

# Searching and Finding

The Way, the Truth, and the Life



Daniel and Françoise Dossmann

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*The Story of  
Daniel and Françoise Dossmann*

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**PART ONE**

**DANIEL'S STORY**

# GROWING UP IN PARIS

I was born in Paris in 1941 during World War II. Even though I was very young, I remember the sound of bombs. Many times, we had to go down three stories and go to the basement, where we would be safe. I do not know if that is the reason, but all my childhood I was very sad. I often cried and my mother would ask me why, but I did not have an answer.

I had a brother, Jean-Claude, and a sister, Christiane, both much older than me. My father died when I was only eight years old because of consequences of what he lived through during the war.

His family had a low-key Lutheran background. But we never spoke about God. My mother remarried when I was eleven years old. My stepfather, Roger, was kind to me.

I also had an aunt, my father's sister, who was a Lutheran deaconess. I would spend time with her during the summers. Through her, I had some mild exposure to Christian hymns. I also remember that in the house where we stayed in the country, which was about two hours east of Paris, there was a wooden plaque above a door:

« JE SUIS AVEC VOUS TOUS LES JOURS »  
(I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS)

I had no idea who said these words or their meaning, but I always remembered them.

During these summers with my aunt, we attended the services at the Protestant Lutheran Church. I was fascinated by the sound of the organ. At one point I dreamed of becoming an organist, and even though this never happened, musical seeds were planted in my heart.

# SCHOOL IS OVER!

## On the Banks of the Seine River

With my family we lived in downtown Paris in the Marais district, which is the oldest area of the city. At that period during the post-war years, my parents did not have much money, and it was decided that I should start working. I left school at age fourteen with my Certificat d'Etudes Primaires (Certificate of Primary Education) and was hired in a gilding-silver metal workshop. It was not far from where we lived, so at noon I went home for lunch. Along the sidewalk, at about sixty feet from the entrance of the workshop, I had to be careful because there was a little girl playing hopscotch. Just after passing in front of her, I would have to cross the street.

When I was sixteen, I stopped working because I discovered the Latin Quarter. I had the desire to do something more creative and, most important, I wanted to play the guitar! I bought one and started to play on the banks of the Seine River. But I had no idea how to tune it, so I invented a way to do that. I then composed songs based on poetry from Baudelaire and Rimbaud, well-known poets of the nineteenth century.

One day, when I was playing at my usual place near the river, a friend sat next to me and said, "Could you please lend me your guitar?" As soon as he started playing, he said, "But it's not tuned correctly!" I said, "No, listen!" and I began to sing the songs I had composed. He was quite surprised, but he told me that it would be much better to learn to play with the real chords.

So, he showed me how to tune my guitar and taught me a song with the right chords to accompany it. It was a song in English. But as I did not know any English, I had no idea what I was singing! My friend did not know any English either, so neither one of us had any clue of what we were singing.

Here is the song:

“Oh, when the saints go marching in,  
Oh, when the saints go marching in,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in.”

We did not know that we were singing the gospel! It was only many years later that I discovered the meaning of these wonderful words.

After that first experience, I started playing blues and singing gospel music. I would practice the words while listening to 78 rpm records with a phonograph I had bought at the flea market. This music touched me profoundly, resonating with the very deep sadness in my heart that never quite left me.

A little bit later, still at the same place near the river where I was quite often, another friend came with his guitar and said, “Here, play this melody, and afterward, I’ll play with you another melody, and you’ll see, two guitars together is really beautiful!” Indeed, as soon as we played together, the beauty of what we were playing amazed me. It was as if I was becoming aware of a brand-new world. It was a fugue by Johann Sebastian Bach. I did not know anything about that composer. But his music transported me into a world of extraordinary beauty and harmony.



## IN THE DESERT OF SOUTHERN ALGERIA

In 1961 when I was twenty years old, I was called to do my military service (in those days, France had mandatory military service for able young men). I was not prepared at all with what happened afterwards. It was a terrible shock.

France and Algeria in North Africa were at war from 1954 to 1962. Like several countries in North and West Africa, Algeria was a French colony, and it wanted to be independent.

I never imagined that I would be confronted with war. I was first sent to Germany for preparatory classes, then sent to Algeria with an army boat. I arrived in the capital city, Algiers, in January 1962. The end of the war occurred in March, and the independence of Algeria took place in July. When I arrived, the war was still raging, hard and devious, with many deaths among the military and the civilians.

As I was confronted with death, I felt more questions rising in my heart. Why are we living? What was the point? I realized that maybe I could die there during the war or some other way later, and that would be the end of my existence. So why *do* we live and what *is* life's purpose? At that moment, I decided in my heart that I would never kill a man.

I had asked my family in France to send me a few books and some sheet music of classical guitar. Who was the composer? J. S. Bach of course! They sent me four books—by Jean-Paul Sartre, Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, and a small Larousse encyclopedia. I started to read them all with eagerness.

But I also was having a major problem. By reading these authors I was surprised. Jean-Paul Sartre was telling me that life was absurd. Nevertheless, in the following years, he became like a “mentor.” His philosophy of despair kept pushing me deeper into a bottomless pit. Life seemed senseless, but in the depths of my heart, I was still hoping that life could be different, that it could maybe have some significance.

Charles Darwin and the evolutionists were telling me that we are nothing, since we only are agglomerates of matter that have come by chance in the universe. So, in the end, life is nothing and we are nothing!

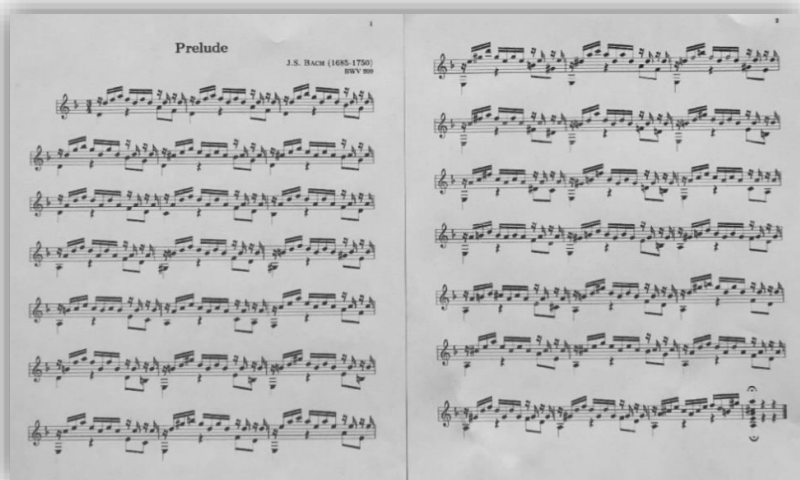
Sigmund Freud writes that our existence is only the hidden reflection of our repressed and distorted feelings. He opened new horizons for me, all of them entirely negative. I was asking myself: If I am nothing and life is nothing, how is it that music amazes me so much? If nothing is nothing, then music is also nothing. Yet, music touched me so deeply.

Often in the evening, I'd go out to the desert and lie down on the sand. There, I contemplated the beauty of the starry sky. And this thought was very strong in the depths of my heart. *Am I really nothing?*

When I opened the sheet music of one of J. S. Bach's Little Preludes, I was surprised to see two pages filled with many musical notes. I had absolutely no idea what music theory was about. With the help of the small encyclopedia in which there were two pages dedicated to music and music theory, I started to learn to read music. I drew a musical score on which I wrote the names of the notes. I also drew a guitar fretboard diagram on which I wrote the names of each note and where I could find them on the guitar strings and the fretboard keys.

It took me six months to decipher and learn to play this Little Prelude. I need to add that I could play music only in the evenings. During the day I was a part of a mine-clearing crew in the mountains and the desert. We lived in dormitories where we were at least a dozen soldiers, and the curfew was at 9:00 p.m.

What a pleasure it was to discover and play this wonderful Little Prelude by J. S. Bach! In addition, in a dormitory nearby, a friend had a record player and three 33 LP records: The three *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra* of J. S. Bach! Surprising, right?



## AN AMAZING ENCOUNTER

After my military service, which lasted for twenty-six months, I returned to Paris. Even though I was glad to be back with my family and friends, something had changed in me. I did not know what it was, but I had a deep desire to do something that would give meaning to my life. My parents by that time had moved to the country, living in the town of Amboise where my stepfather was from. So, I was on my own. I worked for a few months and lived on rice and noodles . . . and bought music sheets.

I started to study classical guitar several hours a day, as well as music theory, harmony, and composition, reading and studying all the books and methods I could find.

Sometime later, a friend who was a guitar teacher in a music school in the 10th *arrondissement*, or district, of Paris, offered me a position as a teacher. He had many students but did not really like to teach beginners. He introduced me to the director, and I was accepted. What a joy to have this opportunity!



*City Hall of Paris 10<sup>th</sup> District*

A few weeks later, we held an audition of those among the guitar students who already could play a little. Among the students, a young woman came and played one of Bach's Little Preludes, the No. 3 in D minor for guitar, the one from which I had learned music theory and how to play classical guitar. Yes, the same one on which I had spent hours in the south of Algeria and that amazed me so much by its beauty. And listening to this young woman, my heart was captivated... and looking at her, my heart was even more captivated.

After the audition, I went to see her. "Miss, you play really well!" I told her. I then played this prelude for her and other pieces of classical guitar, and some blues, a style of music she had never heard before.

Do you know who this young woman was? Of course, it is not very difficult to guess. Françoise! Unbelievable! She was sixteen years old at the time we met.



*The guitar classes took place in the wedding room.*

We got to know each other quickly, and it was wonderful. I began to love her with all my heart. We knew we were going to do many beautiful things together.

I also met her family, who would become my family later—her parents, grandmother, two younger sisters and a brother, cousin, and her cousin's parents, who lived in the same building as Françoise's family.

Do you remember that little girl who was playing hopscotch when I used to get out for lunch from the gilding workshop where I was working? It was her! Her parents had a workshop just there, and she went there every day from school at lunchtime. Yes, we were amazed when we realized this!

There again I felt pursued by the question: If life is nothing, how could there be love?

The existentialism philosophy, with Jean-Paul Sartre as its forerunner, was still deeply ingrained in me.

I also discovered the oriental philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism and the practice of yoga. I began to feel attracted to “religions” and started to practice yoga very intensively, which had the appearance of giving me some meaning in my life.

## **A FIRST TRIP TO INDIA**

A couple of years after the beginning of our relationship, Françoise and I considered the possibility of going to India. We made plans toward that goal. But as Françoise was only nineteen and under the majority age, which was twenty-one at that time, her parents did not agree with that plan. So, I went with a small group of people with the intention of going to do some good works.

I stayed there for nearly three months. The whole trip ended up being an incredible shock on several levels.

I came back disappointed and disillusioned and thirty pounds lighter, having lost weight due to the arduous physical conditions in which we were living.

I was on a difficult path of trying to find answers in Eastern religions and some delving into the occult, while at the same time exploring more about music and art. I discovered contemporary classical music, in which dissonance was the norm. I had the same kind of attraction to abstract painters and to watching movies that were the reflection of a totally absurd world. I learned about “automatic writing” in poetry, which is supposedly directed by the unconscious mind or producing words through psychic ability.

I started to write that kind of music with everything entirely left to “chance,” and to paint the same way. I had the impression that all the limits were broken, or transcended, and I went into that path with all the energy I could muster. It was as if there were no limits at any level. All of this was in relationship with the existentialism philosophy and the belief that we are the product of evolution.

I was still a prisoner of the concept that I was nothing. Among the people I knew or was acquainted with at the time, there was no other way to live.

We were all only a product of chance or hazard. If I were nothing, how could I create something that would have any significance?

