I just didn't get it, even though I wanted to and the seeking for that voice continued.

Well by now I was getting pretty worn out. I was getting tired of talking to myself, (as it felt), and was just about ready to quit the whole thing. I laid in bed one night, praying my usual stuff, asking God to speak and reveal Himself to me, so that I could like the others say, "I know Him". My prayers were directed to the open fanlight window of my bedroom, hoping that somehow my words and thoughts could somehow sneak through the small gap of the window and zoom off to Alpha-Century, where God if He wasn't asleep, might just pick them up on His receiver. Nothing. Whilst I was making this prayer, my eldest daughter, (only a very small child), was coughing incessantly, as she had been suffering from a bad cough and cold for days. We had pumped her with the usual cough and cold medicines of the day, but to no avail. She wasn't going to stop coughing and she was beginning to irritate me big time, as her cough was totally distracting me from my prayer

thoughts. Well, out of pure frustration, annoyance and general tiredness with the whole deal, I called God out. I was angry with Him. He kept ignoring me and I was through. I said, "Ok Jesus Christ, if you're really such a big cheese, then stop my daughter coughing". At which point instantaneously she stopped, as if in mid-cough. I waited for the next cough. I waited, and I waited. No cough came forth. The next thought that struck my mind was. God has killed her. Suffocated her as punishment for my rudeness, for my speaking to God with such disrespect. My heart sank. I felt, oh no, please no Please don't kill her, I'm sorry I apologise I didn't mean to be so rude and off hand with you. With that, she gave a gentle peaceful sigh. I could hear her from the next bedroom next to ours, as we had no doors on our bedrooms. As she sighed, and never for the rest of that night coughed one single cough I realised that the person I was talking to was right there in the room with me. No physical person that I could see, but as real as anybody could be standing next to me and talking to me. It was a real two- way conversation. I didn't know many scriptures at that time (still don't really), but the ones I did know all slotted in to place and everything made sense. I had tears of joy rolling down my face. I knew Him and even greater I knew I was known by Him, and in spite of my brashness, rudeness and lack of respect, He loved me. This was one time, when Father Christmas doesn't turn out to be a fake story.

Well, I didn't see it then, but the 'gap' to a huge extent had been closed. It's a very long way from Alpha-Century, to my bedroom in Romford, England. He's come a long way, and I was so grateful. We talked for a long time. So real was it, that I actually said to Him, "look, I really appreciate you coming to me, but I have to get up for work in the morning, and it's about 3'oclock, do you mind if I go to sleep now"? I tried but He wasn't through with the 'chat' yet.

That meeting was so wonderful, that I couldn't wait to get back to bed the next night to have some more 'chatting'. As I lay there and started to speak, horror of horrors, He'd gone. No sign of Him. He'd gone back to where He'd come from. Straight away my mind raced with thoughts of all the things I'd done that day, and what it could have been, that I would have upset Him so and made Him turn away from me. I can see now, in these days, how scared of Him I was. I didn't have any real understanding of His total unconditional love back then, that I have grown to see more and more of these days, as He has been closing that 'gap' down even further. Well. I stretched my arm out again towards Alpha-Century, and asked for forgiveness for whatever it was that I had done that day, (as I had no idea what it could have been). I prayed and asked for Him to come back and talk to me again, like He did the night before. Then, there He was again. Next to my bed, talking to me, just the same as it was the night before. A wonderful presence, of warmth, kindness, light and love.

This did not happen on the third, night as it was time for me to start growing up, in spirit, and He had much to teach me about closing the 'gap', so that I

could learn how to share His presence daily, for I knew that was what I wanted, and also what He wanted, and also that nothing else ever again on this planet could, or would satisfy me as His presence can do and does.

I knew very little about churches, I also knew very little with what I was supposed to do with my new- found friend. Apart from the stories I'd been told as a child, I knew that Christians went to church weekly, they didn't smoke or drink nor cuss. So I figured, well than, that is what I must do. So I continued on in the small Pentecostal church where I had first made the alter call, and started to apply my mind at the bible studies, to learn more about my new friend. A lot of it was good, in fact very good, and I enjoyed having people expound on the four gospels and the letters of the New Testament, and even some of the Old Testament. I even spoke in tongues as I was led by the other members of the church to do.

