

143 *The death of a salesman*

(This isn't the article [143] that I said yesterday was in draft – this one just snuck up on me!)

I've always been a salesman, starting from when I was a kid, (and I'm not proud of it) nicking stuff from shops and selling it to my mates. I came from a dysfunctional family, so when, as an 18-year-old, I spent a holiday week at a Christian community in Yorkshire, I fell in love, and couldn't stop talking about God: my first experience of a real relationship with God.

But I'm the kind of guy who wants to know, from first principles, how things work, so when I went to college a year later and the CU "explained the gospel", that was it!

So I had the feeling and I also knew "how it worked".

My Christian life since then has gone roughly like this (more detail in article [0]):

- *Ten years* as a conservative evangelical trying to persuade charismatics they were wrong.
- *Ten years* as a charismatic trying to persuade conservatives they were wrong.
- *Five years* (after a second experience of finding a relationship with God) persuading others to follow a course: "How to love and be loved".
- *Ten years* as an internet evangelist (motivated by love, I think) trying to persuade unbelievers.
- *Ten years* with a growing feeling that miracles would really help my sales pitch, which led me into a miracle-based cult – we were "right", but didn't waste time trying to persuade others.

Thankfully, one day God woke me up and I escaped, but I had totally lost my faith.

- *Five years* rebuilding my faith along traditional evangelical lines but still with an aching void.
- *Four glorious years ago*, we moved to the local church where we now live, and I discovered that I had been right all along: *Being a Christian really is about living in a relationship with God.*

But being a "working things out from first principles" sort of chap, I have been (and still am) trying to work out how I could have spent fifty years as a Bible-believing Christian and yet not discovered that love. I know that Love has stalked me all these years, and I've seen glimpses, but why, why, why doesn't the Bible make it clearer?!

Thank you God for your truly amazing love!

Paul Bev. 27.06.21