



Top:
A storm leaves Radio Hauraki's pirate ship, *Tiri*, blown on shore at Waipu Cove, NZ

Bottom left: Ray's cheesy studio shot when he had hair

Bottom right: Ray and Janet Curle at Bill Subritzky's 90 birthday celebration



RAY CURLE

From pirate to preacher

I'll let you in on a little secret. My author name is Janet Balcombe but my real name is now Janet Curle. Little did I know that when a stranger approached me to buy my book one day, we would end up married. Nothing short of an act of God could have connected these two radicals.

Being the son of a well-known evangelist brought with it certain expectations: for example, going to Sunday school, Bible class and church. But there was rebellion hiding in Ray's heart, so as a teenager rock music and surfing became his escape hatch.

At age nineteen, Ray joined Auckland's pirate station *Radio Hauraki* as an ad salesman and copywriter. They transmitted from a coastal freighter in the Hauraki Gulf, near Great Barrier Island.

This boat was the *Tiri*, the star of the film,
3 Mile Limit.

At age twenty, Ray sailed to Australia with two friends in a 32-foot sloop, *The Orbiter*, and surfed the East Coast. Then after a year, he went back to rejoin *Radio Hauraki* who now had a legal licence to broadcast and were based in Caltex House in Auckland. London called a couple of years later and he moved to the UK and worked for *Thames Television*. From there he went to the first private FM radio station in the UK, *Capital Radio*.

At age twenty-four Ray married his Auckland girlfriend and returned to New Zealand for the birth of his daughter, Amanda. He formed *Creative Media Services* and picked up the sales representation for four private radio stations, including Hauraki. But this was the 1970s and sex, drugs and rock'n'roll ruled. Excessive Marijuana consumption and the occasional fling with Cocaine led to a marriage split. Ray left on his own to manage *Radio Otago* (4XO) in Dunedin, working with Mike Baker at *Radio Central* in Alexandra.

On a trip to Auckland to sort out the separation details, Ray's then six year old daughter began weeping as she realised her parents were serious about living apart. Ray says, "*Something like a guitar string snapped inside my heart.*" Later he read in the Bible that in the last days God will turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the children's hearts toward their fathers. Ray immediately turned back to the Lord that he knew as a child and made the move back to Auckland.

He was invited to be Sales Director of 89 Stereo FM (the first

private station to get a FM licence in NZ), and whilst in the boardroom preparing the application papers, he got a call terminating his marriage. That day his mind was in turmoil, and when he got home, he lay on his bed asking the Lord for forgiveness for every sin he could remember committing.

Then something miraculous happened.

“As I cried out to the Lord an incredible thing happened. I was suddenly charged with what seemed like a zillion volts of electricity that transfixed me to the bed so that I was unable to move. For what seemed like an eternity, wave after wave of God’s love flowed right through me.”

“I’d had some euphoric drug trips in my life-time, but nothing compared to this amazing experience.”

If he wasn’t born-again before, he certainly was now – and well and truly baptised in the Holy Spirit and Fire.

After resigning from 89 Stereo FM, Ray worked for Universal Homes and set up a branch in Taupo. There he met Roy Waldrom who mentored him for two years and taught him to hear the voice of the Lord. While he was there, Ray’s daughter came to live with him and he became a solo dad for five years.

Returning to Auckland he met a lovely Christian lady who had also been a solo parent with a daughter, Angie. This led to twenty

years of marriage and four amazing children were added to the clan: Sam, Rebekah, Rachel and Jonny.

For thirteen years, Ray was the Crusade Manager for New Zealand's most well known evangelists, Bill and Pat Subritzky, and helped to organise national and international crusades.

Leading the deliverance counselling at Bill's Auckland meetings, Ray witnessed God heal and deliver hundreds of people. He worked beside his brother, David, who developed the video production side of *Dove Ministries* and counted it a great privilege to be part of the original team who launched the men's ministry, *Promise Keepers NZ*.

Believing it was time to move on, Ray took his family to Gisborne and set up a tourism-marketing consultancy. One day he heard the Lord say, *"I'm calling you to preach and teach on the judgement of God. It is not a message of fire and brimstone, but of love and compassion."*

After four years he heard the Lord say move back to Auckland. Upon asking why he had been led to Gisborne in the first place, Ray believes the Lord said, *"To be broken and prepared for change."*

Those changes came thick and fast. Back in Auckland, Ray worked part-time for *DayStar* magazine and at the *Westpac* Bank call centre in Onehunga. He then became the advertising manager for *Initiate Media* representing Christian publications in Australia, and *Christian Life*, the New Zealand monthly news magazine.

Unfortunately, with much heartache, Ray experienced his second marriage failure, but always hoped and prayed for reconciliation. In 2013 he underwent triple-bypass surgery. While in the hospital a sister-in-law called from London with a prophetic word containing three specific topics:

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick. Keep looking at Me. Don’t be anxious about your children. I love them far more than you do, and I’m already melting their hearts,” and, *“The ministry I have called you to will happen in My time. Be patient.”*

After repenting for his anxieties and sense of failure, Ray had total peace about the operation, and had a super fast recovery. After 9 years of being single and celibate, he met me... and God invited us to get married.

God is so radical. Although we live in a tiny country town, Ray sells advertising for a global network of magazines and websites. We work closely together as a team, sharing our testimonies in churches around the North Island, at *Full Gospel Business Men’s Fellowship* dinners and local conferences.

The ministry God called Ray to (back in Gisborne) has finally begun. When Ray was age ten he had an impression from the Lord that he would be preaching in the last days before Jesus returned! This is now happening.

Ray can be contacted by email on ray@wildsidedesign.net

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.

Acts 16:31
