

Andy's healing testimony

I was training to be a nurse when I first began to feel my heart wasn't working properly. It was beating erratically and much too fast, then when my daughter was just 4 weeks old I was rushed into St. Johns Hospital cardiac care unit as an emergency admission. This was the start of numerous ambulance trips into the hospital, during which time I was placed on various medications, all to no avail, and steadily became increasingly unwell.

During a prayer time at our old church, a friend of mine said he had felt God say to him that I was to trust in the surgeons hands. I was unsure what he meant as no mention of an operation had been made at this time and my Consultant Cardiologist was still trying to control my hearts erratic rhythm with medication. My wife Judy and I both concluded that God was the great surgeon and believed He would heal my heart.

Eventually after repeated visits to the hospital, some of these as emergency admissions by ambulance, my cardiologist said he wished to refer me to another doctor. He jokingly explained that Dr Grubb was an electrician, whilst he was a plumber, but more seriously his colleague specialised in conditions where the heart's electrical pathways were damaged. He felt as I was on enough medications to stop the heart of an elephant, and they were having no effect in slowing or steadying my heart's rhythm, so he wanted a second opinion.

I was therefore transferred to the care of Dr Neil Grubb at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. Dr Grubb confirmed that my sinus node, the part of my heart that was supposed to control my hearts rhythm, was not working and a series of rogue signals were controlling the beat of my heart. A condition called multifocal right atrial tachycardia. My heart rate was now at 130+ beats a minute with episodes of 250 or 400+ beats causing extreme fatigue, pain and damage to my heart. He suspected a virus had attacked my heart, a condition called cardiomyetis, causing scars and damaging my hearts natural electrical pathways.

He proposed an ablation operation to try and fix the problem. Immediately the word given to me by my friend almost a year before now made sense and I agreed to have the procedure. Dr Grubb told that there was an 80% chance of success, but Judy and I were confident that those odds were in our favour as we had God supporting the procedure. We asked him if Judy could be in theatre to pray for me during the procedure. He said he had never allowed this before, but as long as she did what he asked he felt it should be ok.

The procedure however didn't go as planned as during the operation the heart went into fibrillation as the electrical signals of my heart stopped completely causing the heart to do nothing but wobble like a jelly. If I hadn't been connected to the computers they use during the procedure my heart would have stopped beating. Dr Grubb explained I had two options:

Option one was to pull the wires from inside my heart, stop my heart and then try and restart my heart by using a defibrillator. He explained the problem with this was he had been ablating, basically burning, the abhorrent scarred areas of my heart and it might not restart.

Option two was for him to administer a drug to stimulate my heart's electrical pathways to restart it, however if he did this it would mean he could never operate again if the procedure he had performed hadn't worked.

I chose option 1 and removed my wedding ring and my watch and handed them to Judy. She immediately told me to stop saying my goodbyes, and although my faith had been knocked a bit by the unexpected turn of events, I truly believe Judy had the faith to lay hands on me and bring me back from the dead.

An anaesthetist gave me a general anaesthetic and Dr Grubb removed the wires from my heart stopping my heart and attempted to restart my hearts normal rhythm with the defibrillator.

I wasn't aware of any of this as I believe as my heart stopped and struggled to restart. I felt myself leave the operating theatre and arriving in somewhere bright and white.

In front of me were 10 shadowy figures and the figure of a man dressed in pure white clothes. The man turned to 7 of the figures and said "I'm sorry I don't know you". Immediately the 7 figures turned into dust and fell through the floor. Then the man said to the 3 remaining figures "come" and they burst into light and shot upwards out of sight. Then the man turned to face me and the feeling of love that emanated from him hit me like an actual physical blow. I couldn't take my eyes off his face; it was like waves of love were actually pouring from his eyes. He said to me "Andrew you are heading in the right direction but it's not your time yet; follow the voice of the angel." "What angel?" I asked and awoke with one of the theatre nurses calling my name.

