



Pastor's Page

“The Hand of God”

The snow was freshly fallen, and the sun was shining brightly in the clear blue Alpine sky. Thanking the Lord for this beautiful day I moved into a pretty routine parallel turn. I'd already done hundreds of similar turns during the week in the “Three Valleys” ski area of France, but on this occasion I lost my footing and at only a moderate speed I plummeted into the snow. Normally I'd get up quickly brush myself down and continue skiing. However in this instance, I stayed on the ground, my thumb really hurting! Hoping that the pain would soon subside I sat in the snow and admired the scenery! Before long I began to feel dead sick! Now with my head between my legs other skiers were careering across the slopes to inquire after my well being. One of the members of my party called for the ‘blood wagon’ (an affectionate name for the mountain rescue vehicle) It never arrived but with the sickness beginning to pass I said; “ I'll be ok to ski down to the village” (which I did, slowly!) On arriving, I was sent off to a coffee shop to recuperate but actually took refuge in a nearby fashion boutique! Inside I walked around praying for courage to take my ski glove off and look at my thumb, which appeared to have shrunk about an inch since the fall. When I did, I discovered that it was at an angle on a par with the ‘Leaning Tower of Pisa!!’

Overcoming my tendency to “let these things sort themselves out” I headed off to the doctor. Following an x-ray and some painful pulling of my thumb, he said (in English) “You've broken your thumb and damaged the ligament you're going to have to have an operation - do you want it in France or England?” Overcome by patriotism I said “Angleterre, s'il vous plait, monsieur” (which loosely translated means “England, please Mister!”) So back in England I went to the hospital where I had further x-rays before being signed up for an operation. I was very anxious (never having had an operation in my life) The next day I was asked to come in for what I thought would be the surgery, but turned out to be an appointment with a hand specialist. Following a two-hour wait the consultant saw me. He sent me for yet more x-rays, asking me to consider where I might stay after the operation. Returning to the fracture clinic I waited nervously before being called back in. With the original x-ray and the latest x-ray side by side he said; “This is very unusual” (I wasn't sure if this was a compliment or an insult!) He then called a colleague in saying “come and look at this, you won't often see this!” He then explained how an injury such as mine (with suspected ligament damage) very seldom heals without surgery, but said; “yours appears to be doing just that! The bone has realigned itself perfectly for the healing to take place. You aren't going to need any surgery!” He then looked at me, smiled and said “Somebody's looking after you!”

I thank God for his healing power and for looking after me. I know that bigger miracles than this have happened but this one happened to me! I also know that there remain many unanswered questions about suffering, but as we enter lent this week let's contemplate again the God who not only suffered for us but also sealed our salvation with his blood. The God whose hand was wondrously at work through a broken body upon a cross.

Yes I believe that God can mend broken thumbs and broken lives too!

18th February 2007