



Introduction

*F*rom Zimbabwe, Africa, to Auckland, New Zealand, I have traveled around the world and heard some of the most fascinating stories. I once met a middle-aged woman in the bush of Africa who told me how she had been attacked by a crocodile while washing her family's clothes in the river. "The croc," she exclaimed, "snatched me from the water's edge, took me down to the river bed, and rolled me over and over trying to drown me!" Modestly she lifted the edge of her dress to reveal the impressive teeth marks beginning on her right shoulder and finishing just above the knee. She said, "But I outsmarted the old devil! I played like I was dead, and he went away to prepare himself for the feast.¹ While he was away, I climbed out of the river bed onto the shore and have never seen him since!"

Had I not seen the physical evidence, I would not have believed her story. How is it possible to survive such an

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attack? The thought of an African crocodile rolling a person (especially me) on the bottom of a river bed does not include a “what happens next” scenario. Once you’re down, you’re down. How is it possible to make a comeback?

Although for much of my adult life I have not lived in the United States, there is one thing about Americans I know for certain—Americans love comebacks! Whether in movies, sports, theater or in the everyday workplace, we love it when someone seems down for the count only to make an awe-inspiring recovery. In fact, one of my favorite lines from a sports commentator came from CBS golf analyst Verne Lundquist. Jack Nicklaus, perhaps the greatest golfer of all time, entered the 1986 Masters Tournament at a time when the sun seemed to be setting on his illustrious career. But someone forgot to tell Nicklaus he was too old to win. Jack made a final round charge, shot 29 on the back nine at Augusta National, and won the most coveted prize in golf at the ripe old age of 46. When Nicklaus drained an eagle putt on the fifteenth green on the way to his victory, Lundquist exclaimed, “The Bear [Nicklaus’s nickname] has come out of hibernation!” America applauded, golfers and nongolfers were inspired, and one of the greatest comebacks of all time was recorded in the history books.

Unfortunately, sometimes the recovery for which we so desperately long does not come. A parent loses a child. A child loses a parent. A disease remains uncured. A habit remains unbroken. Every trip around the sun brings the hope of recovery, but sometimes recovery just doesn’t come. Instead, greater loss occurs and the effects are tragic.

This book is about recovering something that is lost. Something we lost that unless recovered yields perhaps the worst possible ramifications known to the human experience. Such loss inevitably leads to meaninglessness and depression, dejection and hopelessness, despondency and despair. In fact, unless that which is lost is recovered, nothing that is found

matters. A life of joy, peace, and prosperity will remain elusive, and any sort of satisfaction will be temporary at best.

Indeed, can God make a comeback? Although God has never moved, our accusations against Him have convinced many that He has ridden off into the sunset never to return. Even those who acknowledge his existence expect very little from Him and live pragmatically as atheists. “God may exist,” they say, “but His existence makes little difference to my life.”

This book is about a woman who believed that God’s recovery was about as likely as a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and assembling a fully functioning Boeing 747.² Harmonizing what we know about this world with the existence of God, in her mind, was just not possible. God was just too far gone. He could not recover.

My desire is that through the words on these pages, I can transport you back to the events that led to Laura’s rediscovering or recovering God. Her story has as much tension and intrigue as any novel I have read. These events are actual and occurred, not in the jungle of Africa nor the mountains of New Zealand, but in a place least expected. After all, the most fascinating and inspiring stories do not happen in the unfamiliar far off places of the world, but in the concrete jungles with which we are all too familiar.