I believe I had seen Jesus and shouted this in theatre and all the way back to the ward, telling everyone I passed there was a God in heaven and they needed to believe in Jesus. It was only much later on that day did I discover that Dr Grubb had had a problem with my heart and for a number of minutes it wouldn't restart. It was during this time I had met Jesus.

After a 4.5 hour operation and journey to the gates of heaven my heart was now in normal sinus rhythm and Dr Grubb said he felt that I should have no further problems, but if I did I was to contact him and he would see me again.

I got two years out of this procedure, enough time to complete my nurse training at Napier University and start work in the Eye Department of St. Johns Hospital.

Then following another flu-like virus in 2004 my heart's rhythm became chaotic again.

I had moved address since qualifying as a nurse and this meant I had transferred to a new GP practice near my new address. The GP there knew very little about my previous problems but agreed to refer me to the new Edinburgh Royal Infirmary instead of St. John's my local hospital. So within a few weeks of the symptoms returning I was sitting in the new consulting room of Dr Grubb and he was explaining that my sinus node had again switched off due to the scars on my heart causing abhorrent signals across the natural electrical pathways. He felt the new piece of

equipment the hospital had just purchased would be excellent for my case and we were confident that this piece of equipment was the answer to our prayers.

We were so wrong. After a seven hour operation using the new advanced equipment my heart was in a worse state than before. Judy had sat at my head praying in tongues in response to the difficulties the surgeon had encountered, and this again included two episodes of my heart going into fibrillation and having to be stopped and restarted.

I now realise that both Judy and I had been side-tracked in our faith and taken our focus off of God and placed our hope in the new equipment Dr Grubb had felt was the answer my problems. It had in fact been a hindrance as the shape of my heart had caused the machine major problems throughout the procedure.

The following morning Dr Grubb explained to me that he felt I should be seen at Freemans Heart Hospital in Newcastle by a Professor of Cardiology and that he would write to them to ask them to see me. I wasn't happy about this as I felt God had him in mind when we were given the word of knowledge by my friend 3 years ago, but Dr Grubb felt he had done all he could and my condition needed fixed sooner rather than later.

Within a few weeks I was back in the theatre with Dr Grubb. The Professor from Newcastle had travelled to Edinburgh to do my operation as the waiting list at Freemans was at that time 9 months and it was felt that I must have something done much sooner than that. They explained that my odds of a successful operation were 50:50 and asked if I was happy to proceed.

By now I was really unwell, my heart's rhythm following the failed operation had never settled into any kind of regular beat, and it was fluctuating between 150 and 400 beats constantly. My heart was beginning to adapt to the stress it was under and Dr Grubb informed me that if the operation failed my heart muscle would thicken, a condition called cardio myopathy, and this can be fatal. It appeared I didn't really have much choice. It was either try or die.

Judy was again part of the team in the theatre. She was allowed now to sit at my side and pray with me throughout the procedure. Dr Grubb said she was an essential part of the team.

The operation proceeded as before with both medics trying to find the abhorrent areas which were controlling the erratic way my heart was beating. The problem was due to the amount of x-rays I had received in my previous operations Dr Grubb was trying to do this surgery without using too many x-rays. This meant a lot of the time throughout the operation they were looking at blank screens with little flashing dots in various positions highlighting the essential areas of my heart. At one point Dr Grubb turned to Judy and said that they needed to identify the sinus node area, she and I prayed asking God for help; the surgeon then turned to Judy and said “thanks that’s it.” Throughout the operation Judy and I prayed in response to the problems the surgeons encountered as they tried to identify and ablate the multiple scarred areas that were causing my heart not to work properly.

