Ingrid Lundin Moyal Testimony

This testimony was written by Ingrid Moyal, one of our WBS students, and was posted on her Facebook page December 4, 2020. Ingrid discovered WBS after being diagnosed with ALS. WBS's online bible correspondence courses provided a way for Ingrid to study and obey the Gospel! Attached to her posting was a link to the World Bible School video called, "Trapped", based on the testimony of Ingrid. You can also see this video at ***worldbibleschool.net/trapped/****.*

September 2013, I noticed a limp in my left leg as I walked. Oblivious to the journey that was to come, I received my devastating diagnosis of ALS, in February 2015. 7 years since I noticed a change, 7 long years of heartbreak for us as a family. We've been on a journey, not many people get to experience in a lifetime. This is my story, of how by being trapped in my own body, led me to discover the entrance to the narrow gate that leads to eternal life.

Our adventure started in 2007, Ari received a job offer and we emigrated from South Africa to Wellington, New Zealand in July of that same year. The memories are still vividly etched in my mind. We stayed for 6 years, received our citizenship, and then returned to South Africa in December 2012.Now reflecting back on my life on this journey, I can see God's presence in so many instances.

We rented a two-bedroom place in Churton Park, a family environment with lots of parks and close to the city of Wellington. I settled into a new job. After 6 months, we moved up the coast to Kapiti coast, settled in a sunny home. Living in Wellington, the desire to move back to sunny South Africa often plagued my mind. I believed that these feelings would fade away and eventually disappear when we moved into our own home, but they didn't. They lingered. The desire for the familiar was so strong. Ari's job was based in Kapiti and I would do a daily commute to work in Wellington, by train. Everything was picture perfect. Daniella was 3 and still in kindergarten, there was an excellent school in walking distance, kids who lived in the neighbourhood would walk to school. I was so blind and oblivious to the abundance of blessings; I didn't even notice the numerous God presence signs at the time.

We also lived around the corner from a church, within walking distance. God reaching out to me, the signs were everywhere. God gracefully waited patiently for me/ us over the years. I have discovered that, God's grace is initiating, undeserved, forgiving and nourishing; during this time, I felt that this grace surround me, it carried me even though I struggled to admit it. Over time, I thought I'd adjust but it was a struggle. The daily commute became tedious for me. I stopped seeing the beauty of the green landscape and freedom that was ours in abundance. We were safe. Sometimes we'd forget to lock the front door at night and discover that we'd left it open during the night. We came back to South Africa for a holiday in December 2009, I was emotional and didn't want to leave. But once we got home, back to our home, I was content and happy to be back.

In May 2010, I resigned from work. I was 3 months pregnant at the time. We had decided on a new adventure. Ari thought we'd take a chance and decided to try a family-oriented, simple type of living. Dubbed the "white gold" industry in New Zealand, we decided to give it a try. Our experience with dairy farming was indeed an eye opener. We rented out our home and moved onto a farmhouse down south. This piloted our journey back along the east side of the South Island of New Zealand. We flew down to Dunedin, and from there drove up to the farm in Oamaru, located 15 km outside the town of Oamaru, just over an hour's drive from Dunedin.

Ari was employed as a Farmhand. His duties included 4 am milking and farm maintenance. We expected better weather down south, but was unstable compared to the windy Wellington, with up to four seasons in one day. The experience was also disheartening, only because Of the way they treated the dairy cows. If the cow birthed a male (bobby) they were told to shoot it immediately. It felt so wrong and horrific. Some were kept as bulls, but not all. Ari would sometimes come home with a whole bunch of dead Bobby calves in the back of his truck. After 4, months on the farm, we discovered that dairy farming was not for us. Soon after we'd made the decision, Ari had an accident on the quad bike one while working and he damaged his ankle severely. He had to be booked off for 6 weeks. In New Zealand, if you're injured on the job, you get acc workmen payment grants of almost your entire salary.

