



# Making the Tough Decisions

**A**s an airline captain of more than forty-years experience, I know the importance of having to think on my feet and make split-second judgement calls. Thankfully, these occasions do not arise very often, but we should be ever vigilant.

The Bible is a major part of my spiritual life and the twenty-five publications that form the library of manuals that govern my working life are very important too. In these manuals there are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that must be strictly adhered to. There is also a set of non-normal operating procedures that guide us through the various thought-out scenarios that may arise as a result of mechanical or meteorological mishaps that may occur. In my working life, if the books had to contain a procedure for every conceivable scenario that may arise, then we would need an aircraft ten times as big to carry the manuals. The truth is that there is no way of anticipating every possible event. So in every manual, there is a caveat that states the following:

“Nothing written in these publications negates the responsibility of the Pilot in Command to make whatever decisions he or she sees fit, to protect the safety of the aircraft and all its passengers and crew.”

When I think about the manual for my life—the Bible—I can see the same principles apply. The many parables of scripture illustrate the non-normal operating procedures of Christ. This book has an answer for all of life’s big questions and many of the minor ones as well. If we pray about any situation and seek guidance from the Bible, we will find a better option than the ones we may have thought through without this consultation. Does life or evil always allow us the luxury of prayer or study time before making a critical decision? Sadly no. But this does not mean we don’t have instant access to spiritual support if we stay close to the source of all power and knowledge. Every day in my job I stay close to Jesus. I pray often and speak to him often. Then I use the greatest tool of all: What would Jesus do? (WWJD).

The work we do at Mission Serenity is sometimes life-and-death, just like my flying job. Thankfully these events, as I have said, are only akin to once-in-a-hundred-year type events. So for me at work, as in life, this adage is true. Always think of the worse thing that can happen and don’t let it. We apply this to our mission work and I to my flying work. Luckily in almost all situations, we have the luxury of time to consider, seek counsel and pray. But there are those occasions when we must act on our gut instincts and make a call on what we can see.

## Why the Urgency?

Recently while working for the recovery of a young family, we were applying the Christian Principles of our work in the clear and present company of The Holy Spirit. Progress was good but evil was working hard to derail our efforts. What was clear to us was that this was a family that God had a powerful interest in. I mean, it was clear that this lovely couple should stay together and overcome the difficulties of a tough life. They were well equipped to form a powerful team in the healing of so many others and there was a clear and vested interest in this not happening. There was a battle raging in the room and there was a tussle for souls and we were in the middle of it. Both people believed in God and were desperate for a healing relationship with Him. Then in the midst of the battle came the plea, "Please baptise us now, please. We can't afford to wait. Please give us this chance".

There is not a month goes by when we are not asked to baptise someone into Christ, not into any denomination, but in Christ. We are well aware of the protocols around baptism, as it exists in our own denomination. We always call on one of our associated and ordained pastors to conduct the baptism. Sometimes we are in the water with them but it is always done in accordance with the policy manuals of the church. We know that Heaven does not require a person to be baptised as a requirement of salvation, but this much we do know. For some who are locked into the snare of evil and who are desperate to be saved, it is the baptism that gives them instant ownership of their relationship with Jesus at the time they need it most. Sure, we would like the luxury of time so we can go through the appropriate studies and align our souls with the doctrines of faith that we hold dear. But there comes a time when we just don't know how much time we have.

Many Christians are proclaiming that the return of Jesus is very close. Yet they act like it may never happen in their lifetime. Many assume that the broken that seek Jesus can take the six months or so required to prepare for baptism, like there is plenty of time. But if baptism for some means that they are accepted by Jesus just as they are, right here right now, then what should we do? Yes we know that He is not seeking baptism as a means of salvation, but would Jesus want us to baptise someone right now on the spot if it meant they would cling to him immediately? Or be lost in the bureaucracy of established Bible study and church policy if we did not? When you see someone burning to death in a fire, do you run off to find the safety manual in search of the appropriate way to rescue them or do you do what ever it takes to get them out of there?

Jesus made it clear that we are to make disciples of many; that we are to go out as disciples and baptise the world. The story of the Ethiopian makes it clear that structured Bible studies and established protocols are not required. That ordination, which is not mentioned in scripture at all, is not a requirement for one man to baptise another. If you had to break the law to save a life, would you do it? If the plea we heard for urgent baptism and the intervention of Christ were not heeded and the delay gave satan what he

needed to keep them away, would you baptise or wait? If the Holy Spirit was pounding at your heart to do it even as you were rebuking satan in the name of Jesus, would you do it or not?

I could not in all good conscience let that plea go unanswered. To me, at the time, it was a matter of life or death. Now that it's done I await the knock on the door with the summons to explain myself to the authorities. What will be my plea in the courts of religion? Guilty as charged. Will I do it every time I am asked? No. Would I do it if I felt that Jesus was prompting me under the same circumstances again? Yes, I would; and I will face His judgement. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man I would not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).

There is fast approaching a time when life will be so challenging and frightening that people will be begging Christians to baptise them urgently. We may not have time to hand out expressions of interest cards let alone conduct lengthy Bible studies. Who among you is prepared to put a time on the return of Jesus? If an evangelical program can be held in third world countries over a few days and then masses of people are baptised into Christ who may never be seen again, then where do we as Christians draw the line and why?

We will soon enough be in a place more glorious than our wildest dreams. A place where tough decisions are of the past and we have long forgotten. Until then we must be prepared to make some tough calls and put our own credibility on the line. I guess the best answer comes from the following question, "What would Jesus Do"?

*Graham Hood.*

11/11/13 at 11am  
Armistice Day.

*Lest We Forget*