I have to say that Françoise was not following me on that path. She could not understand what I was trying to communicate with my so-called modern art and philosophy of surrealism as it was defined at the time. She was trying to understand because of her love for me, but for her, none of that provided the answer she was looking for.

But on the other hand, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach I was listening to transported me into spheres of indescribable beauty and hope. The words of all the cantatas and the Passions were in German and I did not understand what was being sung. I had absolutely no understanding that the message in these words was the Christian message of redemption. But something in Bach's music resonated with me more than any other voice!

## MARRIAGE

### AND STILL SEARCHING: BACK TO INDIA

Five years after we met, Françoise and I got married. It was April 6, 1968. Our marriage brought a new and extraordinary meaning for us. I would also like to underline something.

Our wedding was a very nice celebration with our parents, our families, and just a few friends. Even though at this point we were not Christians and had never heard the gospel message, we decided to have our wedding at the Lutheran Church I had attended a few times in my childhood.

The pastor who married us offered us a Bible as a wedding present. On the front page, he wrote the beginning of Psalm 127:

« Si l'Éternel ne bâtit la maison, Ceux qui la bâtissent travaillent en vain ; Si l'Éternel ne garde la ville, Celui qui la garde veille en vain. »

("Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.")





At the time, we did not comprehend the meaning of these words. Later when we finally understood, we even thought that the pastor who married us, and who did not know us beforehand, was like a prophet.

Olivier, our son, was born two years later. His arrival gave a new dimension to everything in our lives. What a wonderful joy to have a child! Yes, our lives had a new meaning.



By then, I had become a professional musician. I was giving guitar lessons in a couple of music schools in Paris and in the suburbs and participated in concerts of various kinds. Later, I became part of a music group, with four other men, of medieval and renaissance music. The name of that group was Les Ménestriers. I played several string instruments in the group as well as percussion. We recorded three 33 rpm records. We did many concerts in Paris as well as in different regions of France, often in connection with schools. We also traveled to a few European countries and to North Africa. Françoise accompanied me often, most of the time with Oliver.

I continued to search even more intensively and was reading as many books as I could, hoping to find what I was looking for. During that time, since it was a religious book, I decided to read the Bible. Even though we had been given one the day of our wedding, I had never considered actually reading it. But then I started. I read it through in its entirety in less than three months. When I got to the end, I realized that I had no real understanding of what the message was all about. *Maybe I had read it too fast!* I thought. So, I started to read it again, this time more slowly. During that second reading, something started to sink in.

I had never experienced that with the other religious books I had read, but I had the impression that “Someone” was talking personally to me through the words.

In the book of Psalms, words like these really touched my heart:

“How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart?”—Psalm 13:1–2

I had no idea why I was so moved. Does God exist? If He exists, I had the impression that He had forgotten about me. Then in the second part of the Bible, I realized that God was talking about Somebody who was completely different: Jesus. I loved reading about things He had said and things He had done.

It is difficult to explain, but at this point, our lives had become nearly desperate. We were practicing yoga intensively, especially me to the point that I nearly became a teacher, but our lives were still empty and joyless.

That is when we decided to leave everything and go to India. It was a big challenge to leave Les Ménestriers, because so many concerts had already been scheduled. The others did not understand why I was letting them down. But we were still hoping that by going to India we would at last find a solution to our problems. Our desire was to go into ashrams (yoga schools) and meet with the gurus.

The major difference from my first trip was that this time, I was going with Françoise and Oliver, who was two-and-a-half years old. So, it looked like an adventure!

But once again, arriving in India was a shock, even more for Françoise since she had not been there before.

During my first trip, the book I had carried with me was *L'Etre et le Néant (Being and Nothingness)* from Jean-Paul Sartre. This time I had a Bible, as I wanted to continue reading it! We flew from Amsterdam in the Netherlands to New Delhi with a stopover in Beirut, Lebanon. We took several trains. We spent several weeks in the town of Pondicherry in the southeast, on the coast of the Indian Ocean, on the Bay of Bengal, where there was an ashram, we had read a lot about. Then we took a train from Madras to Calcutta (now spelled Kolkata), and a plane to get closer to the Himalayas.

We then spent about a week in Darjeeling. It was quite an incredible visit, even though we were there in December and suffered greatly from the cold.

One of my main concerns during the whole trip was that, as I was then reading the Bible, something was not connecting with what we were experiencing and hearing in the ashrams we visited. And what I was reading did not go well either with the kind of life we had had until now.

## SOMETHING I NOTICED

I was starting to really appreciate and love the Person who was being revealed in the second part of the Bible: Jesus. Everything I was reading was giving me different criteria than those I had lived by. I was discovering that the Bible seemed so much more real, true, and fair.

For example, when we were in Pondicherry, there was a hurricane that lasted a few days. Many people in the city were destitute and some of them had lost everything.

I witnessed something that affected me very deeply: I was at the gate of the ashram, because as a foreigner, I would not have been allowed to go inside. In the middle of the yard of the ashram, there was a large tree that was considered to be sacred. A massive branch ended up partly detached from the trunk. Dozens of Indian men living in the ashram worked for hours trying to straighten out this huge branch, and do it respectfully, as the tree was supposedly sacred. Outside, close to where I was, there were families who were asking for help, because they had lost most of their belongings in the hurricane. But none of the men working on the tree seemed to be paying any attention to them. Their focus was on the branch.

I was wondering: *If Jesus had been there, what would He have done?* I was absolutely convinced that He would have been helping those who were suffering in the streets.

We loved India, we loved the people, we loved the food (though it was often too hot even if I can eat very spicy food). But coming back, we knew we had not found what we were looking for. We had *not* found the answer, so the search had to continue.

## CONTINUING WITH QUESTIONS

When we were on the plane flying back to France, something very special happened to me. We were flying over Greece, and it was stunning. I was reading again the beginning of the gospel of Matthew. Suddenly I was struck by these words:

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”  
Matthew 5:8

It was a shock because, suddenly, I realized that I wanted to see God. I recognized that during all these years of searching, it was Him I wanted to know. It was terrifying! It was as if Jesus was telling me: “Seeing God? Yes, it is possible, because it is written: ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.’ But . . . it’s not for you.” For the first time, I deeply realized that my heart was not pure!

After years of practicing yoga, searching, trying to have a meaningful life, but without succeeding in any way, I realized that all of that was not enough. It was exactly as Jesus was telling me. What can we do in a plane but keep on flying? I felt miserable, but I continued reading the next pages of the gospel of Matthew. And thankfully, a little further, Jesus says:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Matthew 7:7

So, in the following months, this is what I did. But many ideas and preconceptions were blocking the way. It was like a dialogue that I started to have with God. I was saying: “But Lord, why would Jesus be the only Savior? Why not Buddha, Krishna, or Muhammad?” Then I would read in the Bible:

“Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:11–12).

Then I would ask, “But Lord, why Jesus as He was a Jew? Why not the Hindus, the Tibetans, or even the Egyptians or the Greeks who had so much wisdom?” Then I would read:

“God’s way of salvation is made available through the Jews” (John 4:22 MSG).

I did not know what to think anymore.

## THE ANSWER

One year after our trip to India, in November 1973 in our apartment in downtown Paris, I was reading again the Gospel of Matthew, and I was seized by an overwhelming revelation.

“After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written:

“‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for out of you will come a ruler  
who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.”

Matthew 2:1–12



Several things challenged me in this text. The first one was to notice that the Magi, or Wise Men, had come *from* the Orient, the East. I thought we had to go *to* the East to find the answers we were looking for. At the time of our search in the 60s and early 70s, that assumption was prevalent. But the Magi did the contrary!

Then I wondered why the Magi were not led to go directly to Bethlehem where Jesus was and that they had to go first to Jerusalem. I thought their encounter with Herod was a waste of time, and that it would have been much better for them to go directly to Bethlehem.

When they inquired of Herod where the King of the Jews was to be born, the king became troubled. He asked the chief priests and teachers of the law to come since he didn't know the answer, but they knew right away: "The Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem; it is written by the prophets." As soon as the Magi heard that, they left the city, and we read that immediately the star was there again to guide them, this time to the place where Jesus was.

I wondered, *why didn't God send the star directly to Bethlehem so that the Magi could go right away to where Jesus was?* I could not understand why. But suddenly God touched my heart and gave me the answer.

I understood that the Magi saw Jesus with their eyes once they arrived in Bethlehem. But before seeing Him with their own eyes, as they went through Jerusalem, they saw and heard about Him through God's written revelation: the Scriptures! That is what convinced me that the Bible *is* the Word of God, and that Jesus *is* the Lord and the Savior.

In my heart, I followed the Magi, and I knelt with them before Jesus. I did not have any gifts for the King of kings. I only had my life. But I asked Jesus to forgive me for all my sins and offenses. Many were coming back into my mind, and it was terrible to tell Jesus everything! But do you know what happened? He forgave me!

For the first time of my life, I felt the joy and the peace of God penetrate my heart. It was as if a wall suddenly collapsed. Since that day, my life was entirely transformed and renewed.

Our son Oliver was three years old at that time. He does not remember the details, but he remembers that something major had changed in our family life. I became a real father to him and a real husband to Françoise. She too had the experience of discovering who Jesus was nearly at the same time. We had gone from death to life, from darkness to light. And Oliver gave his life to the Lord when he was ten years old.

Today I know that one day I will see God. This is not because my heart is pure but because it has been purified by Jesus. It is possible only because Jesus raised from the dead. He is God and He is alive! He was crucified to pay the penalty for the sins of all of humanity. He was condemned to take our place. But He did not stay in the tomb. Therefore, we can receive forgiveness and eternal life. He hears us, He understands us, and He saves us when we come to Him.

He says: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."  
(John 8:12)

**PART TWO**

**FRANÇOISE'S STORY**

## MY BACKGROUND AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC

My father's name was André in French, but his given name was Anton. He was Hungarian, from a nominal Jewish background. He was born in 1900 and grew up in the city of Nagyvárád in Transylvania, Hungary. He had two brothers and two sisters. That region later became a part of Romania, and his birth city is Oradea in the Romanian language. He left Oradea around 1920 and lived in several European countries.

He spent the last year of World War II in concentration camps in Poland. The prisoners of the last camp where he was were rescued by the French Army. He and many others were in very poor physical condition, and they were sent to the south of France to recuperate. He had lived in Paris before, so he could communicate in French.

My mom, Denise, was born and lived in Paris all her life. My parents met in Paris on November 25, 1945, at the first "ball" that was allowed right after the end of the war.

At the time, my mom lived with her mother, Jeanne, in a very tiny apartment on the 7th floor (without a lift) near the Place de la République, in the center of Paris. After my parents got married and I was born, we lived in that same apartment with my grandmother, whom we called "Mémé." They were able to also rent two small rooms on the same floor. We had no modern conveniences of any kind.

I was the first of four children. After me came Monique, Gérard, and Martine. My mom's brother lived in the same building on the 6th floor with his wife and their only daughter, Muriel, who was one year younger than me.

I was named Françoise in memory of my dad's younger brother, who was called François. He died during the civil war in Spain in 1937, fighting against the dictatorship.

Our financial means were very limited. My dad started his own business and designed washable diapers for babies. My mom worked with him doing all the secretarial work and accounting.

There were about a dozen women working with them in a tiny workshop in the oldest part of Paris, Le Marais. When I was attending primary school, during lunch break I would walk about fifteen minutes with Monique to the workshop to eat lunch with our parents (in France, most schools have a two-hour break for lunch). When we arrived, I usually played hopscotch, which we had drawn on the sidewalk. There were many passers-by. (One of them, you already know who he was! It is only years later that we realized that we had to have seen each other at that spot. Once, when we were visiting Paris with American friends, they took a picture of us at that very same spot!)



