

# EVIDENCE OF GOD

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“The more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator... (that becomes) the best explanation of why we are here.”

Paul Davies, Theoretical Physicist

Quote from *Wall Street Journal*

Article by Eric Metaxas, Dec. 25, 2014

“Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.”

Carl Sagan

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Only close friends know how long it took to gather the courage to tell these very personal stories of miracles and of clear evidence of God in my life and in the lives of others I have meant along the way, on this incredible spiritual journey. I struggled equally with the writing of my first book on this subject, *Dear Dean...Love, Mom*, later published under the title *Between Heaven and Earth, Proof Beyond Doubt that Life and Love are Eternal*. That one was thirteen years in the making.

As I travel around the country, giving talks on the subject of life after death, and my own experiences in particular, I have become acutely aware that God is in evidence every day, every moment.

It is more realistic than pessimistic to say that we are living in difficult times. Even world leaders are aware that we are on the brink of major change, perhaps even the end of civilization as we have known it. As those times appear to be more chaotic and more immediate, people are asking Where is God? Why doesn't He intervene? Why is He allowing domestic and international violence to prevail?

The answer is, of course, that He did not create puppets. We are reaping the reward of our own actions. On the other hand, while it grieves Him that we have made such choices, it is evident that He is here whenever we call out to Him and, as some of the following stories will illustrate, He is even here when we fail to call out.

Linda Duty is an earth angel. I don't know what I would have done without her constant support. Thank you, Linda, for reading pretty dreadful early drafts and for making critical suggestions. Linda writes delightful children's books. Her positive messages inspire and encourage those most important to the future of this planet: our young ones.

God bless my sister-in-spirit friend Helen Cleary who read my first effort and urged me to re-think my entire approach. She was right and she was honest enough to tell it to me like it is. Only our dearest friends will tell us the truth, even when it might not be what we want to hear.

*Hebrews 12:6, For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.*

And so doeth Helen.

Thanks to those who have shared their stories and allowed me to include them in this book: Kansas author and literary critic Tom Mach; writer Dan Axell, Sally Webb, and Christine Schmaltz.

The beautiful cover is the work of mystery writer, amateur photographer and treasured friend, Jo Hiestand. In April 2014, we co-facilitated a Missouri writer's workshop at the St. Louis Community College at Meramec. Afterward, we jumped in her car and off we went for a weekend at the Vision of Peace Hermitage in Pevely, Missouri where we occupied caves that had been made warm and cozy, overlooking the Mississippi River and its steady stream of barges. It was there Jo took the incredible cover photo.

I also want to acknowledge you, the reader, who picked up this book hoping to find proof of the evidence of God. May your questions be answered, your faith be constant and your life be richly blessed.

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***T**he tunnel was deeply shadowed. Nothing stirred. To my left, in the distance, I could see a sliver of light, perhaps an exit up to the street. To my right, the subway tunnel disappeared around a bend, into total darkness. Between where I stood and the curve were three huge pillars. I was clearly lost and alone. With no idea where I was, I took a deep breath and sighed, “It’s time for a miracle, God.” At that exact moment, emerging from behind the most distant pillar, one of the biggest men I’ve ever seen stepped out of the blackness...*

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# 1

**A**lthough I’d been to New York several times on business, I’d never had time to explore. Having decided to travel by train from the Midwest, where I was living, to Florida, where I was invited to give a speech, I thought it would be fun to take advantage of a three hour layover in Manhattan on my return trip. I decided the

adventure would begin with my first subway ride. I'd go from Grand Central Station to Rockefeller Plaza where I would have lunch in a NY deli.

The journey started out uneventfully enough. I'd been given directions to my destination by a woman providing answers to traveler's questions back at Grand Central.

The subway looked just as I'd seen it on television and in movies: crowded and noisy. When I arrived at Rockefeller Plaza the wind was blustery, jackets flapped on people who walked quickly and with purpose. I loved it.

I found a deli and went inside. The first thing I noticed was the cacophony of languages that filled the room. One long seat was built into each wall with tiny tables placed here and there, and more crowded into the center space.

I squeezed into a vacant spot, bumping elbows with my neighbors on either side. Then I ordered a sandwich and sat back to enjoy the music of so many unknown tongues. New York, the deli, everything was just as I had hoped it would be.

Half hour later, I left the café confident that if I reversed my steps from the way I arrived, I would end up back on the subway that would deliver me to Grand Central Station. No problem.