Church was ok, but I wasn't. I knew that I was supposed to be 'growing' in the faith. I knew I was supposed to be becoming more holy, and that drinking, smoking etc were no no's, so I set about trying to be rid of these things, so that I would be more pleasing to God, and a more faithful servant. Big problem. I couldn't do it. Oh I tried, boy did I try. I drove every soul within hearing distance of me, nuts with my continual pestering of them, and my continual questions, of, "how do I walk in the spirit"? I felt if I could learn to walk in the spirit, then I would receive power to overcome these obstacles, that were not only keeping me from God's precious presence, but also displeasing Him. Well that got me nowhere. Not only did I hear such varied versions of how to walk in the spirit, I also became confused as many well meaning church members would say, "oh yes brother, you have to be rid of these things if you are to walk uprightly", whilst others would say, " I shouldn't be getting stressed and bent out of shape, as they felt sure God wasn't as fussed about whether I did or didn't smoke, as I did". None of it helped, no real answer that I could latch onto was forth coming, and I was left to just keep on trying.

Well like the first time, I was getting all set to quit again. I had left the church by now knowing that I could never be as holy as those people, and they were for the most part lovely people, but I knew I could never make their stature in this spiritual life, so I had to quit the church. The day came when I was just about at my ends tether, and could try no more, and was ready to tell God to cross my name out of His book, as I was never going to be able to make it. As a last shot in the dark, I decided to go visit the pastor, of the church, and even though I'd left it, he was a dear friend, and I got on well with him. I knocked on his front door, and the timing was good, as his wife and children were out and he was home alone. He could see by my countenance, that something was wrong when he said, "hello John, what on earth is the matter"? We sat down and I started to try and explain my dilemma with the inability I had to conquer my habits. At which point he stopped me and told me that he felt he was able to minister in the spirit from the pulpit, but was no good at all at counselling on a one to one. Oh great, I

thought, that's not what I wanted to hear. Then he leant over the side of his chair and pulled a magazine from the rack and said, "Maybe this will help you. I have just been reading an article, by a lady, and it sounds like her wrestling is similar to yours. I thanked him and took the magazine home.

I read the article. He was back. It was like I had been born again, again. The article spoke of finding our Oneness with him. I had never heard anything of the like in the church, but the lights had gone on again, and whilst I had no understanding whatsoever the article really meant, my spirit within me was leaping and I knew that the truth lay here somewhere. Perhaps I wasn't going to quit after all. I had a new goal to seek, and if it brought me any closer to my friend, then I was up for it. I now started out in pursuing the meaning of Oneness. I read many books on the subject, some better than others, but all good stuff, I also contacted the lady who distributed the magazine, as my first port of call, as I reasoned that surely, if she distributes the thing, then she must know what it is all about. Fortunately for me, she did know, and in a real way, not just a mental conception, but an actual experience of it. I know she will not mind me telling you, that the real awakening came for her when she was in her kitchen opening a can of beans for her and her husband's snack, when she dropped the tin to the floor and the beans went everywhere. She called to her husband in the other room and said, "Fred Jesus has just dropped the beans on the floor". I would have preferred it had she said, "Jesus has just spilled the beans", maybe she did, as this is so apt. In that little encounter she 'saw'. She was made aware of her union (oneness), with He that is her very life.

I spent several months writing to her, and even visiting her at her home, and she very graciously persevered with me, as I bombarded her in letter and word, with all the yea buts and what ifs under the sun. I would write pages, saying things like, "but, how can this be, surely Jesus wouldn't smoke would he? If He and I are one who is doing the smoking here? Is it me or is it He. All these kind of questions sprang from my reasoning mind, and I'm sure drove her nuts, but she persevered as my mentor. She would mostly reply by saying, 'God cannot lie, and if He says it is so, then it is so' I couldn't get round that one. The day came when I got my loving 'dear john' letter from her, literally. She told me that I was now on my own, she was through with the letters and the questions and answers, and that she had told me the truth, and it was for me to 'drop' the only enemy I had that was keeping me from the truth, which was my own reasoning mind. That was a blow to me, but I also knew that that was the right thing for her to do. For, at the end of the day we walk with God alone, and only what He Himself tells us is real to us, and it is impossible to live for any standing length of time on somebody else's faith. I did not come away from this experience totally empty handed, for the 'gap' had been closed even more, and I now knew that somehow, God was within me and not by my side. A huge step from Alpha-Century, to within my very being.