Music was a major part of my childhood. My mom played the violin and was a great music lover. Even though our apartment was tiny, we had an upright piano. I started taking piano lessons when I was about seven years old. A few years later I discovered the Little Preludes of Johann Sebastian Bach, and my favorite was “No. 3 in C Minor.” As a family, we listened to the radio but also to a lot of music: classical, Hungarian, and well-known singers of the time.

## WHEN I WAS TWELVE

On Easter break, I participated in a girl's camp in the mountains, with the goal of learning how to ski. There was a very large house and about a hundred girls who stayed in dormitories. It was near a village called Les Avanchers, in the Savoie region of the Alps. One day I did not go skiing with the others. Instead, I sat on the slope in front of the house.

Looking at the incredible beauty of the mountains around me, I had like a revelation in my heart that “Somebody made the world,” that God was real and that He was the Creator.

My parents were fine people and did the best they could for all of us, despite their limited financial resources. As a nominal Catholic, my mother believed in God, but she did not speak about Him. My dad was a Jew, but he did not seem to really believe in God. We never went to any kind of church or religious gathering.

I cannot explain why, as I was not unhappy, but I had a very low self-esteem, and I even overheard someone say that I had an inferiority complex. Despite these feelings, on this day in the mountains, I had the strong conviction that God created the world, which of course included me. This certitude entered my heart and never left. This was all I knew for many years.

During the summer of that same year, my parents rented a little house near the Atlantic Ocean. One afternoon we went to the movies and saw *The Trapp Family*. Discovering that movie was a life-changing experience for me! I fell in love with all the different aspects of the story. I knew it was a true story. It was spoken in French, but the songs were the original versions in German. Maria played the guitar, and I immediately had an intense desire to learn to play the guitar, like Maria!

(This movie was produced in Germany in 1956 with German actors, followed by *The Trapp Family in America*. *The Sound of Music*, produced almost ten years later in the United States, became one of the most popular movies of all time. I discovered that in the United States most people were unaware of the existence of the original German movie *The Trapp Family*.)

Following that meaningful experience, I asked my parents if I could get a guitar for Christmas, and I did get one when I was thirteen years old. I was *very* happy and grateful because I knew they had made a financial effort to buy it for me. Right away, I started taking some classical guitar lessons.

Shortly afterwards, I discovered that the Little Prelude of J. S. Bach that I loved so much had been transcribed for the guitar and was in D minor. So, I learned to play it.

My family moved to Normandy for my parents' business when I was fourteen. A year later, my grandmother and I returned to Paris, and lived in the same apartment where we had always lived. My cousin Muriel told me about a guitar class she attended for a few months, which was at the City Hall of the 10th district, not far from where we lived.



*Two scenes from the Trapp Family movie*



## MEETING DANIEL

September 1963: When I went to register for the guitar class, I discovered that there were two classes each week and that the one teacher Muriel knew taught classes on Fridays. The other teacher gave classes on Mondays. Without understanding why, I was convinced that I needed to register for the Monday classes. The classes were held in the large wedding room. Shortly after the classes started, the teacher asked the students who had studied the guitar previously to play something in front of everyone. I decided to play this Little Prelude of J. S. Bach.

As soon as I finished playing, a young man came to see me, and we talked for the first time. It was Daniel!

In the weeks that followed, I quickly realized that my eagerness to go to this class was more than just to learn to play the guitar. After all, I was filled with all the romance of a sixteen-year-old! A few weeks later, Daniel invited me to have lunch in his apartment. It was in the Marais, very close to where my parents used to have their workshop. Daniel had prepared spaghetti. He put the pan on the table with two forks in it. Who needed plates?

Daniel spent most of his days playing the guitar and listening to music, mainly J. S. Bach. But he also had records of some contemporary classical music, of which I understood almost nothing. In addition, he was reading books on philosophy and modern literature that did not appeal to me. Yet, despite our differences, we began to realize that love had entered our hearts and that our lives were meant to be united. We also knew that the most important thing was to search together for the meaning of life. In that regard, we started practicing yoga and reading books about Eastern religions. In the years that followed, our main desire was to seek God and find Him at all costs!

## THE NEXT FEW YEARS

We got married on April 6, 1968, nearly five years after we met. In France, the only legal marriage is by a mayor or one of his associates and it takes place in the City Hall, usually where the husband to be is registered. We thought it would be nicer to also get married in a church, even though we had no idea what “church” meant at the time. Daniel had some background with the Lutheran Church on his father’s side. So, we decided to go to see the pastor of the church in Paris he had attended a few times as a child. The pastor asked us a few questions and agreed to marry us.

It was a beautiful day of joy for us and our families. I have a luminous remembrance of it, even though what was the most important did not come to light until much later. The pastor must have sensed something, because he gave us a Bible with the first verse of Psalm 127 underlined:

« Si l’Éternel ne bâtit la maison, Ceux qui la bâtissent travaillent en vain ; Si l’Éternel ne garde la ville, Celui qui la garde veille en vain. » Psaume 127:1

(“Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.” Psalm 127:1)

With my parents’ help, we were able to go to Nice on the French Riviera for our honeymoon, where neither one of us had ever been. It was a wonderful discovery with the blue sea and the mountains nearby.

We still lived in Daniel’s apartment. Music continued to be one of the major elements of our lives. Daniel taught at a couple of music schools, one in Paris, the other one in the town of Palaiseau in the southern suburbs.

One year after we were married, a friend who was a professional musician and who played classical guitar as well as the lute, invited Daniel to join him on a trip to Canada and the United States. The purpose was to accompany a singer and her impresario. They also played some classical music with two guitars. They went on a three-week trip to Quebec, Canada, then on to New York (they played at Carnegie Hall), San Francisco, and Oregon. To be honest, I was a little jealous, because going to the United States was my biggest dream. But there was no way I could have gone with them.

Shortly after their return, that same friend invited Daniel to join a group he was going to start, Les Ménestriers, which would play medieval music. They gave concerts in France and abroad and sometimes played on television. It is through that group that I discovered the recorder, which later became my instrument.

Two years after we got married, Oliver was born—on June 21, 1970. The hospital where he was born was the oldest in Paris, as it was first built in the seventh century. It is called Hôtel Dieu and is located on the parvis (a closed area in the front) of Notre-Dame Cathedral.

We moved to another apartment in Paris, not very far from where I grew up. It was on the 6th floor, still without a lift. It was a little bit more modern than the two apartments where we'd both grown up, but not much.

Our ongoing quest to find answers about God continued, but nothing seemed to be happening!

Daniel had intensified his practice of yoga. I did some too, but I was not as motivated as he was. Nevertheless, the idea of going to India took root again. This time it was going to be different because we were going together with Oliver, who was now two-and-a-half. We knew of a few places where we wanted to go, all of them related to yoga, gurus, and ashrams (yoga schools). We left in the fall of 1972 with a three-month tourist visa.

I had visited a few other European countries before, and I imagined that to have a total “culture shock” was going to be a thrilling experience. But it was not. I experienced it as soon as we got off the plane. Shortly afterwards, I felt overwhelmed by being in such a different environment. We were outside the train station in Mumbai (called Bombay at that time). It was strange to take it all in: such crowds of people, the heavy traffic, unaccustomed modes of transportation like rickshaws, incessant noise, and unknown smells. I even wondered, *Am I still on earth, or did I go to another planet?* I felt a deep anguish, a desolate feeling of not belonging during that first experience. The feeling came back a few other times, but not as intensely.

We traveled a lot to different parts of India, mostly by train. When we were going anywhere in the streets, Daniel always carried Oliver on his shoulders. He felt more secure up there!

We interacted with people who were deeply immersed in the religious realms of Hinduism and Buddhism, which are always accompanied with the belief in reincarnation.

By the end of our trip, we came to a few conclusions. We loved many things we discovered about India—beautiful landscapes in the plains and in the mountains—and we loved the Indian people. Most of those we met were welcoming and friendly. There were some unique sights, like animals roaming freely in the streets or carts with oxen in the fields.

We did not get too sick (Oliver and I a little bit more than Daniel, but nothing bad). We were thankful that Oliver loved white rice, as it would have been difficult for him to eat otherwise, since all the other food was too spicy for a toddler.

But we did not find at all the answer about the significance and meaning of life we were looking for. We felt even emptier than when we started. The hope and deep desire that something beautiful, true, positive, transforming was going to emerge from that trip was totally gone and seemed to be lost.

## NO FRIENDS

For me, one of the hardest realities during the nearly ten years Daniel and I had been together was that I had absolutely no friends, a void that was deeply distressing to me. This fact had been a constant reality and an ongoing source of deep suffering in my heart. Before being married or even after, that constant sense of loneliness and not being able to have any trustworthy friendship with another woman never waned . . . until everything changed!

We came back from India in December 1972. The following year was the most difficult that we ever lived through. I was in a constant state of anguish. I had a mental and physical problem with food that was getting worst. When we had started to be involved in yoga, we had become strict vegetarians. That was part of my problem but not the only one.

As we had used most of our savings during the trip to India, I decided that it would be wise if I had a job. As Oliver was three years old now, he could go to kindergarten. Even though I had no specific diploma and limited experience, I did find a job as a secretary-receptionist with a nonprofit organization. The office was within walking distance from our apartment. I was working at that new job, and I was glad to meet interesting people. But otherwise, I knew that I was totally at the end of my rope.

## FINDING WHAT MATTERS

One evening in November, I literally cried out to God. During all these years I had always believed in God as the Creator. I even had felt His presence in tangible ways on a few occasions. But I had no idea how I could get closer to Him and even talk to Him. At that moment I said something like “Oh God, come to my rescue. I have absolutely no friends, I don’t know where I can find help, nor to whom I could turn.” And then, after spending some time stammering a prayer, it was as if there was an outflow of light. I knew without a doubt from the depths of my heart that it was Jesus who was answering my cry.

I had always dismissed the little bit I knew about Christianity. I knew a man had died on a cross—crucifixes and crosses can be seen in many places in France—but I could not understand what the relationship between that fact and God the Creator was. And suddenly, in that state of anguish and panic I found myself, amid all the overwhelming difficulties, I realized that Jesus was truly answering me, that He was simply telling me in my heart that He was there, that I was not alone. So, the equation was very simple: If Jesus can answer me, it means He is alive = If He is alive, it means He is God = If He is God, it means that the Bible that tells of Him is the truth.

I knew that I was not alone anymore, that Somebody was by my side and that He was filling the void in my heart with consolation, peace, and forgiveness. Right afterwards, Daniel and I realized that we had had similar experiences and arrived at the same conclusion, even though the way it happened was quite different for each of us.

One lasting impression we had was this: We had been in a very deep pit. The only goal of all these practices and searches was to get out of that pit at all costs, to “save ourselves.” The more we tried to get out by ourselves, the deeper we sank. Finally, it is only when we let go, when we called out to God to rescue us, that a Hand was extended to us and took us out of that pit. And the Hand was Jesus.’ Jesus came into our hearts, and He completely transformed us.

In the following weeks, we became conscious of two major changes. First, I knew I would never be alone again and that the Lord was with me and will be with me forever. Second, our relationship was totally renewed as Daniel was also transformed right before my eyes. I started to realize that I had value in God’s eyes, the same as everybody. Oliver was too little to understand what was going on, but a tangible transformation took place in our family life. Something fundamental had happened even if, at the time, we did not know what name to give to our experience.

Afterwards, we discovered biblical words and phrases to express what had happened. We were born again, converted, forgiven, saved, and had received eternal life. Reading the Bible, we started to grasp the meaning of Jesus’ death on the cross to carry our burden of sins, lies, deceptions, false religions, and untrue concepts. The first revelation I had of Him was that He is alive. Jesus is God, He is the Savior and the Lord. From that day on at the end of November 1973, we have always lived with that reality in our hearts and there is no end.