We decided to use the time, and Ari started an application for IT jobs, even as far as Dunedin, and Back in Wellington. We really didn't want to move to a new town again, and to the cold, Dunedin. Then one day, an advertisement for a job in the town of Oamaru was in the local community newspaper. It was to run and manage Morecom Telecoms, the only computer shop in the one-street town of Oamaru, God was certainly watching us, and we were in His presence! They immediately grabbed Ari whose great credentials were invaluable to them. We explained our situation and they were so happy to help out. We moved off the farm, rented a beautiful old home in the town of Oamaru, with a gorgeous view of the ocean and harbour areas of Oamaru. We were truly in God's presence.

We settled in our new home; I was also 8 months pregnant. Dylan was born at Dunedin hospital on 30 December 2010. I spent the new year celebration in Oamaru hospital, had my own private room and had 24-hour access to midwives, who would assist us, new mothers. They would also help with bathing and spoiled us with milo during the night feeding. It was a different way of life, simple with a strong sense of community. The people of the town of Oamaru were warm and friendly. So warm and welcoming our tenants in our Wellington home signed a 6-month rental lease. We signed a year for the property in Oamaru. Ari and I were planning to return to Wellington. He applied for numerous jobs; we had decided against Dunedin. When Dylan was 6 weeks old, Ari landed a good job in Wellington. Just what he was looking for. We had developed such a great relationship with our landlord, he decided to overlook the one year we had signed with him. We were finally on our way back home to Wellington, New Zealand.

We took the scenic route back up the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand. We spent a night in Christchurch. Ten days later, Christchurch was rocked by another severe earthquake, lives were sadly lost. Took the ferry with our car, all while having to care for a 6-week-old baby. A road trip with a 6-week-old baby was challenging at times, but the experience was well worth it. When we arrived in Wellington, we had to stay in a motel for a week, while our tenants moved out. Ari started work soon after we arrived back home. Everything worked out perfectly. Back home, we settled down. Earthquakes rocked Wellington, down South and further up north, and they were frequent. I was anxious. The thought of a tsunami wiping out the whole of Kapiti, and Dylan and I not being able to get to Ari and Daniella, these thoughts were real and frightening and always in the back of my mind.

We had a new young family move in across the street from us. Daniella was 6 years old at the time, she became friends with Aimee, they were the same age and went to the local school together, on good days, I'd put Dylan in the pram (baby stroller), and we'd all walk to school together. Life was easy but being a South African and used to our glorious warm weather I struggled with the cold weather. From the moment we arrived in New Zealand, the weather bothered me. I became depressed and was longing for warmer weather. I ordered a cross-training machine online and with great perseverance, I'd crank up the volume of my iPod, make the most of my time while Dylan was asleep. After a month or so, I began to look and feel better about myself. I was surprised at my level of motivation; I'd cook healthy meals for the entire family. I had no real friends; we had a community of South Africans in the area but no real friends. I was friends with our neighbour Michelle, across the street, and would often have a glass of wine and snacks on a Friday afternoon as we celebrated the end of another week.

Life was good, but the longing for home always seemed to linger in my mind. Time went by, and Dylan became easier to manage. I know that I suffered from depression and anxiety with both my children, I have always struggled with these feelings from a young age. I am not ashamed to admit it, somehow issues to do with our mental health have such a stigma in our world, we all struggle with these feelings at some point. Shortly after Dylan turned 1, we enrolled him with a day mother down the road, he used to go 3 times a week for half a day. This gave me much needed alone time. I joined the gym, got out and spoke to people. I used to love to use the sauna after a good workout And I'd chat with others while in the sauna.

I remember I met a lady whose full-time job was caring for her disabled son, he was paralyzed from the neck down. She poured her heart out to me. I responded appropriately, my response was genuine and sincere. I could see the utter exhaustion in her eyes. I sensed and could feel her pain and need for escape, but my struggle was minuscule compared to what she'd been experiencing. I felt ashamed; I had the privilege of sending Dylan to a day mother for a few hours to give me a break I needed. As I reflect on this incident now, I visualize what my response could've been that day. Knowing what I know now, although I couldn't solve her problem, I could've been a light in her life that day, comforting and encouraging her that there is another way of finding the rest that she desperately needed. Little did I know that I would be in the same position eventually, like her son, having to depend on someone 24/7. I need to mention my caregivers and husband Ari here, I have no words to describe the gratitude I have in my heart, I understand now, I am thankful that God has blessed me with two wonderful caregivers, and a husband, who has endured with me through it all.