Here comes my third quitting period. I'd reached an impasse. I knew that my mentor had told me the truth, when she said it was my 'reasoning', that was holding me back, but I found I was reasoning about reasoning. I was trying to take no thought about taking no thought. I was going crazy. I was bending myself into a hopeless case.

I was standing at my backdoor looking out to the yard. There was a smattering of snow on the ground. My wife was at the kitchen sink washing dishes, and I noticed a small sparrow hopping about in the snow, dipping his head every now and then below the snow to find something edible. I watched for a while and said to my wife, "look at that little bird. He doesn't care whether God cares about him or not. I bet he doesn't wrestle his little brain in to all sorts of contortions, about his life and where his next scrap of food is coming from, so why do I"? I expect my wife replied, "I've no idea why you do", or words to that effect, but I really do not remember her response to my statement.

I went to bed that night, choosing to give it all up. I'm through with union, I'm through with God, all these great things are too hard to achieve. Others may be able to do it, but I can't, 'Too deep for me man. I'm through'. I laid my head on the pillow, only to realise I had a movie playing in front of my very eyes. I blinked. I couldn't switch it off; there it was in front of me like a screen, even though there was no real physical screen there, just what I was observing with my mind's eye. The movie showed a small puppy dog, with a toy rubber bone in its mouth. The other end of the bone was being gripped firmly by a hand. The wrist could be seen but the rest of the arm went beyond the screen's perimeter. I watched the little puppy shake its head from side to side, trying with all its strength to wrestle the bone away from the hand that held it tightly. This I watched for a few seconds, when at length the puppy let go and flopped on its side, puffing and blowing with its little tongue stuck out, as it panted. The next thing I observed was the hand still holding the bone then threw it across the room, at which the puppy leapt up and ran and got it. Oh, my goodness, I thought. God is talking to me. God is showing me something. "Lord what does this mean"? I asked. This is the reply I received. "In this little scene, you are the puppy dog. The hand is mine, and the bone represents union, or oneness, the way you see it. You are trying to wrestle the understanding of union with me from me, and I would not let you have it. When you were through I threw the bone, and you rushed to gladly pick it up. Because you can only have what you are willing to let go of. You will lose what hold on to. The bone is not important. It is me that is important and you have made the 'concept, your concept' of union more important than Me.

I saw in this, that I was in union with Him all the time. I was trying to get something I already had, but was not recognizing. I saw that what was keeping me out of such awareness was my own reasoning. The debates in my head, and my own yea buts, and what ifs etc. God was starting to teach me how to shut that stuff off, so I could hear the truth.

Then finally, after much practise and after much labouring to enter my rest, God gave me a scripture. Which has helped me clinch what He has been showing me, and from 'minding the gap', to closing the gap. One quiet evening, whilst alone, I was quiet inside and outside and just reading a familiar scripture, that I had read many, many times before. It was Psalm 46:10. Be still and know that I AM God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. This time I saw it. The very words I AM leaped from the page. I knew that God was saying this is YOU, because this is ME. I could see that the eyes of my understanding had been enlightened. I could SEE the Oneness. I knew that Me is He and that He is Me, and that it would always be impossible for the human, natural mind to grasp how 1 + 1 can and does equal 1, in God's math.

"Mind the Gap, oh Lord thank you, what gap"?

I know that the natural mind is going to think, "he's saying he is God". I have also been told that our mental institutions hold inmates that are saying that they are God. Well bless them, maybe they're just misunderstood, or maybe they are not operating from a conscious awareness that I speak of here. Only God himself would know that, I cannot live inside another's mind. However what I am NOT saying is that I am the creator of the universe. But I am saying, that a droplet of water from the ocean in essence IS the ocean. Jesus put it the best way, "I and my Father are One". But the word here to be accented and stressed is 'One'. If you are still asking God to do something for you, you still have you and He. When you SEE your True self, you will SEE there is nothing to ask for. For all is well with you. Everything you need you have, and everything you are going to need you will have. God cannot deny Himself we are told.

Please, please be mindful of the gap. It need not exist, and in truth it does not exist, but only to those that can see The Kingdom of Heaven here and now are unaware of any 'gap'. There is and never was any separation between man and his creator. Only in the mind of man does the separation exist. So come to your right mind. Let that mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. You already have the mind of Christ, so let it function. Quieten the noisy natural carnal mind, and hear what the Spirit is saying to the church/temple which IS YOU.

Mind The Gap.