One of our first thoughts was: “We probably are not the only ones on the face of the earth to have had this experience with Jesus, but where are the others, especially in France and in Paris?” We had no clue where to start looking for other believers in Jesus. We had never even heard the word “evangelical”!

Six months later, we finally met other Christians. The first evangelical church we encountered was through a Christian bookstore in Paris called La Maison de la Bible (The House of the Bible). Another church we found was in the southern suburb of Paris in the town of Palaiseau. Daniel had given guitar lessons at the music school of that town. We had wonderful contacts with people from these two churches.

One of the fundamental things that changed for me was that I started to have friends. I came to realize that the loneliness I had experienced so deeply for all these years was not going to be a reality any longer. There was no comparison between the kind of atmosphere we had known in the past and the love and family-oriented relationship we started to witness among Christians. Over the years, that fact has multiplied, and it has never ceased to amaze me. We are still close friends with many of the first Christians we met.



**PART THREE**

**THE STORY CONTINUES**

## ABUNDANT DAYS

With our involvement with these two churches, we decided to follow the Lord's command about being baptized. The pastor of the Palaiseau church and his wife, Alfred and Heidi Kopp, had contacts with Christians on the northern part of France close to the seaside. We went by bus with friends from the church and a few family members. We gave our testimonies and were baptized in the sea by Alfred Kopp. It was a wonderful event!

As soon as we became Christians, Daniel started to write Christian songs. He always wrote them in such a way that we could sing and play together.



Our encounter with the Paris Christian bookstore led us to go to the Geneva Bible Institute in Switzerland in 1975 for one year. It was our first “adventure” as Christians. We had never been to Switzerland. There were about thirty students. There was another couple with a boy who was five years old, same as Oliver. We had several interesting classes with committed and qualified teachers. Oliver went to school in a nearby village and walked there every day with a few older kids.

For us it was a fulfilling experience on many levels, discovering more and more of the Bible and becoming friends with many people. We are still in contact with several of them today. There was also some music involved, as Daniel had the chance to direct a choir with a few of his compositions.

Among the classes we received was one on children's ministry. It was presented by a couple who ended up having a tremendous influence on the three of us. Samuel and Hélène Grandjean had a multifaceted children's ministry: They wrote a children's magazine *Toujours Joyeux (Always Joyful)*; they directed children's camps during the summers, and they composed children's songs. As soon as they discovered that Daniel was a composer and that he played classical guitar and I played the recorder and that Oliver had a very nice voice and could sing in tune, they invited us to participate in their recordings. In the following years we did several recordings in Geneva with Samuel and Hélène. The preparation, the time in the studio, and the fellowship were wonderful experiences.

These recordings produced by Hélène and Samuel Grandjean, are still today available at La Maison de la Bible bookstores in France and Switzerland. After the classes were over in June 1976, we had the opportunity to participate in camps related to the Bible Institute. Both were in the mountains, which was wonderful! One was in the German-speaking part of Switzerland, in the small village of Isenfluh, with a gorgeous view on three snow-capped mountains, the most well-known being the Jungfrau. The other was a youth camp at Les Contamines in the French Alps. To be part of these two camps was a treat that led us to some long-lasting friendships.

Then we moved to Amboise, in the Loire Valley, the town where Daniel's mom and stepdad lived. We lived on what Daniel was earning giving private guitar lessons. We had decided that it was better for him to teach only private lessons, so that he would have the freedom to share about the Lord. Several of his students became Christians.

We did not have much in terms of material possessions, but we could see how the Lord was taking care of us. We were also involved in a small local church. Of course, Daniel's parents were overjoyed that we lived close by, and they could have Oliver often at their home. We also went regularly to visit my mom, who lived in Granville, Normandy, on the Channel coast. My father had passed away a couple of months after we became Christians.

During that time, we found out that there was a Christian recording studio at the Centre Missionnaire d'Albertville in the Alps. This is a French language school for missionaries. We recorded many albums there, instrumental and singing, often with friends who played instruments or liked to sing. That is where Daniel also recorded two albums of the chorales of J. S. Bach originally for organ. These recordings later became the album "firstfruit".





*Recording at the studio in Albertville*

We also discovered many Christian books that had a deep influence on us. One of the authors was Francis Schaeffer, who, along with his wife, Edith, founded L'Abri in Switzerland. Daniel often said that he was so moved to read books from someone who understood where we were coming from and our search. Later, we were able to visit l'Abri for a few days. We also had the joy of reading missionary books. Some of them had lasting effects.

## TELLING OF OUR DELIVERANCE

Between the time we became Christians and when we became missionaries (1973–1983), some major deliverances happened. We had some baggage that was not removed right away when we came to Christ.

For Daniel, it was “mediumistic gifts” that he had acquired through some occult practices during our years wandering in many different directions, and some of that came directly from the practice of yoga. We met Christians who helped him and prayed for him to be delivered of these “gifts,” and he was—I was there! It was a major step in the right direction.

As for me, it was mostly a problem with food that came from the sudden change in our diet when I was nineteen years old. I came from a family where we ate meat every day, to being a strict vegetarian when we started our search and the practice of yoga. My body reacted negatively. There were also some trauma issues that were involved. We were in Amboise, just coming back from a few days’ vacation on the seaside. I was quite ill, and Daniel prayed over me in a powerful manner in the name of Jesus. We then both experienced the fact that “something” left me. The problem was gone forever. I have had some mild consequences with migraines that recurred over the years, but nothing to compare with what I had lived through before.

We both considered these as major deliverances. We did not know what the future would hold, but we were completely open to whatever the Lord was going to show us.

Because we were first witnesses of the dangers of yoga and the way it is presented in the Western world, Daniel felt led to share our story and to explain what yoga really is. It is often seen only as some type of gymnastic activity or an exercise program. But for Hindus and Buddhists and people in India and other countries who practice yoga, this cannot be assimilated to sport. The practice of yoga is totally related to the belief in reincarnation. So, Daniel wrote a text by hand, and I typed it on my very basic typewriter.

We gave the title to the potential book *Le yoga face à la Bible* (*Yoga Face to Face with the Bible*). We sent it to the editing office of La Maison de la Bible to see if they would be interested. They were! There were many corrections to deal with, back and forth between us and the editor. I have no idea how many times I typed the entire book, but it was more than a few. The book was published in 1978 and later translated to Portuguese, German, Hungarian from the German translation (which was very special to me because my father was Hungarian), and eventually in the Czech language.

## INKLINGS OF NEXT STEPS

I would like to share first one interesting fact, as it had a major impact on what happened next. After we became Christians, the Lord gave me a clear conviction that I should practice my English. I had some basics from school, and I had gone a couple of times to the UK, but I did not speak fluently. So, I started to practice anytime I could. I often listened to the BBC on the radio. I read missionary books in English. My favorite author was Amy Carmichael, an Irish missionary who lived in India for fifty-two years and founded the Dohnavur Fellowship to rescue children (mostly girls) who were prisoners in the Hindu temples.

A friend from Bible school, Nicole, sent me recorded messages of an American pastor, Steve Brown, and an American singer, Don Francisco. When we would go to Albertville to record music, I was thrilled to have contacts with English-speaking missionaries. It was great to be able to practice English with them.

In 1981, Daniel and I had the conviction that God was calling us to leave France, but we did not know where He was calling us to go. The passages of the Bible that convinced us that something was going to happen were:

“Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities” (Isaiah 54:2–3). “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8).

Our first thought was to go to India, as we knew our perspective would be totally different than it had been on our previous visit, but we had no personal contacts with Christians there.

It was through Virginie Krémer, the wife of Etienne Krémer, the pastor of the little church we were attending in Amboise, that we discovered where the Lord was calling us. Virginie was an American missionary from Arizona and a childhood friend of Tom Fulghum. Tom and his wife, Lois, were missionaries with HCJB World Radio in Quito, Ecuador. For years they had been telling Virginie that HCJB was looking for French-speaking people to produce French radio programs through short-wave radio. Virginie would answer something like “there are so few Christians in France that when we have them, we keep them; we don’t send them to other countries.”



Virginie finally got a conviction that we could be the couple corresponding to that need. So, she decided to talk with us about it, without having any idea that the Lord had been preparing us too. When Etienne and Virginie came to see us, we first told them we felt that the Lord was directing us to go, that we had thought about India, but that we were really unsure where we were supposed to go. Virginie said, "I think I know where."

She then told us a little bit about the American mission HCJB World Radio and the radio station in Quito, Ecuador. The radio station had begun broadcasting in English and Spanish on Christmas day 1931. We had never heard of HCJB. Then she shared about the need for a French-speaking couple. She added that in the last couple of weeks, she had had a confirmation from the Lord that we could be the ones and that she needed to talk to us. We went to look at a world map we had on a wall to find out where Ecuador was. I already knew, because I always loved geography and had a deep desire to travel and meet Christians in other parts of the world, but Daniel did not. I have to say that in French, we have the same word for the country of Ecuador and the equator. In both cases it is *Equateur*. Many people in France do not realize that it is the name of an actual country, not just a line around the world. We prayed together and we knew it was the answer we had been waiting for.

A few months later we got several incredible confirmations. In an amazing way we met Larry and May Yeoman, who were at the time the directors for HCJB in Europe. They were originally from New Zealand and lived in Italy. We went to Italy and spent a few days with them to become better acquainted with the mission. To go to Ecuador, we had a lot of paperwork to do. As Daniel did not speak English, I then realized why the Lord had been telling me in advance to practice my English!

We were accepted by HCJB in 1982 through their Miami office in Florida. At the same time, we found out that we were strongly encouraged to learn Spanish before going to Ecuador. We were given the options of going to Costa Rica or to Texas. Right away I said "Texas!" I had nothing against Costa Rica, but my biggest dream at the time was to go to the United States. So, we decided to go to Texas and attend Rio Grande Bible Institute (RGBI). It meant a lot more paperwork in the process, writing to RGBI, being accepted, making an application to the US Embassy to get a student visa and to go to Paris for an interview. After the interview to review our files and answering many questions, our visas were granted and were included in our passports. We were very thankful. We were also able to have an encounter with a few leaders from HCJB who were traveling in Europe, including the new president, Ron Cline. All these contacts were wonderful.

## 1983–2000

### FRANCE TO TEXAS TO ECUADOR



We emptied our apartment, and we gave away many things to friends and neighbors. Since we were leaving for good, we still took a lot of stuff with us and had several trunks. After a sad goodbye to Daniel's mom and stepdad, we were on our way to RGBI in Edinburg, Texas. We were flying from Paris to New York, then taking another flight to Houston, then another one to McAllen. We were tired from all the preparations but also quite excited. A few friends drove us to the Roissy/Charles-de-Gaulle-Airport, north of Paris. Seeing the photo that somebody took at the airport, one friend commented afterwards that there were several gloomy faces—our friends'—and three beaming ones—ours!



We had some traveling adventures along the way, as there was Hurricane Alicia just at the time we landed in Houston. A taxi driver took us to a nice hotel, but there was no electricity, so no running water! I had a strange first impression of hearing American English—it sounded more difficult to understand than I had anticipated. We were able to fly to McAllen a couple of days later. Finally, we arrived at RGBI. Southern Texas in August was very hot, and we discovered air-conditioning for the first time. Oliver was thirteen years old and entering eighth grade. This is when he started to learn English. He went to a small Christian school, and it was a wonderful experience for him. The kids were excited to have a young French man among them.

As well as being a language school for missionaries, RGBI is also a Bible Institute for Latin students. The contact with these young people helped us practice Spanish. There were around a hundred of them, about half from Mexico and the rest from other Spanish-speaking countries in Latin America.



All the missionaries (we were about fifty, including thirteen going to Ecuador with HCJB) had to be involved in some capacity within the school. Can you guess what role Daniel was offered? To give guitar lessons to the Latin American students, of course! He even put together a guitar group that performed during one of the school concerts.