Try as I might, I could not find the subway entrance. Frustrated and confused, I approached a woman seated inside a raised structure that looked like a teeny high-rise box office positioned in the center of a sidewalk. From her lofty perch, she barked directions to the throng around her who called out their destinations. I felt like a kid waiting for the perfect breaker to jump into the waves as I listened for an opening where I could shout "Grand Central Station, please!"

When the deed was accomplished, she rattled off, in rapid-fire sequence, which trains I needed to take. I walked away muttering... *the "A" train connects to "E" train connects to...* *What'd she say?*

Actually, finding the first train wasn't all that difficult. I perched on one of the side seats, jammed between other



travelers, trying to watch out the window for numbers posted on the subway walls. I was sure the woman told me to get off at Station E.

What I saw that made me think I'd reached my first point of transfer, I will never know. The subway stopped, the doors parted. No one got on and I was the only one who got off.

Standing now in a totally empty tunnel, I looked around in wonder. There were no signs on the walls, no indication of where I was and no clue where I should go from there. The place was simply a long underground concrete tube with what I remember as having only one set of tracks, the one that took away the subway train on which I'd arrived.

The tunnel was deeply shadowed. Nothing stirred. To my left, in the distance, I could see a sliver of light, perhaps an exit up to the street. To my right, the subway tunnel disappeared around a bend, into total darkness. Between where I stood and the curve were three huge pillars. I was clearly lost and alone. With no idea where I was, I took a deep breath and sighed, "It's time for a miracle, God." At that exact moment, emerging from behind the most distant pillar, one of the biggest men I've ever seen stepped out of the blackness.

His back was to me and one arm was crooked in such a way I assumed he was speaking on a cell phone. He had on dark clothing, but even from that distance I could see he was well-dressed. With no thought about caution, absolutely without fear, I raced toward him, calling out, "Oh, thank goodness!"

When he turned, I was facing an African-American who looked like the most gigantic football linebacker anyone could ever envision. But that's not what caught my immediate attention. What my gaze fastened on was the large cross around his neck.

When I say "large" I'm not talking about an oversized piece of jewelry. I'm talking about a cross made of wood—outlined in huge colorful stones—that was twelve to eighteen inches long and maybe ten inches wide. I knew in that instant—while I was

still racing toward him—that he was either an angel or an angelic emissary. God answered my prayer instantly and here was a man wearing a cross that let me know he was sent by our Father.

In a breathless *whosh* I explained my dilemma. He smiled and said, “Your train will be along in a second.” And, indeed, a subway arrived as he said the words. As it came to a stop, he led the way to the door, stepped back to let me enter, then came aboard behind me.

I found a teeny space to scrunch onto a side seat, while he managed to balance on the edge of a crowded seat across the aisle, facing me.

My eyes were riveted to the big cross encrusted with brightly colored jewels that hung around his neck.

After a few minutes, he said, “This is where you get off.”

As I rose, he did too.

We stepped into another empty tunnel, and walked directly from the train we just left, to one pulling to a stop behind it. No one else got off or on.

As this second train took us away, my angel said from across the aisle, “When you get off at the next stop, you will see a Grand Central Station sign that points to a staircase. Follow that and you will be in the station’s lobby.”

The train was coming to a stop when I leaned to him. “Thank you so very much. I hope I didn’t take you out of your way.”

“You didn’t,” he said, flashing a sweet smile.

With a last glance at the beautiful cross, I got off the train, awed and humbled by the knowledge that God not only answers prayer, He answers swiftly and in a way that cannot be mistaken as being anything except His holy work.

How many times have you had something happen in your life that you have chalked up to coincidence? Think back on at least one of those instances and ask yourself if you’re sure it wasn’t God sending an angel to answer your prayer.

Sure the big, well-dressed, dark-skinned man might have been a fluke. But what was he doing at the far end of the tunnel, in almost total darkness, behind a gigantic pillar? And why would he be wearing such an oversized cross? I would think a shadowy tunnel would not be a wise place for a NY savvy gentleman to be sporting something embedded with that many jewels.

And let's be honest. It may not be politically correct for me to say this, but wouldn't most females, alone in a shadowed tunnel, be at least a little apprehensive about approaching a mountain of a man under such circumstances?

I felt only a rush of gratitude when he stepped from behind that pillar. The cross was instant confirmation that God had answered my prayer.

