



## **I Saw God Do It!** **Celebrating 65 Years of Ministry** by Wil Pounds

I grew up on a small dairy farm in southeast Louisiana. My parents were members of Palestine Baptist Church. My mother played the piano for worship services and taught the intermediate girls Sunday School class. She was faithful in praying for the youth in the church and making sure her Bible class fully understood the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ. When I conducted my mother's funeral after she had celebrated her 91st birthday, some of her former Sunday School class shared how they came to know Christ as their savior through her faithful witness.

After I surrendered to the call of God to preach, my father rededicated his life to Christ and became an excellent adult men's Sunday School teacher. He taught the men in the church for ten years before he went to be with the Lord.

### **Saved by Grace Alone**

Every August the little country Baptist church held a two week revival in the 1950's. The summer of 1954 was no exception. One Sunday morning the invitation was given and a large number of youth made public decisions for Christ. I did not go forward that morning. However, as we walked across the front lawn to our house, I told my mother that I wanted to join the church and be baptized.

I am so thankful that my mother did not tell me that would be a great idea. Her response was, "You need to be born again, and put your faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior." She told me I needed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. During the week she spent time sharing with me how to be saved.

The next Sunday morning between Sunday School and the worship service, my mother and the pastor shared with me the plan of salvation in the Gospel of John and the Letter to Romans. I prayed to receive Jesus Christ as my personal Savior. During the morning worship service I made my decision public before the congregation at Palestine Baptist Church.

Yes, I was baptized by immersion in open air at a neighbor's pond a few weeks later along with other new believers. Some of these were the same ones who gave their testimonies at my mother's funeral.

I lived a typical Christian life of a teen in the late 1950's. Much of our lives back then were centered around the church youth activities, sports and Sunday School.

When I was in the 7th grade, I became interested in radio and built a three tube regenerative short-wave receiver. The first station I picked up on the new radio was H.C.J.B. the Voice of

the Andes, Quito, Ecuador, South America. A couple of years later I built a five tube superhetrodyne radio and again the very first station I heard was H.C.J.B. I spent many hours in my teen years at night listening to outstanding Bible teaching on that missionary radio station in South America. To this day, I thank the Lord for the solid biblical theology I received during those early formative years as a young Christian. I thank God for missionaries and pastors who taught me the Word of God. They were God-called preachers and teachers. I thank God that He brought into my life men who were faithful to the Word of God.

## **Call of God to Missions**

In January 1960, that same missionary radio station carried a series of documentary drama programs called "The Auca Story" that told about the life and martyrdom of five young missionaries in the eastern jungles of Ecuador in January 1956. I was so involved and captivated by the programs that I took detailed notes as I listened over the next four months. I did research in the school library on the lives of these missionaries, the Auca Indians, and the country of Ecuador.

March 1960 Palestine Baptist Church conducted Youth Sunday when the youth took over the leadership of the church. Someone was chosen as pastor for the day and would preach the morning message. Another would lead the music. Other teens would teach the Sunday School classes, someone would serve as Sunday School director. I was visiting another Baptist church with my girlfriend the night the youth chose the officers for the day. I was angry the next day when I was informed that I was to be the youth pastor that week. They had chosen the most timid, bashful, inferior boy at high school. But there was no way out.

My pastor gave me some pointers on how to develop a three point sermon. I prayed over what to do and sensed the Holy Spirit leading me to select Matthew 28:18-20. "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'"

I took my notes I had written on the Auca Story and developed my message on missions. When I read it out loud, I could get 15 minutes if I read slowly.

On Sunday, April 10, 1960, I stood at the pulpit at Palestine Baptist Church and began reading my sermon. After about 13 minutes the Spirit of God came down on that old church. I stood before the congregation crying like a baby. My heart was sensitive to the presence of God. I looked up and the whole congregation -- both men, women, youth were crying. They were all watching God call me to act upon what I had been sensing for months. I could no longer speak; I was overwhelmed by the presence of God.

The pastor gave the invitation and we stood to sing, "Wherever He leads I will go." I stepped forward and said, "I will go anytime, anywhere, anyplace, regardless of the cost to lead

someone to Christ." The pastor asked, "Do you mean you are surrendering to the call of God to be a missionary?" I said, "yes."

The next day I took my Bible to high school, and began to share Christ. In my senior high school annual that year I wrote my life's goal: "Live to the hilt of every situation you believe to be the will of God."

That decision was made public 65 years ago. Nothing has changed.