We had the opportunity to go twice to Mexico, to Monterey, and later to Torreón with students from the school. It was great to be able to go with them and stay with local families.

Here is an anecdote I have shared many times over the years: The school put all the missionaries and Latin students in local Spanish-speaking churches. The first time we went, Daniel, Oliver and I did not understand much. But they asked us to introduce ourselves in English and somebody translated for us. Everybody was friendly and welcoming to us, as well as to the few Latin American students who were with us.

There was a young woman playing the piano, and I understood from what was being said that she was going to get married soon. After the service, she came to greet us. Then she turned to me and said, in English of course: "Would you like to come to my shower?" I had no idea what she was talking about. Of course, I knew what a shower was, but not the kind she was referring to. I could have asked, "What do you mean?" but I did not dare to, because it was obvious that I should have known! When we went back to the school, I told the story to a missionary friend, and asked her what the soon-to-be-married young woman had meant. So, she explained to me about bridal showers and baby showers. We do not do these in France, we only give individual gifts in both cases. So that was a startling and fun cultural experience!

## IMPRESSIONS OF ECUADOR

After leaving Texas and many good friends we had made, we went to the HCJB office near Miami and spent several days there. It was great to become acquainted with some of the staff and to see a little bit of the area. The personnel director took us to the Ecuadorian embassy to get our long-term visas.

We arrived in Ecuador in June 1984. We were amazed by what was around us. The Andes mountains were a real feast for the eyes. Quito is situated at an altitude of 2,850 meters (9,350 feet). The city is built around a volcanic massif, the Pichincha, with two major summits, both over 4,600 meters. Daniel climbed these two mountains many times.

From Quito, it is possible to clearly see three volcanos, which are always covered with snow. Cotopaxi (5,897 meters) to the south, Antisana (5,753 meters) to the east, and Cayambe (5,790 meters) to the north. We lived in three different apartments over the years, and in each one we could see at least one of these volcanos.

One of the wonders of living at the equatorial line (Quito is seven miles south of this line) is that flowers, including roses, bloom year-round. We also enjoyed seeing eucalyptus trees, which are always green, and having easy access to fresh vegetable and fruit, some of them we discovered for the first time. The only seasons are the dry season and the rainy season. It is commonly said that in Quito it is spring all year round.



*Cotopaxi, Antisana, and Cayambe*

## OUR RADIO MINISTRY

When we arrived in Quito, there were two American women who spoke French and worked at the French Department. Daniel and I started right away to produce radio programs. Apart from Spanish and Quichua, all the languages broadcast from Quito were transmitted using shortwave (SW) radio frequencies. So, our listeners were in most of the French-speaking world: Europe, Africa, the Caribbean islands, French Guyana, Québec in Canada, and French Polynesia.

In all our programs, the goal was always to share the gospel message with our listeners. We received many letters from listeners from all these different countries, and it was a joy to answer them.

Daniel's main radio program was "Le Chemin de la Vie" (The Way of Life). These were Bible studies presented by theme, by series, or following a book of the Bible. Many of these are still available today on our website: [www.edenridge.org/dossmann](http://www.edenridge.org/dossmann)





Over the years, I recorded different types of programs. A good part of my responsibilities also revolved around answering letters from listeners. I discovered early on that I loved to translate Christian materials from English to French. One thought that came to my mind was: I do not have the gift of teaching, but what if I could find an English-speaking woman teacher whom I could translate and be her voice in French? Through some incredible encounters this became a reality. The Lord led me to Anne Graham Lotz, the daughter of Billy and Ruth Graham. Anne is the founder of AnGeL Ministry. After a few exchanges of letters with our director at the time, we finally met Anne and her Executive Assistant, Helen George, at the Cove, the Billy Graham Training Center in Asheville, North Carolina, which is one of my absolute favorite places to visit. Anne gave me permission, and I translated some of the teachings she did in conferences. These came by cassettes and there was no script. It was a lot of work, but I enjoyed it tremendously. The name of that program was *L' étoile du matin* (*The Morning Star*).



By then, HCJB radio was broadcasting in about twenty languages. We had an ongoing number of contacts with HCJB missionaries representing about twenty-five countries, and there were many visitors to Quito throughout the year. We also had the privilege of becoming friends with many Ecuadorians.



*Daniel, Clarence Jones (HCJB Founder),  
and Abe Van Der Puy (HCJB former President)*

## **OUR FIRST FURLOUGH TO THE UNITED STATES AND TO EUROPE, 1986**

Someone at the HCJB headquarters, near Miami at the time, gave us the opportunity to visit several churches in the United States to play music, give our testimonies, and present our ministry. This included participating at Maranatha Bible and Missionary Conference in Michigan where we met a wonderful group of people from a large church in Akron, Ohio.

We visited Akron afterwards and several people became supporters and lifelong friends.

Daniel, Oliver, and I arrived in France in time for a very special event: “Mission France avec Billy Graham,” a Crusade that was scheduled from September 19 to 26. We were particularly happy to be able to attend. There was some very upsetting political unrest at the time such as some bombings in Paris. The Paris Council said that if there was one more bombing, they would have to cancel the Crusade. There were none. We went every night to the Bercy Sports Stadium, the largest indoor arena in Paris. Everybody had to be checked by security each time they entered. Despite all of that, the attendance averaged 12,500 each night. The final night was overcrowded, and hundreds of people found room in an overflow area.

As we were French HCJB representatives, Daniel was able to get a journalist pass and nametag. Every evening before the meeting started, Daniel interviewed different key people attending and others in the audience. We used these recordings later in Ecuador. It was an awesome joy to be present at these meetings, to hear the large choir gathering people from different churches from Paris and the suburbs, and to see so many people responding to the clear presentation of the Gospel message, as the choir was singing “Tel que je suis,” the French version of “Just As I Am.” Just prior to the crusade, Billy Graham was invited to a national TV event. There was an interview with different journalists, and he responded to all their questions through his translator. Then the main journalist, very well-known in France, said to Mr. Graham: “Rev. Graham, I want to ask you one thing. We want to give you a chance to preach now to all who are in the studio here and to all the listeners and viewers throughout France—and there are many of them—you have two minutes to try to convince them that God exists.”

Billy Graham stood up and went to the middle of the stage. Then he said: "I am not going to try to prove to anyone that God exists because I couldn't do that. But the favorite Scripture that I quote constantly is John 3:16: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' And that Scripture teaches that God loves you and that God is interested in every detail of your life. He has the very hairs of your head all numbered, He wants to forgive your sin, He wants to give you joy and peace in your heart. He wants to give us all the things that people are searching for today. Jean-Paul Sartre said there is no exit from the human dilemma, but the Bible teaches us that there is. And that is why Jesus came and died on a cross. He died for our sins, and God laid all of our sins upon Him. And He offers you peace in your heart, joy in your heart, the assurance of salvation when you die. Blaise Pascal is probably the greatest scientist that France has ever had, one of the architects of civilization, and Blaise Pascal received Christ in the 17th century. He came to the age of 31 and thought that life was absurd and that there was nothing to life. He spent two hours in prayer, and he wrote in his journal: 'On that day—he said— 'I absolutely and completely submit myself to Jesus Christ.' It changed his life. And God could change your life today if you receive Christ into your heart. God bless you all!"

In the following months, we visited several churches where there were new Christians who had come to know the Lord during these meetings with Billy Graham. We were very thankful to have been able to participate in that incredible event!

## **MORE INTERESTING MEMORIES**

In addition to its widespread radio ministry, HCJB was involved in medical work. There was Hospital VozAndes across the street from the radio station, next door to the Alliance Academy, the school Oliver was attending.

We visited many times what we used to call “our antenna farm” in Pifo, a half hour drive from Quito. The sight of the transmitters, equipment, and the antennas that allowed the programs to go all over the world was quite impressive. We also went to Papallacta, a two-hour drive from Quito, where the hydroelectric plant that furnished the necessary electricity to the transmitters and antennas was located. There were a couple of furnished apartments we could rent where we had some wonderful vacations. There was a swimming pool with a natural hot spring in Papallacta, so it was a wonderful pleasure to spend some time in the hot water.

And then there was the town of Shell Mera at the edge of the Amazon jungle. Hospital del Oriente, formally part of HCJB, was in that town. We had friends working at the hospital, so we also went there on many occasions, even though at the time the road from the city of Baños to Shell Mera was dangerous to travel. The road was dangerous because it was very narrow between the mountain and the edge of a straight cliff along the Pastaza River. Several tunnels were dug in the early 2000s, so it’s a little less dangerous now. We even used to have a tee-shirt available on which was written: “I survived the Shell Road”!

One ministry we had discovered when we were still in France was Operation Mobilization and the Ship Ministry. After a few years in Ecuador, we found out that The Logos was going to be in the port of Guayaquil. Oliver and I and a few friends were able to go and spend the day on the ship. A few years later, the Logos II was in the city of Manta. I stayed on the ship for several days and participated in several activities. It was a wonderful experience!

## MUSIC IN ECUADOR

Music continued to hold a key place in our lives. We both participated as instructors in music seminars organized by missionary friends. Some of these took place with indigenous people in remote areas of the Amazon jungle. These times always represented some fascinating cultural discoveries. We continued to play music together whenever we had the opportunity, in churches or for special occasions.

Daniel taught the guitar and gave musical training to several young Ecuadorians. We had an especially wonderful contact with several Quichua families who lived in Calderón, in the northern suburbs of Quito. Two sisters from one of the Quichua families, whom we first met when they were children, ended up going to RGBI in Texas to study the Bible, the same school where we learned Spanish. They are now both married and both couples are missionaries. Passing on the training they received from Daniel, they are teaching music and worship in different churches. One couple is in Ecuador, and the other one is in Canada and ministers to Spanish-speaking congregations.









One of the national holidays in Ecuador is Quito Day on December 6. This is the anniversary of the foundation of the city in 1534. Every year for that special occasion, HCJB organized the “Quito Day Concerts” with a choir and an orchestra, and often a special musical guest. We were involved on several levels. For Daniel it was the opportunity to play the guitar with a few friends, sometimes pieces he wrote for the occasion. For me it was to be part of the choir. We always sang typical Ecuadorian numbers in the first part of the concert because this day, December 6, was a celebration of the founding of the city of Quito. Then in the second part we sang Christmas songs with a clear presentation of the gospel. These concerts happened often at the beautiful National Sucre Theater in downtown Quito.



## THE AMAZON AND A NEW FRIEND

Discovering the Amazonian jungle was an unforgettable adventure. We went to visit missionaries who lived in a variety of communities: The Waodanis/Aucas, the Shuars/Jivaros, the Chachis, and the Cofanes.

We have marvelous memories of canoe trips on various rivers, all of which are tributaries of the Napo, which in turn is a tributary of the Amazon (the Amazon River itself does not cross Ecuador). The flora and fauna that we could contemplate on the banks were jewels of beauty.



Perhaps these visits could have the appearance of vacations, but they always included active participation in different areas, whether it was music or teaching. Daniel had with him (in addition to his guitar) a portable device to record testimonies and local songs. Afterwards these recordings became a part of our radio programs.

I would like to present you with a story and a person who had an incredible impact on Daniel, Oliver, and me. Several years before knowing that we would one day live in Ecuador, we read two missionary books in French that touched us deeply. These books told the story of five American missionaries in Ecuador, all of them married with young children, who tried to approach a fierce tribe that people called "Aucas," which means "savage" in the Quichua language. In 1955 the five men flew from the town of Shell in a small plane piloted by Nate Saint. Their sole purpose was to be able to eventually share the love of God with these people.