Gratitude is a virtue; I've learned the true meaning of. It's a response that can't be forced or coerced on someone, it must be freely given. When we choose to celebrate our lives and not resent what is, we experience the freedom and rest we need regardless of our situation. We need to Have faith, to embrace what is. I have learned that faith is something we carry in our hearts, it defines who we are as people, shapes our character; it defines how we choose to live our lives daily. It's connected to a lifeline to heaven, called hope. We can't separate the two.

This faith (trust) in Jesus leads to abundant life (John 10:10). We are encouraged in the truth that Jesus is a lamp to our feet and light to our path. I try to live my life in this hope daily. I do still have many difficult days, but I acknowledge and thank God every day, that He who began a good work in me, will continue until Jesus comes again (Philippians 1: 6).

After the sauna, I'd shower and get dressed up afterwards, I'd feel really good about myself. I eventually joined a playgroup and Dylan and would attend every Wednesday if I remember correctly, I met other moms and we'd chat. It's comforting to know that we all have struggles in life. No one is perfect, we all have issues we have to face at some point in our lives. Then one day at the playgroup, I was preparing "tea" and suddenly a sense of deep sadness came over me. I had to go into the bathroom and try and compose myself, but it was a struggle. The tears kept streaming down my face. I didn't want any of the other moms to see me cry, and so I waited and gave myself time. From that moment, I realized that I needed to go back to South Africa. I had always felt guilty about taking Daniella away from the rest of the family. It turns out that we did what was best for us as a family at the time. I don't feel guilty anymore. I'm at peace with this now and am grateful for the experience.

We were given a wonderful opportunity to return to South Africa. We had a place to stay until we'd settle down and find jobs. I had a good feeling. And so, we began to sell off furniture, I had accumulated so many things or possessions in my life, and it became a problem. This problem started after Daniella was born. I filled my life with things (possessions), hoping that it would bring me the happiness, I needed. I thought it would change my feelings, about myself and my feelings towards others. When we moved to New Zealand and back home to South Africa, we had accumulated so much. I am ashamed to admit that I delivered boat loads of things to the salvation army. In a sense, it's giving back to the community and it felt really good.

Daniella, Dylan and I flew back to South Africa in December 2012, accompanied by my stepmom, Colleen , who flew to New Zealand to help me with the last-minute arrangements and my support for the kids with the flight back to South Africa. Ari stayed in New Zealand until our house was sold. We eventually sold the house and Ari arrived sometime around March 2013. Eventually, our holiday came to an end, Daniella attended the school down the road, and Dylan went to a preschool, everything was going well. I am starting an application for jobs, and Ari did the same when he arrived. It was tough. Not as easy as I had anticipated. I was optimistic, Ari not so much. We started arguing daily, things were uneasy. I eventually landed a job at a recruiting agency and started soon after. Ari landed a job, but not what he was hoping for.

As I reflect on my mental and emotional state, I was extremely moody and depressed. I was not doing well. In July 2013, we went for a weekend away where a lion cub scratched me. A few weeks later, in September 2013, I experienced my first symptom. A limp in my left leg as I walked. A few days later, painful lower back pain. Then a few days later, the worst flu like symptoms I've experienced. I spent days in bed. I misinformed, the orthopedic surgeon, advised that I needed a back operation. I have included the full story below. I have progressed quite considerably more over these past two years. I can no longer walk or speak; I am extremely weak in my neck. I now use a wheelchair that supports my neck. When I wrote this, I was optimistic. My hope is now based on the character of God, His compassion, His mercy. His faithfulness, His unconditional love.

It's been 7 years of struggle, with endless angry and bitter tears. So much loss and yet, from a godly perspective, a gain, and a win for heaven. My hope and trust in God to extend the same gift of salvation, to Ari, my precious children and to my family and friends. To everyone reading this message. Some days, being trapped in my body, feels surreal, it's as being in a dream that's constant, yet endless. We have experienced so much loss as a family. But by God's grace, He has roped me into an intimate relationship with Him.