I immediately began preaching as God opened doors of opportunity. After a few months the pastor told the congregation that I was "bootlegging the Gospel" and I needed to be licensed to preach. My home church licensed me to preach, and later ordained me to the Gospel ministry.

I preached youth revivals, street preaching, jail ministries, over the radio, wherever the door opened.

While a student at William Carey University, I served three summers as a summer missionary in Ecuador with H.C.J.B. the Voice of the Andes. For three years I was also President of the Mission Volunteers organization at William Carey.

While a student at William Carey the Lord brought a beautiful red headed young woman who was also a mission's volunteer. Ann and I were married on August 19, 1966.

During seminary days at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary I continued my evangelistic ministry with the ultimate goal of serving as an evangelist in Latin America. I preached in the French Quarter in New Orleans every Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Our son Timothy Paul was born while we were in the seminary. Ann and I faced the most difficult day of our lives the day the Lord chose to take him home to be with Him. I knelt and prayed, "Lord, I thank you for this day. . ." I paused and thought about what I had just said, and prayed again. "Yes, Lord, I thank you for this day. . ." God equipped us and has used us to minister to other couples who have lost their children. Then God blessed us with three beautiful daughters. There is no greater joy than leading your children to Christ and seeing them grow in God's grace. Our daughters love the Lord, and they love being involved in missions. They were born in three different countries and lived overseas.

When I graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary with a Masters degree in Theology, the Lord opened the door for Ann and me to serve in the Republic of Panama. I pastored Chagress River Baptist Church before moving on to Ecuador. This church had 13 missions and preaching points with five mission pastors. I would preach a minimum of three services on Sundays.

While pastoring in Panama, we received a call to serve in full-time evangelism in Ecuador. I preached in open-air street preaching, public showing of Gospel films, evangelistic services in churches, sermon telephone, literature distribution, city-wide evangelistic crusades, etc. These included small Indian villages as well as national campaigns with Luis Palau.

At the same time, I began a daily fifteen minute radio program broadcast twice daily world-wide over short-wave radio. I was also the regular preacher on Caribbean Call and Happiness is. Ann and I participated on other radio programs. Ann sang with Coro Vozandes, and Hymns of the Christian Faith, an early morning daily Spanish program. I recorded five minute evangelistic messages for short-wave listeners that were included in other programs. The SHALOM daily program on the Old Testament ran from 1972 until 2005 on H.C.J.B. the Voice of the Andes. We had listeners from over a hundred countries. You can find many of these Bible studies today on [Christ in the Old Testament](#) at [AbideInChrist.com](#), and in Spanish on [AbideInChrist.org](#). I had the privilege of recording over 2,500 radio programs of expository Bible studies while serving with H.C.J.B. I thank God every day for this ministry, and for the wonderful privilege of having been a part of it. An overlapping ministry during this time was pastoring churches in the city of Quito including First Baptist, and providing counseling at Hospital Vozandes. During this time, I was also a speaker at Bible Conferences, retreats, home Bible studies, ministry workshops for various missions, etc. in Ecuador and Colombia.

Ann taught seventh and eighth grade English at the Quito Alliance Academy. This was a college prep school for missionary children. We both continued our graduate studies earning our M.A. in educational and social sciences. Ann has had teaching ministries in Ecuador and the U. S. She is a highly professional educator who has taught in elementary school, junior high, vo-tec and university level. One of my great joys is team teaching seminars and workshops with Ann. Audiences in churches where we have pastored enjoy Ann's piano arrangements of Christian hymns born in the heart of Latin American believers.

## **THE GREAT IMPERATIVE**

The imperative is still the same. Jesus has not changed His mind. There is no contingency plan. We are either missionaries or we are in the need of one.

Jesus commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations. Listen to His words again: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:18-20).

The imperative is go and tell the world the message of the death of Christ for our sins and His resurrection. There are at least 10 recorded appearances of the risen Christ in the New Testament. In eight of the ten appearances of the risen Christ, He gives a commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel.

In the book of Acts the enemies of the cross could not keep the followers from preaching the resurrection of Christ. The disciples went to prison, even died, because they could not but speak of the resurrection of Christ.

## ***Jesus has All Authority***

The heart of the great commission of Christ to the church is that Jesus has all authority, and He sends us to all nations.