At the same time, a young Auca, Dayuma, had fled the tribe because her family had been killed, and she herself was in fear of her life. After spending some time with a Quechua community, she met Rachel Saint, Nate's sister, who also lived in Shell. Rachel invited Dayuma to stay with her and she started to learn the Auca language.

For years, the people from that tribe had only been known by the name of Aucas. But it was not the name they called themselves. The name they identified with was Waodani (or Waorani or Huaorani), which means "people" in their language.

At the beginning of January 1956, these five young missionaries decided to go further in their attempt to contact the tribe and to land on one of the beaches of the Curaray river (a tributary of the Napo), very close to an Auca village that they had spotted on a previous flyover. They were in constant radio contact with Marj, Nate Saint's wife. On the day they arrived at a beach they had nicknamed "Palm Beach," three Aucas came up to them, a man and two women. As much as possible due to the difficulty of communication, they had what seemed to them several positive exchanges. But the next day, these five young men were attacked by a group of Aucas, and they were all killed with spears. The news of this event spread all over the world.

The Ecuadorian government was ready to intervene militarily, but the five widows resolutely opposed this action. They had become the spokespersons of their husbands, who wanted above all things to bring the message of God's love to the Aucas. Several people from the radio station HCJB intervened to help these bereaved families, and the radio station broadcast many programs on this subject.

Through her contact with Rachel Saint, Dayuma had understood the gospel message and she longed to return to the tribe to tell her people about God. In 1958, Dayuma, Rachel Saint, and Elisabeth Elliot (widow of Jim Elliot, one of the five men killed by the Aucas) with her three-year-old daughter Valerie, left with the intention of staying among the Aucas. A few porters accompanied them, as the journey would take several days of walking through the jungle. Elisabeth Elliot and her little girl Valerie, stayed among the Aucas for three years. Rachel, on the other hand, was still living among them when we arrived in Ecuador.

From the books we had read when we were still in France, we knew that many people from that tribe, including the former killers, had become Christians.

When we found out that we were going to Ecuador, we immediately thought that one day we might be able to discover more about this incredible story. When we arrived in Texas to learn Spanish at RGBI, we were amazed to find out that there was a strong connection between HCJB and the story of the Aucas.

Marj Saint, Nate Saint's widow, had remarried Abe Van Der Puy, who also had lost his first spouse. Abe had been the president of HCJB for twenty years until 1982. They each had three children from their first marriages. We got to know Abe and Marj when they came to RGBI to visit all the HCJB missionaries who were going to Quito. We all spent an evening with them, and it was a wonderful encounter.

When we arrived in Quito, we had a deep desire to meet Rachel Saint. When I asked around, several people told me that she did not come to Quito very often, and that no one knew in advance when she came and went.

About a year after we first met them in Texas, Abe and Marj Van Der Puy came to Quito for a few weeks. I signed up on our bulletin board to invite them over for a meal. About an hour before they were going to come, Marj called and said, "I have something to ask you. I do not see my sister-in-law Rachel Saint very often, and she just happens to be in Quito. Would you mind if she came with us to have supper at your place?" This request was an incredible response to something we had longed for! We had a wonderful evening with our three guests. They asked us to tell them how we came to know the Lord. This meeting was the start of a wonderful friendship with Rachel. We saw each other afterwards every time she came to Quito.



Rachel invited Daniel, Oliver, and me to come and visit her in the jungle, in the village of Toñampare (or Toñampade) where she was living among the Waodanis. We were able to go in 1987. Rachel had organized Easter meetings and invited the Waodanis from all the surrounding villages, some of them living two days away by canoe (without motor). Meeting with these Christians was an incredible experience. During the church gatherings, we played music and sang. Daniel gave messages in Spanish and Rachel translated to Waodani.

We stayed for several days and were able to go to Palm Beach where the five missionaries had been killed. What was extraordinary is that it was three of the former killers—now strong and committed Christians, Kimo, Komi (Dayuma's husband), and Mincaye—who took us to the beach and explained to us with gestures and the few words of Spanish they knew how things happened when the little plane arrived and that the next day the five young men were killed. What emotion! The whole experience was unforgettable.

Another special experience was that Rachel asked Komi to take the three of us to another village by canoe, a good hour away. What a treat! When we arrived at one of the huts, about twenty people were having some drinks together. We knew they were drinking *chicha*. We knew how *chicha* was made. We had seen women gather around a very large dish full of some type of corn. They chew some of it and spit it out. This process goes on and on, with everything being mixed. After a while the concoction becomes fermented. To say the least, most foreigners are not tempted to drink it.

When we arrived, though we were certainly hot and thirsty, we cannot say we were eager to share *chicha* with them. Yet at the same time, we did not want to offend them, so it was a little awkward. But they had had visitors before, and they knew that *chicha* was not an appropriate drink for us. So out of nowhere, one of them brought out a glass bottle of Coca-Cola, opened it, and offered it to us.

What a treat! Oliver does not really care much for Coca-Cola. But he said afterwards that that was the best cola he had ever had, even if it was warm!









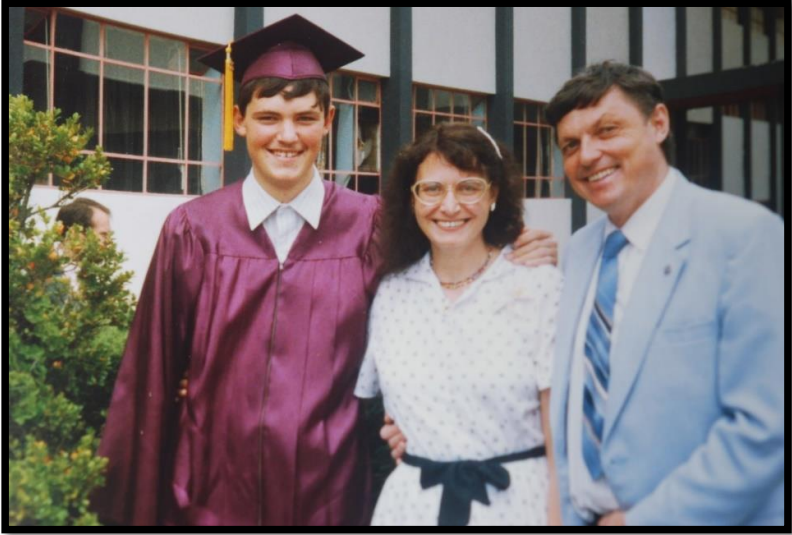




Rachel Saint passed away from cancer at the age of 80 in November 1994. I saw her one last time at the Quito hospital. I took it hard when she passed away, but at least I knew she had not suffered long. She is buried in her village of Toñampade. She had an extraordinary impact on many lives, and we were very thankful to God to be among those who knew her.

## OLIVER

In 1988, Oliver graduated from the Alliance Academy, the missionary school in Quito, which was under the Christian & Missionary Alliance.



He then went to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, where he stayed for a couple of years. He loved Moody and being in Chicago, but he strongly felt the desire to study computer science. Looking at different Christian college opportunities that would be affordable for us, he discovered Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. We had traveled in different states in the United States to participate in church presentations and conferences, but we had never been to Tennessee. The three of us went to visit Union University, where we were warmly welcomed by the staff. We toured the college with them, and they answered our questions about classes, living quarters, and finances. Oliver was soon convinced that Union was where he wanted to go.

He moved to Jackson in 1991 to prepare for a diploma in computer science. He was later led to also complete an MBA, Master's in Business Administration. He worked in the computer department at the school, which helped him financially and gave him some great contacts.

It was during that time that he met Rachel, his future wife, who was from Memphis and studying to become a schoolteacher.

## A SMALL DIVERSION

I want to take just a moment and tell you here about a major event in Oliver's life that happened in 1996, which he still considers as "a dream of a lifetime." Along with his friend Eric, whom he had met at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, and Jean-Hervé, a friend from middle school from when we lived in Amboise, France, he decided to do a bike trip from Denver, Colorado, to Anchorage, Alaska.





Here is the website that tells the story of this amazing adventure shared by these three young men:

<https://www.edenridge.org/alaska96>

## BACK TO THE STORY

Oliver and Rachel were married in Jackson in December 2000. Daniel composed a piece of music that we played at their wedding! Oliver started his own computer business, which includes website development.



Oliver had the desire to continue his connections with missions and at the same time to use his business acumen. He shared his thoughts with two friends from Union University, Chris and Ashley, who were engaged to be married at the time. They came up with the idea of creating a retreat center for missionaries. They decided to apply to designate this center as a nonprofit organization, which they called Mission to Missionaries. As they began to raise funds for the project, they realized that it would be very difficult to raise money for a project that did not yet exist.

Daniel had never stopped composing songs and instrumental music. Often in the evening he would tell me, even after going to bed, "I have a melody in my head; I have to go and write it down." One day, Oliver and Daniel were brainstorming about the fact that Daniel had composed so much instrumental music and that there was a financial need to buy land for what would become EdenRidge.

Together we came up with the idea of producing instrumental CDs and, through the sale of these CDs, help the organization that he and his friends had started. Then they could buy a piece of land and build a missionary retreat center. The first CD, *Ocean*, was recorded in Quito in 1999. All the others that followed were recorded in the United States with Oliver, who had some audio engineering experience. When we shared in churches in the US, France, and Switzerland about our radio ministry, we always played music. We then sold CDs and told everyone that the profits would go to the retreat center for missionaries that Oliver had the vision to build.

The result and the fulfilment of that dream is EdenRidge, which is situated on the Cumberland Plateau in East Tennessee. More information is available at: [www.edenridge.org](http://www.edenridge.org).



## CÔTE D'IVOIRE (IVORY COAST) 2001 TO 2004

We left Ecuador in 2000 in ways we could not have anticipated or chosen. But the Lord right away opened a door for us to go to Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). For several years, there had been many interactions between HCJB and radio ministries in other parts of the world. One contact already existed with a couple, Lee and Michelle Sonius, working in Côte d'Ivoire, where French is the national language. So, in 2001 we traveled to Abidjan to work at the radio station Fréquence Vie, run by the mission SIM (Serving In Missions).

Lee and Michelle were both born and grew up in Africa. Another American couple, Larry and Linda Burk, who had been with TWR (Trans World Radio) for several years living in different countries, joined them. We were a small team, but we had many positive interactions. Daniel and I continued to produce radio programs. We did not have to learn a different language, but we sure had to learn a different culture, even if the French influence was certainly evident on many levels.



Of course, being in Africa, music had a prominent place! So once again, we formed a choir directed by Daniel with several friends from the radio station and a few others.



During the three-year period we were there, several visitors from HCJB came to spend time with our team. We had some great times together, including being able to go to the beach at Grand Bassam. No swimming, since the sea was too dangerous, but we could enjoy the seaside. Oliver and Rachel also came to visit us in 2002 and it was a great time for all of us and a great discovery for them.

We had many wonderful contacts with Ivorian friends and missionaries from different countries and agencies. One very special contact we had while in Abidjan was with several women serving with MMCT (Mobile Member Care Team). That led me to be more involved in translation from English to French with the workshop SYIS (Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills) which is a ministry of International Training Partners.





Unfortunately, November 2004 was the beginning of a civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. France was involved in the political turmoil that was going on, so it was particularly dangerous for us as French citizens. We had no choice but to prepare to leave. As it was unsafe to be on our own, we stayed for a few days with an American couple from another mission, Steve and Carol Smith. It was a strange and frightening time, but we still had a wonderful time of fellowship with these friends.

One evening we heard several gunshots not far from us. I have to say that for me, it was the first time I heard real shots. With our friends, we sat down on the floor in the corridor, far from any windows. We prayed and sang together, "You Are My Hiding Place" in both English and French. That song had always been special to me, and it became even more so then.

We were finally evacuated by the French Army along with thousands of other people. We were only allowed to carry out twenty pounds each. Daniel could not even take his backpacker guitar (it was the only one we had in Africa), though he was able to recover it later. Sadly, we could not even say goodbye to most of our friends.

