



INTRODUCTION

It could happen to you!

From time to time over the past few years several people have suggested that it would be a good idea to commit to print the beginnings of the Bethany story, before they become lost in the mists of time. Although I agreed with the sentiments, the thought of personally undertaking the task seemed overwhelming, and there were always more 'immediate' things clamouring for attention. Recently, however, two incidents occurred which prompted me to action. Firstly, in the period of transition from Tony Blair's premiership to that of Gordon Brown, I listened to a radio programme which advocated that the sooner Prime Ministers wrote their memoirs after retirement, the better. Having left Bethany employment six years ago, it seemed I had better make a start!

Secondly, I was encouraged by rereading the autobiography of Paul White, 'Jungle Doctor'. It was a story of his journey with God, told in his own style and from his heart, and therefore it became 'alive'. Whilst this 'Bethany' account is indeed about how the Trust was born and began to grow, it is not primarily about the facts and figures of homelessness. Rather it is a testimony of the faithfulness of God. Faithfulness which runs through all of what became known as Bethany's 'Seven Levels of Care,' through which the Trust sought to give an holistic response to the needs of homeless and vulnerable people. Because I want this story to 'live,' like the book I read, the parts of the Bethany journey in which I have been involved are of necessity told from my heart and in my own way. It is therefore more 'memoir' than straight historical record. Even while working for the Trust, there were





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many aspects in which I was never personally involved, and since I retired, the work has grown at such an amazing rate that it makes it difficult for those still employed to keep up with all that is going on, let alone someone no longer 'in the loop'.

Inevitably, then, I have drawn on articles that others have written in reports, newsletters, and annual reports. Indeed some staff, past and present, may well recognize their own words coming back to haunt or bless them! I am grateful for these contributions because they have been written by people to whom their particular experience or work has been meaningful and for whom, and through whom, God had done some wonderful things. But principally, this is the story of what can happen when an extraordinary God shares an idea with ordinary people who decide to act upon it. In a different context therefore IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU.

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March 2008