Despite my devastating diagnosis, I'm encouraged by the fact that I get to spend eternity with Jesus. God has been faithful and helping out from the very beginning of my illness. Shortly before receiving my diagnosis, God sent me Bertha. She's an extension of me, would wash and dress me, choose clothing to my taste. I had lost the ability to speak but Bertha became my voice. Bertha has become a member of our family, gaining some invaluable experience for her career. Helping me out has become more challenging lately. I have progressed quite considerably in the past few months. It's as if caring for a newborn baby. My neck needs constant support, and my peg feeds (feeding tube) take time so as to allow for digestion. It's also draining Ari who does the night duty. I usually sleep through the night, but occasionally wake up where my head has fallen off the pillow and I need help.

There are many days when I feel like giving up. So many days, when I cry out to God for some relief, some release for us as a family. There is so much I need to say, my hope is that God gives me strength and endurance, to do His will for the time I have left and make this an ongoing testimony, until He takes me home, to be with him forever. I see God working in my children s lives. My gorgeous Daniella is finishing her last two years of school, she's self-sufficient, independent. Knows what to do and then gets on with things. Works as a waitress part-time to earn pocket money. Dylan is an absolute angel, gift from God is loved by everyone he meets. Extremely independent and confident is he. Makes his and packs his own lunch for school. I am thankful. I sometimes gaze at my gorgeous children, and my heart sings praises to the Lord for blessing me with such an incredible gift.

It's been over 2 years since my baptism since I received the special gift from above. The gift of a new life, to spend eternity with Jesus. That's the belief (faith) I hold in my heart, connected to my lifeline, hope, is what keeps me going. God wants us to endure the endurable, to build character and be transformed from within. It's a change that takes time and patience.

Something I've always struggled with. Patience. Every day is a chance to start over, make today your day for new beginnings.

I've been so focused on worldly things; I was blind to the abundance of blessings I had all around me. I sometimes experience feelings of regret. It becomes overwhelming when thinking about it too often. That's why I turn to my only source of comfort. The Word of God. That speaks the truth. God also knew I had a story to tell(my truth) and I know that He's intention is to reach everyone reading this. This gift of technology came at just the right moment, God's divine intervention. Thanks for the gift of this technology, dad, and Coll, who made it all possible.

My Alien Body

I was diagnosed with *Motor Neuron Disease* **(MND)**, specifically *Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis* (**ALS)** in March 2015. MND is a disease that attacks the nerves in the brain and spinal cord. The nerves stop sending messages to the muscles, and as a result, the muscles become weak and waste. The brain isn't affected, I'm still fully aware of my body shutting down. It feels as though my body is collapsing into itself. As my muscles become weaker, the foundation of my body is becoming increasingly unstable. It's difficult for me to hold myself up and I need a chair that gives me proper back support. I am thankful that I have a small frame. I think it would have been very difficult if I was a lot bigger. It's easy for people to lift me.

My husband and my care worker know exactly how to do things, which makes it easier for me. At the moment, I can still stand, but only if someone holds me. My ankles are very weak, the left one more than the right. My arms and hands have been affected the worst. I have lost my fine motor coordination, and as a result, I can't use my hands for anything anymore. I use my eyes to type. Thanks to the wonderful Tobii eye gaze technology, I use my eyes to navigate the mouse and use an on-screen keyboard to type. I thank God for this amazing technology. I feel in touch with the world again, which keeps me going and more positive. I've become emotionally stronger and physically weaker. I have to 'hold' myself together for the important people in my life. Being ill, affects not only me, but my family too, especially my husband and my kids. I don't think my son knows me any other way. He was just two when my symptoms started more than three years ago. For me, it feels like a lifetime, because of the post-traumatic stress I have suffered as a result of this insidious illness. I say insidious because it is the perfect word to describe MND.