For a while, many people in France were attentive to us, as the official evacuation of thousands of people from Abidjan to Paris was all over the news. We were sorry to have left in this way, but at the same time, we were thankful that the Lord had protected us. We received hundreds of emails with encouraging messages, often with Bible verses to uplift us.

## **NORMANDY, FRANCE**

### **2007 TO 2014**

For a while, we were not sure where we were supposed to live as we had no “home.” We stayed for a time in Jackson, Tennessee, close to Oliver and Rachel and their first boy, Alexander. A church lent us a missionary house for over a year. Then in 2007 we felt we needed to return to France to be close to my mom. She passed away shortly after we were back in France.

My mother had lived in Granville, Normandy for thirty years, on the Channel seaside. Whenever we were back in France, we often stayed with her. Over the years, we became acquainted with churches that were started by German missionaries from the mission Liebenzell. Because of the good contact we had with these churches, we decided to settle in Normandy.



*Granville, Normandy*

We lived close to the town of Coutances. Daniel had set up his own studio. He continued writing and recording his radio programs and sending them to radio stations in France and to a few French-speaking African countries. I was doing several activities related to translation. I had the great pleasure to be involved with the French equivalent of the SYIS workshop and acted as a facilitator in three of the workshops in France.



Music continued to be an important part of our lives. Daniel participated with his guitar in the worship with a few others at the church we attended in the town of Coutances. Every week, he gave free guitar and piano lessons to several young people and adults who lived in the area.

One of the activities he particularly enjoyed was the formation and direction of the Normandy Choir, which brought together singers and musicians from different churches in Normandy. This choir was performing during a yearly Christian conference, and a guest speaker was often invited. As always in this kind of setting, Daniel was like a “fish *in* water.” He composed several songs for the choir that we were able to perform in these settings.

## MOVING TO THE UNITED STATES

In 2013, we decided to move closer to our “American family” now that we had four grandchildren: Alexander, Zachary, Liana, and Kaylee. We applied to become residents at the US embassy. This came to completion in March 2014, and we settled in Fairfield Glade, close to where Oliver and Rachel had moved to a year prior from Jackson. Their reason for moving to this area was to be close to EdenRidge.

When we arrived, we wondered how God would lead us and especially how Daniel's musical gifts would be used. We knew that we could continue to record some albums and play occasionally in churches. In the studio set up in our house where Daniel was also working on his radio programs, we recorded *Dawn of a New Day*, with his compositions.

For several years, Daniel had composed many small pieces for the piano. We met Glenn and Bonnie Lafitte when we arrived in Ecuador in 1984 and we became friends right away. Bonnie is a pianist, and she and Glenn came to EdenRidge in 2015. She was glad to record Daniel's compositions. The title of this album is *Echoes of Eternity*. Daniel plays in two pieces, one of them being “Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring” from J. S. Bach.

Another nice thing that Daniel was able to do with his piano compositions was to start teaching Liana and Kaylee. They enjoyed their piano lessons.





## A FUN SURPRISE THE LORD PREPARED

When we first arrived in Ecuador in the 80s, Oliver was a teenager. Largely thanks to him, we discovered Christian rock music. One of the first groups we listened to was Petra. We watched with Oliver the movie *Beyond Belief* that he borrowed from a friend whose parents were HCJB missionaries. Even if we, especially Daniel, had at the beginning some misgivings about this style of music—mainly because we did not know it and had never even heard it—watching this movie completely changed our thinking and we became enthusiastic right away. We deeply appreciated the quality of the compositions, the harmonies, the depth of the message, and the lyrics of the songs. We were then convinced that the Lord was leading these musicians, and many other groups, to share the gospel message with people of all ages and backgrounds. A few years later, Daniel went back to France alone to see his mother who was not well, and he was able to go to a Petra concert in Paris, which he enjoyed tremendously!

Years later in 2016, Oliver visited a local church in Crossville, Revolution Church. Listening to the worship, he discovered with amazement that the man who was playing the electric guitar was none other than Bob Hartman, the founder of Petra. Oliver went to see him after the service and thus began a friendship with Bob and his wife, Kim, who plays the keyboard. We also visited this church (and later it became our church), and Oliver introduced us to Bob and Kim. When we invited them for supper with Oliver and Rachel, I asked Bob if he could bring one of his guitars. After the meal, when Daniel and Bob started to play, it sounded as if they had been playing together for years. It was just incredible to see and hear how they followed each other. Listening to them, Oliver thought: CD! So, the possibility opened right away to produce a new album with our two guitarists and composers. Of course, their styles are quite different, yet they complement each other in an extraordinary way. The result is *Guitar Legacy*.







## **APRIL 2018**

### **OUR 50-YEAR WEDDING ANNIVERSARY**

Oliver offered to organize a party for our 50th anniversary by reserving a lovely spacious room in a local restaurant for desserts and coffee. About eighty people joined us that day, Saturday, April 14. Several friends we had known for years, mainly through HCJB, were able to come. Friends from Fairfield Glade and Crossville came also to join us. In the same fashion as his testimony, which he had written previously, Daniel shared how he learned to play the guitar and how we met. He spoke in French and Oliver translated for him.

Our young friend Hosanna played our famous Little Prelude from J. S. Bach on the keyboard, and it was wonderful.

While showing pictures, I shared about all our different musical steps throughout the years and the countries where we lived. We ended by playing one of Daniel's compositions, and we offered a CD as a gift to each of our guests. What a beautiful time of sharing the many memories of our life as a couple!

*Thank You, Lord, for having united Daniel and me by Your grace. Beyond the trials and difficulties, which are a part for each one of us, You have always led us and directed us by the power of Your love. Thank You for what You have done in our lives, for Your protection and Your blessings. Thank You that we were able to celebrate our 50 years of marriage with joy in the presence of our family and many friends who are very dear to our hearts.*

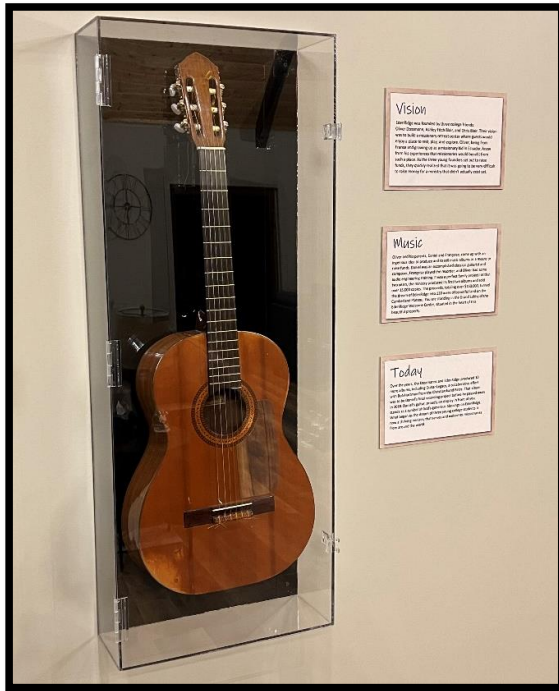




## DANIEL ON HIS WAY TO HEAVEN

At that time, even though Daniel was already sick with a melanoma we had discovered a few months earlier, as well as a blood disease that was quite difficult to manage, we could not have imagined for one moment that four months later Daniel would be with the Lord. Yet that is what happened! On August 8, 2018, Daniel flew to heaven. Oliver and I were by his side as he left his life on earth.

Oliver and I were able to say something very important to Daniel just before he went to be home with the Lord. The construction of EdenRidge's Welcome Center started in 2019. It had already been planned to have a place to present EdenRidge's story in the main lobby. There is a direct link between Daniel's compositions, the instrumental CDs that we have been able to produce since 1999, and the purchase of the land on which EdenRidge is built.



# Vision

EdenRidge was founded by three college friends: Oliver Dossmann, Ashley Fitch Blair, and Chris Blair. Their vision was to build a missionary retreat center where guests would enjoy a place to rest, play, and explore. Oliver, being from France and growing up as a missionary kid in Ecuador, knew from his experiences that missionaries would benefit from such a place. As the three young founders set out to raise funds, they quickly realized that it was going to be very difficult to raise money for a ministry that didn't actually exist yet.



# Music

Oliver and his parents, Daniel and Françoise, came up with an ingenious idea to produce and to sell music albums as a means to raise funds. Daniel was an accomplished classical guitarist and composer, Françoise played the recorder, and Oliver had some audio engineering training. It was a perfect family project! Within two years, the ministry produced its first two albums and sold over 15,000 copies. The proceeds, totaling over \$150,000, turned the dream of EdenRidge into 130 acres of beautiful land on the Cumberland Plateau. You are standing in the Grand Lobby of the EdenRidge Welcome Center, situated in the heart of this beautiful property.

# Today

Over the years, the Dossmanns and EdenRidge produced 10 more albums, including Guitar Legacy, a collaborative effort with Bob Hartman from the Christian band Petra. That album was to be Daniel's final recording project before he passed away in 2018. Daniel's guitar, proudly on display in front of you, stands as a symbol of God's generous blessings on EdenRidge. What began as the dream of three young college students is now a thriving ministry that serves and welcomes missionaries from around the world.

# **DANIEL'S MEMORIAL SERVICE**

## **WHAT WE SHARED**

As difficult as it was for me and Oliver and the whole family, we can say that it was a beautiful service. We have friends at the United Methodist Church in Fairfield Glade, including the pastor and his wife at the time. We were able to use their sanctuary for the service and their large friendship room for a get-together afterwards. We had close friends we had known through HCJB who came from far away. Among them were Ron and Barb Cline who came from California. Ron was the president of HCJB at the time we joined the mission and held that position for twenty years. Ron spoke at the end of the service. Two local pastors and a couple of friends shared about Daniel. The sanctuary was full. Several local friends helped Rachel to prepare and organize the food we shared afterwards.

### **Oliver**

It is impossible to talk about my dad without saying something about his music . . . his abilities as a guitar player and as a composer were simply stunning. For him, the words “background” and “music” could not be said in the same sentence. Music was meant to be listened to attentively and never to merely enhance an atmosphere. There is a funny story from our days in Ecuador when a friend of mine came home with me one day after school. My dad was in the living room; he was staring at a speaker, and he was listening to music. My friend asked, “What is your dad doing?” I said, “He is listening to music.” My friend replied, “What do you mean?” I said, “That’s it, he’s just listening to music!” My friend replied, “And that’s it?” I just said, “Yeah, that’s my dad . . .”

### **Françoise**

Many people told us that apart from Daniel's wonderful gift of music, what they remembered the most about him were his friendliness and his smile. And I know it is true. But what is very important for me to tell you is this: When I first met him, when we dated, when we got married and two years later when Oliver was born, Daniel smiled very little. There was a deep sadness in him and searching for God was the main goal of our lives. Everything changed when we became Christians. Daniel started to smile because his heart was completely changed and purified by the Lord, and he knew he was saved by the grace of God. Even though like all of us, we had our share of struggles and adversities, Daniel never really stopped smiling. That was true until his last moments with us because he knew he was going to see the Lord and be with Him for all eternity.

Several times, we had spoken together about who was the first person he wanted to meet, after the Lord of course, when he went to heaven. This is a very easy answer. As soon as he became aware of the importance of music in his life, there is one composer who influenced him the most. Johann Sebastian Bach helped him study music and start to play the guitar, and it is also through one of his compositions that Daniel and I got acquainted. He is considered universally as the greatest musician who ever lived. He signed all his music with these words in Latin:

***Soli Deo Gloria***  
***To the Glory of God Alone***



## AND AFTERWARDS

For the first time in my life, I found myself living alone. I knew I was not completely alone as Oliver and his family were close by and I had many friends locally and in many parts of the world. But still . . . the adaptation has been very slow and is never over. But I know the Lord is with me and He still has things for me to do.