The resurrection of Christ proves that He has all authority and power over everything and everyone. Jesus has all authority as the LORD God. There is no limitation to His authority. He has absolute power, and absolute authority to do as He wills. He has full authority to claim our life long active service for His kingdom. He even has absolute authority over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, over His own people, angels, archangels, powers, principalities, might, dominion, thrones, and the saints in glory.

Now, I ask you. Who am I to say "no" to the King of all glory? How can the church that He gave his own blood for say "no" when He commands us to go and tell lost mankind of His saving grace? The life of a disciple is different because of the price that was paid to redeem us.

## ***Jesus Commands us to Make Disciples***

Jesus commanded us to make disciples. The word in the original means "to make one a disciple." A disciple is a learner. In our passage the word had imperative force. "Make disciples" is an imperative. It is a command, an order. We really do not have a choice. A disciple is not simply one who has been taught, or disciplined, but he is one who continues to learn. All Christians are disciples, and we are to be committed disciples all of our lives. God forbid if we ever think we know it all in the Christian life. Discipleship is the process by which our daily lives are transformed into the likeness of Christ. God is not finished with us until He has conformed us to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29).

## ***Jesus Commands us to Evangelize Lost Mankind***

Our primary task is sharing Christ and leading people to a saving knowledge of Him. Making disciples begins with sharing the good news of salvation and leading them to put their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. Discipleship demands personal evangelism. But we don't drop them when they trust in Christ; that is only the beginning. We are to disciple them, baptize them, and help them to grow in their new relationship with Christ. Our job is not complete until we teach them how to lead others to Christ, and teach them how to disciple these new believers.

During the last twenty-five years we have concentrated on teaching seminary extension courses for pastors. I taught seminary courses to pastors and laymen in Arkansas for ten years as part of my responsibilities as Director of Missions at Delta Baptist Association. The Association gave me 14 weeks a year to do mission work in other parts of the world. I am teaching Evangelism in Depth to pastors and church leaders in Latin America. We recently spent a week in India teaching these workshops. I conduct three day workshops in different locations on personal evangelism. At the end of each conference we have many decisions for the pastors to follow-up on after we leave. They see immediate results from their participation in the evangelistic outreach, and as they follow-up on these decisions, their church grows, and they in turn have people to disciple and teach. The Lord opened this door, and we are seeing His hand upon it. I

have the privilege and opportunity also to serve as the International Coordinator, and visiting professor of Bible and theology at Peniel Theological Seminary in Riobamba, Ecuador. We have watched this new school start with thirteen students sixteen years ago and grow to over 200 in attendance. You will find these reports on our mission pages, [I Saw God Do It!](#)

### ***Baptizing New Believers***

Our task is to disciple the new believers in Jesus Christ and lead them to the point of public baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Those who put their trust in Christ as their Savior must at some point make that decision public. Baptism is a declaration before the watching world that Jesus Christ is your Savior who died for you on the cross and rose from the dead. It is a declaration of your faith in Christ. It is saying publicly that Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead. It is saying I have put my faith in Christ who died for me and I was dead in trespasses and sins and Christ has come into my life and I am alive in Him. I have identified myself with the risen Christ.

We are to baptize in the "name," not names. The word "name" is singular. We do not baptize in the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but the "name" of these three. We believe in One God in three persons. Every time we baptize we are proclaiming the Triune God. The Eternal Godhead is involved in our salvation. The Father chose us in the Son before the foundation of the world. Jesus the Son of God washed us in His precious blood and cleaned us, and God the Holy Spirit dwells in us, sanctifies us and imparts to us this eternal life.

It is evident from this passage and others in the New Testament that the early church believed in the Trinity. The word "trinity" is not used in the Bible, but the teaching is clearly there. That God is a Trinity is a scriptural idea. In the early church there are references to baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The teaching of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit is clearly as ancient as the church. It is simply not debatable for the orthodox church. Let the cults debate it all they want. We will simply proclaim the truth. Whatever we do in the name of Jesus, we do in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe that if a person is truly converted, he will want to fellowship with other believers. He will want to grow in his new found faith in Christ. He will want to become a disciple of Christ.

### ***Teach All Nations***

Where are we to make these disciples? Jesus said, unto "all nations." There is no exception. We do not pick and choose. He leads and guides His followers to all nations. Currently God has me back in Ecuador preaching and teaching and serving as interim pastor of small churches. In the past it has included Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, India and Ukraine in former Russia.