For days, weeks even, I couldn't stop thinking about God's instant response, the dramatic way in which He responded. I felt certain it was so that I wouldn't get the notion it might be "coincidence" or anything but exactly what it was: immediate answer to my prayer for a miracle. I began to notice how many times I'd hear people say, "The strangest coincidence happened the other day" and they would tell a story that smacked so loudly of God I wanted to shake their shoulders and yell in their ear, "That was God, you twit! How can you not recognize the work of God?"

I started keeping notes on the number of occasions God made Himself known in not only my life, but in those of others around me. I didn't know they would end up being this book. That's because books, like babies, have their own gestation period. First there is the seed. An idea comes to mind, but it's no big thing. Time goes by and the idea won't leave you alone. It stirs inside you. It kicks to be let out. It grows and grows and grows. You may get uncomfortable with this new notion, but until it's time to be born, you can't make it happen. If you attempt to commit your ideas to paper before they are fully developed, the words will lie there in a stagnant puddle. So, you let it go for a

while longer and then, one day or night, when you least expect it, it comes rushing out, fully formed.

Welcome to the world, Book!

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## Notes

Isaiah 41:13

*For I, the Lord your God, hold your hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I am the one who helps you."*



Dear Lord, these are the moments that I now realize were evidence of You in my life and I thank you:

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## 2

I was born in Daytona Beach, Florida to a mother who turned nineteen a month before my arrival. My father—handsome, fun, and daring—was a stuntman during the depression, parachuting from a single-engine plane, several thousand feet up over the Atlantic, into a small fishing boat,

while crowds cheered from the beach. He was scarcely five years older than mother. Because of my dad's gypsy nature, we left Daytona when I was only three months old, which set the pattern for the rest of my life, or at least until I was fourteen. I attended more than twenty schools in nine years, and I loved it. Mother worried because often I wasn't able to enroll in a new school until the semester was nearly over. Dad would counter her arguments with, "Don't worry, Marge. She's getting the best education in the world. She's seeing places, important places, historic places, not just reading about them. And she'll never meet a stranger. She'll be able to adjust to anything life throws her way."

He was right, of course, except for a few obvious challenges that sort of lifestyle brings with it: I never learned to maintain relationships. I didn't know a lot about stability, or forming roots. The saving grace was that our first stop in any new city was the local museum and, from there, any other monuments or historical sites. I could recite the capital of every state before I entered kindergarten. .

Although I was always the "new girl" in school, I never felt excluded. I was able to observe others and I delighted in their friendships with one another. I loved to watch them interact. It never dawned on me that I could even be seen. I felt invisible, but never lonely.

Since I wasn't raised in a church, I didn't know about any particular doctrine. Someone gave me a Bible when I was about ten, and I actually did read parts of it, though I found Psalms too flowery, the Book of Revelation too scary and totally incomprehensible, and Genesis too filled with begats. I did, however, love the stories told in the Book of Matthew.

Mother would see me curled up in an overstuffed chair, absorbed in the Big Black Book, and she would give me one of her withering scowls. "Don't you be reading that all the time," she would say. "Too much religion will make you crazy. People

go nuts trying to understand the Bible. Go on outside and climb a tree.”

I had no desire to climb a tree. I wasn't the outdoor type. So, I went back to my reading and nothing more was said—until the next time.

I never heard either of my parents talk about God except in passing. I can't think why Momma would have addressed the subject, but I do remember she mentioned that the world would end by fire one day. That made a huge impression. Every time I'd spot a forest fire in our travels, I was sure it was our last day on earth.

All I knew about God or Jesus was what I gathered from that delightful old historical storybook called Bible. That's what it was to me—a storybook. There was no theology attached, no explanation of the more complicated passages I skimmed over and disregarded.

The word “home” had little meaning except to wish I had one. As we would drive through a town, especially around the dinner hour—which those of us from the south called “supper” back then—I'd press my nose against the back window and stare down neighborhood streets. The image of children running along the sidewalk, toward a house where a woman—I was sure it was the mother—was waiting in an open door, would make my heart race. Sometimes I could actually hear a faint call of “Supper's ready!” Oh, what it must be like to be hurrying to a dining room table with everyone gathered around! I'd sigh as the homey images faded from sight and we moved on to find lodgings for the night.

Home. How sweet.