I continue occasionally to be involved in translation between English and French for Christian ministries. As I am always between both cultures and languages, I navigate from one to the other all the time.

This also goes way beyond cultures and countries. Being a part of an international mission has never stopped to be deeply meaningful to me. HCJB World Radio became Reach Beyond in 2014 and I continue to be associated with the ministry through many ongoing contacts with people working in different parts of the world.



There is a direct link between the fact of Daniel and I being missionaries with HCJB / Reach Beyond and Oliver being the visionary for EdenRidge. EdenRidge is a big portion of what I am involved in. I am part of the Welcome Team. It is always a joy to get to know missionaries and to participate in making them feel welcome. I enjoy discovering links and connections between Christians from all over the world.

Through the years, I discovered that I could easily make connections between people, often across countries and continents. Sometimes I am just in the middle, and I do not do anything. Other times, I participate in making things happen. I am thankful to the Lord for all these opportunities.

When people ask me “where is home for you?” I always like to quote Hebrews 13:14 as freely rendered by a pastor friend: “This is not my home, but I live here now.”

When we were living in France before moving to the United States, both Daniel and I wrote our detailed testimonies in French. We had the thought of publishing a book, but it never happened. When Oliver and I started to talk about the possibility of having a book with our story, I translated and put together the material we already had and added the rest to make it up to date at the time of this writing.

# Two connection stories

## From Normandy to Fairfield Glade

We planned to move to the US in 2014 to be close to Oliver and the family and be involved with EdenRidge. In 2013 we started the paperwork to become residents and get a Green Card at the American Embassy in Paris.

We got an email from Jill, an American young lady who wanted to become a missionary to France. She got our contact information through a lady with whom I had participated in a workshop for people in ministry. Jill asked us if she could come to see us in Normandy so that we could give her some input into the French culture. She said she would be coming by car with coworkers, a couple with children, who were missionaries close to Paris. We told her we would be glad to spend some time with her. Our visitors arrived late morning and the family went sightseeing for the day. We had lunch with Jill, went to the seaside (a 10 minutes' drive from where we lived), then went to our church. Our pastor, himself a missionary from Germany with his wife, was there so they spoke in English for a while. We had a great time with Jill and late afternoon the family came back to pick her up. I could see there were two boys in the car around 10 years old. Speaking with the young lady in the car, I said to her "we are leaving next year to go to the US to join our son Oliver and his family" and I added a few words about EdenRidge. She said, "where are you going in the US?" I answered "Tennessee." Then she said, "WHERE in Tennessee?" I said, "in a very small town called Fairfield Glade." She answered, "my parents live in Fairfield Glade!!!" To say that we were all blown away is an understatement...

We exchanged email addresses, and we all said, "let's keep in touch." Their names are Eric and Kristanna Richardson.

When it was time to look at a place in Fairfield Glade where we could live for about a year - until we could find our own place - Oliver found a house for rent in front of a lake and sent us the address. I then wrote to Eric and Kristanna, asking them for their parents' address. We were on the same street about 500 feet from each other... I communicated with Chuck and Pat Scott, and we got to meet them soon after we arrived in March 2014. We have been in close contact ever since and they are also part of the Welcome Team at EdenRidge. We all have shared that story many times over the years...

When I went back to France, I was able to visit Eric et Kristanna and their four kids... So, we have a special connection with the entire family!

### **Meeting "The Train Lady"**

When we lived in Normandy from 2007 to 2014, Daniel was in charge of a choir with participants from several churches in the area. We met to prepare songs for special meetings. We sang his own compositions, as well as from other composers. The contemporary worship books used among most of the Evangelical Churches in French-speaking countries are called "J'Aime l'Eternel" (I Love the Lord) and are published by Youth With A Mission in Switzerland. Daniel chose one of these songs "La Lumière de Ta Présence" (The Light of Your Presence) composed by Linda McGowen Panci. I wrote to Linda, included the instrumental arrangement Daniel had made, and asked her permission to do a public interpretation of her song with Daniel's arrangement. She answered very positively. Afterwards, Linda and I had the pleasure to meet at a large Christian women's gathering in Strasbourg in 2012. Linda wrote a book "Love Notes to God" about her story as a YWAM American missionary and as a musician living in Switzerland with her husband Tom. Her book in English is available at [www.ywampublishing.com](http://www.ywampublishing.com) and in French (Notes d'amour pour Dieu) at: [www.jem-editions.ch](http://www.jem-editions.ch)

When I travelled to France and Switzerland, I often stayed In Geneva with my friend Anne-Claude, who worked with us for several years in Ecuador at the HCJB French Department. She and René got married in 2016 and I went to their wedding. Daniel composed a special piece for them, which we had recorded beforehand and which we listened to during the wedding ceremony.

As I was going to be in Geneva in March 2019, Linda invited me to visit them at their home, not far from Lausanne. So, I took a train in Geneva. A lady sat in front of me, and we exchanged a few words. As she got off the train, I realized that she dropped her soft eyeglass case. Another lady arrived and I told her "The person who was there forgot her eyeglass case." The second lady rushed to the door as it was not yet closed, called the lady who was already down the stairs, and tossed the case on the dock. The door closed immediately. So, the introduction was already made, thanks to an eyeglass case!

This time we exchanged more than a few words. I told her that I was French, lived in the United States, just arrived, and that my husband had passed away recently. She told me that she too was a widow, and we had a friendly conversation. As she was leaving at the next station, she got up, turned to me, and said: "Que Dieu vous bénisse!" (May God bless you!). Right away I told her "I am a Christian also!". She answered, "me too!". She went to the door, and I was immediately convinced that I needed to give her my card. It had a picture of Daniel and me, our email address, and the websites of Reach Beyond and EdenRidge. I told her "Here, if you want to know who I am!".

During a wonderful visit with Tom and Linda, we talked about a lot of things, about music, what they did and still do, I shared about Daniel, and I also told them about the meeting with the lady in the train!

The next day I received an email from "the lady of the train." Her name was Janine Zumsteg and she had been attending a church in Nyon for a long time. In the days that followed, we exchanged several emails and talked on the phone. I told her that my husband was a composer and played classical guitar, that we recorded several instrumental albums, and that I could send her one of our CDs in which we both played.

She told me that her pastor was also a musician and that she would send me one of his CDs. His name is Jean-François Bussy! We were both amazed to see how the Lord orchestrated this meeting of a few minutes in the train. But it is not finished...

A couple of weeks later, I was at the Palaiseau church, one of the first churches we discovered in 1974, right after we became Christians. In the afternoon we had a special gathering where I was going to share. Towards the end, I told the story on how I met Janine in the train. Among those who came were Patrick and Ulli Guiborat. They attend another church but came in the afternoon for that special gathering. We have known each other for a very long time.

Here is how we met Patrick: September 1973 in Paris. We lived with what Daniel was making as a guitar teacher. Oliver could go to kindergarten as he was three years old, so I felt that it would be good for me to find work. I was hired as a receptionist and secretary by a non-profit organization in a place that was a fifteen-minutes' walk from where we lived. A dozen people worked in the office. A couple of months after I started to work there, we became Christians, and everything changed! Among the employees, there was a British lady, Dorothy. One time, I told her that Daniel was a classical guitar teacher. She immediately asked me if he could give guitar lessons to her teenage son, Patrick, because she felt he was under some political influence she did not like. Of course, I told her that Daniel would be very happy to teach him the guitar.

So sometime later, Patrick came to our apartment and started to learn to play the guitar with Daniel. This happened at the very beginning of our Christian life, and Daniel was very eager to share the Gospel message with Patrick. Very shortly afterwards, Patrick told Daniel that he wanted to become a Christian and they prayed together. It was about that time that we had discovered the Palaiseau church in Paris' southern suburbs. Patrick was able to join the youth group as he lived also in the southern part of Paris.

We always felt we had a special connection because of the incredible way we met. Later on, Patrick attended Nogent-sur-Marne Bible Institute north of Paris, where he met his Austrian wife Ulli. They have four sons. Since the year 2000, Patrick has been the CEO of a Christian NGO called SEL, which stands for "Service of Assistance and Liaison" [www.selfrance.org](http://www.selfrance.org). Within that organization, he is the Director of Compassion International in France.

As soon as I finished sharing, and we were gathered around the table to eat the snacks prepared by our friends, Patrick said to me: "I know Jean-François Bussy, he is a member of the Board of Compassion International." Unbelievable! Later that same year, I was able to meet with Jean-François Bussy – as well as seeing Patrick again – when Compassion International held their meetings in Denver, Colorado. Jean-François and I exchanged CDs. I knew right away that if he and Daniel had met, they would have talked about Christian music for hours!

The story made a full circle! I still communicate regularly with Janine! So, saying "God bless you" to someone can result in unsuspected connections!

## IN CONCLUSION

How do we end our story? It is not the number of things that we have done or accomplished that justifies us in any way before the Lord. It is simply the fact that, one day, we accepted Jesus Christ as our Savior and our Lord. We are aware of our background, of the families we come from, and with whom we grew up. And in fact, we realize that God was always there, even before we knew Him.

The Christian life is at the same time an adventure, a walk forward on God's trail (as the Waodani Christians would say), and a constant learning of our dependence on God. Sometimes there are splinters, falls, pains, sufferings, heartaches, and deep disappointment. What matters the most is to realize that, if we are in this journey with Jesus, we are never alone. He is there by our side, and He guides us by His Spirit and by His Word.

We would like to conclude with the English translation of two of the poems that Daniel wrote, and with a song that he composed in English, "In Your Light" with the words of Psalm 36:7-9. We sang it together on many occasions. The instrumental version is N° 13 on the album "Dawn of a New Day".

**"I Wanted to Write Your Name"**

Lord

I wanted to write Your name

On the earth

But the wind blew

The rain came

And all was removed . . .

Lord

I wanted to write Your name

On the oceans

But the wind blew

The waves raged

And all was removed . . .

Lord

I wanted to write Your name

In the sky

But the wind blew

The clouds came

And all was removed . . .

And so,

Saddened and empty

I lifted my eyes up to You

And I felt Your boundless love

Penetrate my soul . . .

And then,

As I came closer

I saw that it was You, Lord

Who had written Your name

On the pages of my heart . . .



**“The Buried Flower”**

In the depths of the heart  
There is a flower, a prisoner  
Amongst the thorns of desperation.

Day and night,  
It yearns for the light  
which one day, will deliver it.

And the day comes!  
Because God, in his infinite love,  
Sent His Son amongst those thorns.  
One by one, he tears them from the darkness  
and straightens  
the desperate flower.

Oh! Miracle!  
It rights itself and becomes radiant  
Full of the infinite love of the Eternal God.  
Jesus,  
The divine Master then pours on it  
The morning dew  
Of his life, bursting forth  
For eternity.

# In Your Light

## Psalm 36:7-9

"How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!  
Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of  
your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house;  
you give them drink from your river of delights.  
For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light."

*In Your Light*  
Psalm 36:7-9  
Daniel Dosmann  
© 2000

*Prayer of worship*  
Voices  
Lord how - grace-ful in your un - fail - ing love O -

house you give them drink from your ri - ver of de -  
lights they light For with you is the foun-tain of life  
in your light we see light For with light in your light  
we see light In your light

*A little bit faster*  
They feast on the a - bundance of your

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Daniel & Françoise Dossmann were born and raised in Paris, France. They met in a classical guitar class where Françoise, age 16, was a student and Daniel was one of the teachers. They had no Christian background. This book is the story of how they searched for God on their own, first into Eastern religions, including a trip to India when their son Oliver was two years old. They became Christians one year later, entirely alone with a Bible. They searched and found that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.



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