We are commanded to teach new believers to obey everything that Christ has taught us. Never has this command been more important than in our day. We live in a narcissist, superficial, politically correct age. Very few in our day have a working knowledge of basic Christianity. We

live in a day of anti-intellect, anti-scholarship, anti-education. Make up your own Christian belief. Pick and choose whatever you want and call it Christianity. Mature disciples are not made by a watered-down theology. Christians today need a solid Biblical theology, honed from the Word of God. We are to be faithful to all the teachings of Christ.

The great Biblical principle is we make ourselves available to the Lord as He prepares us and leads us to where He is working. He invites us to come and join Him in what He is doing. When you follow Him, you will always have a ministry filled with His blessing. Every day at the beginning of the day make yourself available to the Lord for Him to do in and through you what He chooses to do with whomever and wherever He chooses and you will always be at the center of God's will.

### ***Jesus' Presence with us Always***

Jesus promises that we are never alone. "Lo, I am with you unto the end of the age." The way Jesus states it is very emphatic. "No one less than I myself am with you." Wherever He sends us He is always there with us. There is no situation where He is not present with us. He is ever with us in every situation, in every circumstance. Whatever kind of day may be our lot, Christ is there with us. He does not say I will be with you; He says, "I am with you always." We have a great companion, friend and helper with us all the time.

The apostle Paul had the conviction that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord in Romans 8:39. Nothing, and no one can separate us because He is with us in whatever the circumstance.

Jesus Christ promises to be with us when we go out to serve in His name. "I" - the pronoun is emphatic - "I am with you always." The One who has universal authority and power sends forth His people saying, "I am with you always." "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Immanuel - God is with us! He says again, I will never leave you or forsake you. I am with you always. That is true of every believer in Jesus Christ. There are no exceptions.

He will not withdraw His presence from us. Indeed, He cannot because He is in us and we are in Him. We have a unique mystical bond, or vital union with Christ. "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This promise is true until the consummation of the present age when Christ returns in His glory.

We have the presence and power of the Lord within us to be His disciples unto all the world.

Nothing has really changed. I preached last Sunday on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I pray to God I am just as "fanatical" about the Gospel as I was when God called me to preach, and I pray I will be until the day He says, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and calls me home to be with Him.

I make no apology for being in dead earnest about world missions. We must never retreat until Jesus Christ tells us He made a mistake in coming into the world to redeem lost men.

My life goal in the ministry is Colossians 1:27-29. With the apostle Paul want everyone to "known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me."

The methods of my ministry have changed through the years as the Lord has opened and closed doors – mass evangelism, radio programs, worldwide shortwave broadcasts, city wide evangelistic crusades, literature and open-air gospel film ministries, pastorates in three countries, medical-dental-evangelism teams, internet websites, counseling, conducting workshops and seminars, revivals, teaching theological education -- but the message is still the same; it never changes. We preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified!

A world without Christ has no hope. It grapples at anything it can find and falls deeper and deeper in despair. "Christ in you the hope of glory" is what the world desperately needs. The Christian life is a growing thing. The Holy Spirit uses the circumstances in our lives to cause us to trust in the Lord daily. He is constantly knocking out our false securities so we will trust Him more and more. His goal is to conform us to the likeness of Jesus Christ.

I have learned from experience, "When God wants to do an impossible task, He takes an impossible man and crushes him," wrote Alan Redpath. The reason said A. W. Tozer: "It is doubtful that God can bless any man greatly until He has hurt him deeply." We learn through these growing experiences, and God opens doors for us to minister to others.

When God calls He equips and provides all our needs "according to the riches of His glory."

I would rather have dreamed big and failed than to sit and do nothing.

"You never test the resources of God until you attempt the impossible" (F. B. Meyer).

What would you do for Christ if you knew you could not fail?

I still want to be used of God whatever the personal cost.

This one passion in my heart has never been satisfied, and never will be until the Gospel has been preached to every individual the world over. I want everyone to know the love of God who sent His Son to die for them on the cross and rose from the dead. That passion is like a fire that keeps burning deep inside. I want God to take me and use me to His glory alone that the world may know Him personally in a saving relationship. I want to make myself available to Him to do in and through me all that He desires. Oh, to be used of God today that His name will be glorified for all eternity!



One of the Ecuadorian martyrs, Jim Elliott said it well, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose."

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 25 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries from 1972 until 2005. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor, missionary and teaches seminary courses and Evangelism in Depth conferences in Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, India, and Ecuador. He also serves as the International Coordinator, and visiting professor of Bible and theology at Peniel Theological Seminary in Riobamba, Ecuador.