All through those years, I felt a closeness to God that I never talked about (who would I have told?) and I was aware of His constant presence. Still, I did wonder who *He* was. To a child it's all so mysterious, so incomprehensible. I spent hours pondering questions that danced around in my mind: Where was God? Where did He live? Why did I sense Him in the twinkling

of the first star at sunset? Why did I feel Him so close when no one ever talked to me about Him? What did He look like? If only I had some image I could visualize. When I thought the word God, I drew a blank. I believed in Him, but I wanted to visualize Him.

Mother dismissed my where's God inquiry by telling me that I'd find Him in the clouds, but all I saw was sky-fluff that resembled a puppy or a ship then morphed into another form entirely. It certainly wasn't the face of God.

Was it?

As for Jesus, on the rare occasion I'd have a Saturday night sleep-over with a school mate, and attend Sunday morning church with her and her family, I learned that "He loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so". I saw pictures of a nice bearded man who tenderly held little lambs in His arms. I could put a face with the word Jesus!

Yet it was God I yearned to know more about.

In February of my fourteenth year, we moved from New Orleans to Tampa, Florida where I enrolled in the tenth grade at Hillsboro High School. Two weeks later, Daddy took me aside to tell me that he was leaving that day and I would never see him again.

I recall the lump that filled my throat as I whispered, "Why?"

His reply stunned me: "Because I'm so disappointed in you."

A hard slap could not have hurt more. What in the world could I have done? My heroes were June Allyson and Walt Disney. My entire value system was based on what I saw in Disney movies, and I patterned myself after the person I considered the sweetest human in the world: June Allyson. I never missed a single one of her movies and I was convinced I was her daughter. One day, I'd run into her on a city street. She would recognize me and throw open her arms. I'd go racing into them, crying, "Momma!" It was a lovely fantasy.

But now, here was my father, my one and only constant friend, telling me that he was leaving and I'd never see him again...all because he was so disappointed in me.

My mind went back to something my maternal grandfather said when I was about nine. I had asked, "Grandpa, am I pretty?" And he replied, "Why, honey, you're pretty twice; pretty ugly and pretty apt to stay that way."

Surely *that* was why Daddy was leaving. He didn't want to be seen with such an ugly creature, didn't want to have to admit that *it* was his daughter.

Daddy concluded our talk by telling me that our conversation was to remain our secret and that I must never tell my mother. "She thinks I'm going to Georgia on business this afternoon," he said. "Only you know the truth."

True to his word, he left and never came back. True to mine, I never told my mother or anyone else, at least not for many years. I simply quit going to school—if I were that ugly, I shouldn't be seen in public! My mother, thinking Dad must have been killed in a highway accident, eventually stopped looking for him and had a kind of mental and emotional breakdown. I don't think she even noticed that for the next two years I lived in my bedroom.

Even in that dark, dark time, evidence of God was revealed in the fact I was surrounded by books, mostly classics and poetry. My mother had never read one, claiming that she was too busy to waste her time on such nonsense. I can only conclude they belonged to her sister, my aunt, who came to live with us.

The aunt had a genius IQ and the temperament of a Dali Salvador. She also had a collection of classic 78 rpm records that I listened to day and night.

While Aunt Betty's books were not blatantly religious, they contained the writing of religious thinkers as well as Nostradamus, Plato, Kalil Gibran, America's Best Loved Poetry, the Koran (Qur'an is the more accurate transliteration of the Arabic word), Egyptian Book of the Dead, and she could quote



accurately from any of them. She also knew the Bible, chapter and verse. I'm not certain I didn't receive a better education those two years alone in my bedroom with her books and music than I received the other nine school years combined.

As unbelievable as it sounds, I see now that God was nurturing and supporting me. Not that I was aware of it at the time. I certainly was not. I drifted from book-to-book, page-to-page, Bach to Beethoven, Perry Como and Sinatra, melody and daydreams. It would be years before I would fully comprehend that my real Father had never left me. While I might not have been able to verbalize such a thought at the time, looking back on that phase of my life, I see evidence of God at every turn.

Most people can relate to a time in their own life that seemed so bleak they could not imagine ever again walking in the light. Daddy left us without warning. His departure came out of the blue, as disasters most often do. Whether it's the loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, devastating illness, termination of a job, no matter the situation, it is in those times we're tempted to say "What am I doing in this dark place?" when the real question should be "What am I to learn in this dark place?", because dark places are opportunities to measure where we are spiritually.

I didn't know to ask that question. Not back then. And yet, because I had been comfortable in solitude all of my life, I probably adjusted better than most children would have adjusted to those circumstances. Also because I had never known a strict regime or any kind of discipline where chores or expectations were concerned, I never felt restless. I just read, mourned the loss of my daddy, cried, then read some more. That process was repeated, day in and day out, for two solid years.