Eventually after 5 hours on the operating table the surgeons were trying to eliminate what they thought was the final area causing the erratic nature of my heart. I looked at Judy as they began to burn away inside my heart. My heart’s pulse rate increased dramatically and the pain with it. I lay there hearing Judy praying in tongues and tried to focus on God as they continued to burn the scared area, then they stopped but my heart was still beating erratically. The professor turned to Dr Grubb and said “use a thicker catheter wire and give it some wellie, he’s young enough and he can take it.” The catheter wire was changed to a thicker one, which meant they could use more power to the area they were trying to ablate. Dr Grubb insisted I now allow him to administer some morphine through the IV in my arm as he suspected this might hurt a bit. I looked at Judy and she took my hand and we prayed quietly together. I looked up at the scanner arm above my head and noticed for the first time that the screws holding on its casing formed a cross. I gave Judy’s hand a squeeze as she was asked to return to her seat at my head as Dr Grubb prepared to give it some wellie!

I began to sing in my head the worship song “Not not by might, nor even power but by your Spirit O’ Lord. Healer of hearts. Binder of wounds. Lives that are lost restore. Flow through this land, till every man. Praises your name once more.” The power

heating the catheter tip was increased and my heart rate began to increase. Even with the morphine in my system the pain was still there. I could feel my heart sizzling and I could feel it popping inside my chest, like a steak cooking in a frying pan. I looked up at the cross on the scanner arm and then closed my eyes and gritted my teeth, trying to stay focused on Jesus the healer of hearts. I could hear Judy praying and I turned and looked at her, she smiled at me and I winked. "Are you all right?" she mouthed to me. I nodded my head and tried to smile. I had to look away as they increased the power some more and the pain shot across my chest and up the back of my neck into my head. I gritted my teeth again as they increased the power burning away in my heart. I looked over at the ECG monitor to my left, in the middle of all the monitors supplying information to my heart but I didn't need it to tell me my heart was racing because as my heart was pounding away in my chest and the sizzling and popping continued the pain was horrendous.

Judy's praying increased every time Dr Grubb increased the pressure on the foot pedal controlling the ablation catheter. Then when I felt my whole chest would explode my heart dropped into normal sinus rhythm. Dr Grubb, despite the fact he was wearing a lead coat, jumped up and punched the air. Judy was on her feet and at my head giving me a kiss. A theatre nurse came and checked on me and told me it was over.

Dr Grubb bent over and said my heart was in a nice regular rhythm, but they were just monitoring it for a few moments. He said he was pleased to see such a decisive change in the rate and he was confident they had got that final problem area. I remember looking at the cross on the scanner and thanking Jesus.

After about 20 minutes the surgeons were happy to start removing all the wires and catheters inside my heart. Dr Grubb asked if he could use my case in a medical publication. I said that was ok as long as God got the credit. Dr Grubb said "I'll put it down 80% to God and 20% to me". Both Judy and I laughed because we both knew God was 100% in control in that theatre.

Although my heart was now beating normally I still had to rest while it recovered from the strain it had been under for the last few years. I managed to get back to work,

despite a different health problem in 2005; everything was going really well with my heart.

Then in early 2009 I began to recognise I was having episodes of atrial fibrillation, and some associated irregularity of my hearts rhythm. At first it only bothered me at night, often waking me from my sleep in a cold, clammy sweat. I put it down to stress as I had been struggling with really bad migraine headaches and had lost loads of days off my work over the previous 12 months with them. However the irregular episodes began to increase as did my pulse, until eventually I had to tell Judy my heart was playing up again. Despite it been now over 5 years since I had last seen Dr Grubb in Edinburgh I phoned his secretary and explained who I was and what was happening and enquired whether I needed to go via my GP to see him again. She phoned me back with an appointment to see Dr Grubb at the Western General in Edinburgh where he ran a clinic.