My symptoms started in September 2013. I woke up one morning with a limp in my left foot as I walked. I didn't pay much attention and just carried on as normal. Then a few days later, I developed the most excruciating back pain. I also felt extremely exhausted all the time, and things in general became increasingly difficult and tiring. I made an appointment with an orthopedic surgeon who sent me for an MRI and told me that I needed a back operation. I decided to live with the pain and went for a few physio sessions. In January 2014, I decided to go for a second opinion. After a thorough examination, I was told that my back was fine, and my problem was neurological. I was referred to the neurologist immediately, who examined me and told me that I had to be admitted to the hospital for further tests. So, my seemingly harmless limp and back pain was more serious than I thought. This was just the beginning of my MND journey.

I remember feeling happy and relieved because I was going to find out what's wrong with me. I was admitted to the Donald Gordon Hospital. I had two MRI scans and a spinal tap. The MRI of the brain showed that I had suffered a stroke. Further examination showed that it was an old lesion, probably at the time I had my car accident in 2001 that almost cost me my life. But that's another story, another blog. My neurologist diagnosed me with possible Transverse Myelitis, and I had five days of intravenous corticosteroids, and then spent two weeks in a rehab centre. In my mind, I felt as if I was getting better. I took unpaid leave from work and gave myself time to relax at home before going back to work. I was advised to go back to my neurologist, but I felt I was fine and needed some time at home to rest. I also carried on with my therapy and exercise at home and I believed I was on the mend.

I still had the limp and as the effects of the corticosteroids wore off, I began to feel tired again. I also started falling over and I couldn't seem to stop myself from falling over. I heard of a doctor in Pretoria who could possibly help me. She took my blood and sent it to the UK for testing. Apparently, we don't have the equipment here to do the testing. I didn't ask questions and just wanted her to help me. The blood came back and showed that I had heavy metals in my blood which was potentially causing my illness. This doctor proposed a " treatment plan" over the course of many weeks and the option of stem cells. I spent the next few months travelling to Pretoria for "Lipid Therapy ". I was told that I needed to complete 25 sessions before they could test my blood again. I think in total, I had 12 sessions. I also had stem cells from a donor injected into my spine and also intravenously. Again, I was excited about the treatment and after I had the stem cells, I thought I would see an improvement. I gave myself a few days for the stem cells to work their magic and was extremely disappointed when they didn't.

I stopped the "Lipid Therapy" and managed to get an appointment with another neurologist. I didn't bother to go back to my first neurologist and thought a second opinion wouldn't hurt. After he examined me, he diagnosed me with possible Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP) or MND. He said to me that the presentation for MND wasn't there. CIDP is treatable and so began my third round of treatment for my possible CIDP. I spent the rest of 2014 in and out of hospital. I felt extremely ill after every treatment, and I felt very weak. I couldn't really see an improvement, and I was beginning to think that it could be psychological. I began to doubt myself and even family were calling me lazy.

I decided to book myself into "rehab" again, because maybe I was too lazy to get myself right. I spent 3 months in the Rosebank clinic. I also saw a psychologist and had physical therapy twice a day for 3 months. I was so desperate to get better, and the thought that it could be MND, never crossed my mind. I remember my neurologist telling me, that he would give me the benefit of the doubt and treat me for CIDP. I remember thinking, there is NO way that I could have MND, because MND only happens to men. So, I spent the last three months of 2014 in rehab, and even graduated with a certificate. I told my husband to phone my first neurologist and make an appointment. I had to wait two months, and only got to see him on the 16th of

February. When he examined me, he told me that it looked like MND. I was on a big cocktail of medication and he told me that I needed to "detox" my system, so that he could run proper tests. I went back to him and was officially diagnosed with MND on the 16th of March 2015. It has been a long and relentless road to getting a final diagnosis. It's also been expensive; the stem cells and Lipid Therapy was not covered by medical insurance. It was traumatic for me, having to spend 3 months in rehab, away from my family, my kids. I'm so grateful for my husband, who took over my role while I was away.

Through all of this, I can say that my faith in God has grown so much! I still have days where I am angry, but I feel like I have grown so much and learnt so much about the person I am. I came across this beautiful quote by Christine Caine, "Every time I look back on the timeline of my own story, I see God's grace, redemption and protection of my life. I have always been " protected" by God. I know that now. With everything I have been through, I have always been OK. The experience has just made me stronger. I am blessed with a loving family and a helper who is an extension of me. I choose to believe that I will get better!