I thought I was hiding, but I know now that I was healing.

With every dark moment that has come over the years since then, I have been able to realize that we have within us every bit of courage needed to face whatever it is we are being forced to face. God, in those moments, is closer than ever.

He and He alone is our one true Friend, our one true Father.  
And we are beautiful in His eyes.

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## Notes

Matthew 23:9

*“And call no [man] your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”*



Recalling your darkest moments, at what point did you realize that God was with you every step of the way?

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## 3

**I**f we made a list of every evidence of God in our life, we would most likely still not be convinced it was His work. Could it be that we don't feel worthy of God's individual attention? Why would God want to help me, we ask? I stole an

apple when I was five. I had an abortion. I divorced three men and lived with two before that. I'm a terrible mother. I'm a terrible sister, brother, husband, daughter, person. Surely God is busy with ministers and gurus and all kinds of good, selfless people. He wouldn't take time for the likes of me.

1 John 3:1 *See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*

God, our Father, is big enough for all of us. There is enough of God to go around, and He makes no distinction between you and me and the most prayerful person on the face of the earth. You matter as much as the highest rabbi, the loftiest preacher, the most enlightened minister, the most unselfish person ever created. You matter that much even when you don't realize your own worth. I used to have a saying taped over my desk: *God don't make no junk.*

My mother never talked about God. Never went to church. Does that mean she was a bad or evil person? God must not think so.

Long after Momma remarried, she and her husband, William (Wally) Wallace, were returning to Florida from a vacation trip that took them across long, desolate, stretches of Texas. They were pulling a little camper trailer behind their Chrysler convertible when suddenly the horn began blasting away for no apparent reason. In repeating the incident, Mom said that Wally tried to tap it into silence as he continued to drive, but the thing seemed to be stuck. Finally, he pulled to the side of the road and lifted the hood to see what he could find that might be causing the racket.

As a former air force airplane mechanic, he knew about every kind of mechanical malfunction a plane or a car could possible experience. According to his expertise, everything was fine under the hood.

Scratching his head and rubbing his chin, Wally stepped back to get a better perspective of the car—and that's when he saw

the camper was inches from becoming disengaged from the trailer hitch. In that instant, the horn stopped blowing.

Wally secured the camper to the hitch and they went on their way. Had he been driving at the high rate of speed he had been going when the horn sounded its warning, the uncoupling of the camper would, without any doubt, have caused the car to flip. There was not another automobile for as far as the eye could see, and the top was down on their convertible. Every element spelled disaster, and yet they were saved. God was certainly in evidence on that hot Texas afternoon.

His love for us seems not to be a tit-for-tat situation. It appears He doesn't base His degree of love for us on our degree of outward worship of Him. I say outward because I have no idea if Momma prayed in solitude. Just because I never saw her pray or go to church, or show any overt interest in God, doesn't mean she didn't have her private way of loving Him. The following Psalm holds as true for Mother as it does for the ardently devout.

*Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Notice the verse does not end with *but only to a certain few*. God makes Himself evident to all.

I've talked to people who honestly believe the Lord won't listen to them because they have transgressed beyond redemption. I know, in those first few weeks after my father walked out on us, I felt that way myself. I had a horrible self-image. My father's declaration that I was such a disappointment he could no longer live in the same house with me made a deep psychological impression, one I still struggle with every day of my life.

So much of what we believe about ourselves has been imposed on us from the outside. We are, in large measure, an accumulation of what others have told us about ourselves. If you think about it, our limitations were all imposed from the outside.

If that were not true, we would be living to our full potential because it would never dawn on us that we couldn't.

Your words shape those who believe in you just as you were shaped by the words and ideas imposed on you by those you believed.

It took me a very long time to stop feeling the weight of the response to my question, "Grandpa, am I pretty?" The image of a twice ugly girl ruled and controlled most of my early life. Remarks like that, when we're so young, have a lasting effect. Long after we're old enough, and wise enough, to recognize that many of our negative traits are the result of outside influences, we still feel their impact, and we still strive consciously to overcome the limitations they place on us, until we finally come to accept that we have a choice; we can choose to let go of the power they have over us, or we can choose to let it cripple us for the rest of our life.

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This book is available through Amazon.com and may be ordered at most every bookstore in the world.