After all the tests Judy and I went back in to see Dr Grubb and sat down in his tiny consulting room in the basement of the Western. He gave us the bad news that yet again my heart sinus node had switched off and explained the options available. Initially he explained he wanted to put me on medications, which he suspected would have no effect on the rate or rhythm of the heart but may help prevent much more damage occurring to the heart muscle. Then he planned to try another ablation procedure, but the odds of this working were small, 20% at best. If that failed he may have to knock out the top half of my heart, leaving it in permanent fibrillation and allow me go about with only my ventricles, the lower half of my heart working. He explained a pacemaker was of no use as it would have no effect on my heart. I have to be honest my faith was struggling with this turn of events but I explained to him that Judy and I both felt that the word from God given to us 9 years ago, to trust the surgeon's hands, referred to him and as we had not heard anything else at this point we felt it was right to continue to do so. He therefore agreed to list me for my 4th ablation procedure, which he hoped he would get done before Christmas 2009.

As it turned out it was in February 2010 before they could do my surgery. My heart rhythm by now was completely erratic and my pulse again was fluctuating between 130 and 400 beats per minute. I had also been rushed into St. John's hospital by

ambulance following a severe episode of chest pain and I was told there was nothing they could do other than chase up my surgery as it was obvious my heart was under an incredible amount of stress.

This surgery however was postponed when the consultant's mother was taken unwell, and a new date of the 9th March 10 was offered.

Ian, a friend from our church (New Life Christian Fellowship), felt moved by God to begin a fight against my heart condition. After consulting with the leaders of the church, he arranged for two people to come and pray with me and Judy every night.

On the Thursday of the first week, the night that our Pastor Richard and Elder Douglas were coming to pray for me, both Judy and I felt God lead us to the passage of scripture in James 5:14-15 that says;

“Are any among you sick? They should send for the church elders, who will pray for them and pour olive oil on them in the name of the Lord. This prayer made in faith will heal the sick; the Lord will restore them to health, and the sins they have committed will be forgiven”.

When they arrived both Richard and Douglas had the same scripture from God, so Richard read out the scripture and then actually poured olive oil over my head and prayed for healing, believing what God said in the Bible. We all agreed together and Richard said the scripture was clear enough, I would be healed.

Something changed that night, not physically, because if you had taken my pulse it was still 130+ and erratic as ever, but I felt something change. Richard asked me to share on Sunday what was happening and I said my operation was due in a 3 weeks but I wouldn't need it. Why did I say that when if a doctor had taken my pulse or ran an ECG the physical evidence would have argued a different story and called me a liar? It was because inside of me I believed it to be true. I often say now I knew it deep in my knower. Richard got me to do it again the following Sunday and everyone who was there that morning prayed for me. I had no physical manifestations but God was working inside my heart and I knew it and slowly over the next 3 weeks my heart

began to recover, it began to slow down. When I was due to have my operation my heart was in normal sinus rhythm and beating at approximately 80 beats a minute the whole time.

When I arrived at the Hospital on the 9th March 2010 the consultant Dr Grubb came to see me. I told him the heart was back in sinus rhythm, he said he would still take me into theatre as arranged, where he would test the heart and induce the rogue tachycardia and then ablate the damaged area.

In theatre, Neil tried everything to induce my heart's erratic rhythm and tachycardia but my heart continued to hold sinus rhythm. They paced my heart up to 400 beats a minute, shocked it with sudden bursts of increased pace, gave me as much adrenaline as they could, then gave me atropine but my heart stayed in a steady sinus rhythm. For 1 hour and 15 minutes Dr Grubb and his team persisted in trying to break my heart's natural sinus rhythm but it remained steady always returning to 72 beats per minute the moment they stopped stressing it.

Dr Grubb and his team were amazed, this was not normal or expected. He said this condition does not just go away on its own and that Judy, who had her now usual seat in theatre, and I must have tapped into a greater power than he had. He was happy to give God 100% credit because as he said this time he had done nothing. I laughed and said could he not have said that sooner and it would have prevented the last hour and 15 minutes of work.

I do not have to take any heart medications, I do not have or need a pacemaker and following a recent hospital check-up I have been given the all clear and discharged from there care because I have a very healthy heart.