

Minister, Writer, & Gospel Singer Rev. Paul G. Zimmer II opens up and shares his life with us...



Q: Childhood memories: what did you want to do when you grew up, Rev. Paul?

A: Well, initially, I wanted to please my dad, and he was a printer, and he'd take my brother and I with him to work on Saturdays, and all those huge presses and the smell of ink had my interest. However, once I got into high school and joined Beginning Band [I started out on drums but moved to the trumpet when the teacher discovered I lacked the ability to keep a beat] I quickly decided I wanted to teach high school band. I followed this dream through my first two years of Junior College, but after being mediocre in music theory classes, my dreams were like an old sailing ship caught up in a storm and smashed against the rocks of the shores.

It wasn't until I came to Jesus, as Lord and Savior on Christmas Eve, 1966 that I found He had kept me for the day I'd receive my calling to the ministry. I remember my mom and dad asking what I did on Christmas Eve, and I told them I heard from God, and I was going into the ministry! My mom, a Catholic, said, "You do know you won't be able to get married?" And my dad [who didn't know Jesus at all], had just popped a couple prunes into his mouth, and he nearly choked to death with my news. That was an interesting breakfast conversation to say the least.

Still, it took me being drafted into the US Army, nearly going to Viet Nam, and a few more years working as a lathe operator on the evening shift to convincing me to get out of blue-collar work and into studying for the ministry. I had flunked out of Junior College after four semesters, so my confidence in academia was low. That is where I let go and let God, and ended up five semesters later with my B.A. degree in Religion and Social Work, not to mention four straight academic scholarships and a total GPA of 3.88.

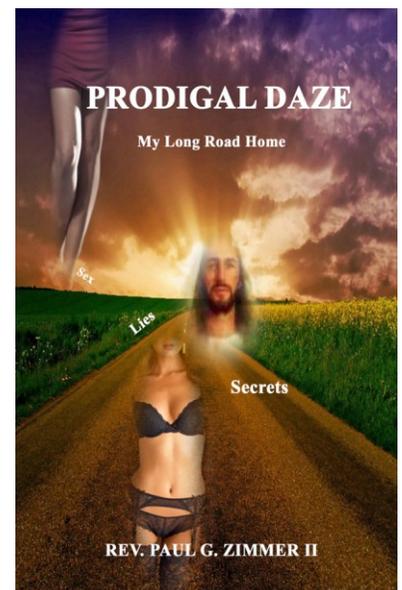
I could no longer deny that not only did He call me to the ministry, but He made a way [in spite of my own failures and lack of confidence] for me to enter the ministry!

Q: I remember always having a book in my hand. What kinds of books did you enjoy reading as a young boy?

A: This may sound strange to those who read books, Cindy, but I was never big on reading! I guess I felt I had enough reading assignments in school, and about the only thing I read for fun and relaxation were comic books (loved Superman and Archie), and the Sunday comics, and of course the daily sports page. Today is no different, although I do read the paper from page-one to the end! And I love to browse the web and read articles and blogs from several forums I belong to! And the truth is, coming from an author, to say I never liked reading books, well, that is at odds with my being an author, and expecting people to buy and read my books!

Q: How did you get started with the Boy Scouts and what role did it play in your life?

A: I was in eighth grade, and every week, some of the kids I considered friends, wore the uniforms to school, because their troop meeting was right after school! Well, I was a typical male, who saw the uniform with all its badges and thought it may be neat to have one too!



I got into scouting rather late; I was 14, and scouts usually start at 11, so I had a considerable amount of making up to do, because you had to make Eagle by 16 in those days! I worked hard, and I read the manual, many, many times [so, there is another book I did read], and by the age of 16, I reached the rank of Star, with 23 merit badges on my sash.

The Scoutmaster knew I could never advance further, so in order to keep me involved with Scouting; he secretly petitioned the District Office and nominated me for the position of Junior Assistant Scoutmaster. At my Courts-of-Awards to receive the rank of star, I was presented with the Junior Assistance Scoutmaster badge, and I was sold on scouting!

I served in some function for several more years, even earning my right to belong to the Order of the Arrow, an Indian award given to scouts nominated by their peers for their leadership and hard work. The initiation was difficult, but I earned the Arrow Sash, and it is a lifetime honor!

After returning to California after my six-year hiatus to the nether lands of America [sorry Nebraska, I loved the state and grew immensely while there], I returned to southern California, and while looking for a job, I went to a job agency, and they screened me for a job working with kids. That led me to the Inland Empire Council of the BSA, and I was hired as a District Executive in training. I had to attend a six-and-a-half week course at the BSA Headquarters in Dallas/Fort Worth, TX for training. The course was called National Executives Institute, compared to an expedited Masters Degree in Business Management and Communications, and it ran 60 hours a week, six-days a week. There were a total of 60 classmates in each academy, and it even had a semester break after 20 days, and both semesters had a class President and cabinet, elected by their peers.

I don't know why, but I decided I wanted to be the president of the final semester, so I started a covert op campaign leaving notes for all the students, plus hanging up a poster each day, in one of our classrooms. To say I was busy would be an understatement. I did the notes and posters by hand, so no one, and I mean no one knew from whom the notes came from. Hand printed on the notes were a countdown to the unveiling of their next, and BEST class president EVER!

Needless to say, when elections for second semester came due, I was a unanimous choice for president. The first and last time I would ever be serving as a class leader for an academic course. I was honored, and at the end of the long, tough training course, all 60 of us, men and women, were commissioned as District Executives by the Boy Scouts of America!

I stayed with the job for a little more than two years, but because the job was more about raising funds, and developing more units and recruiting kids and leaders, I became disenchanted with the politics of the inner workings of the job, and left for a more rewarding job with the California Youth Employment Training Act. I wanted to work with kids, and not be restrained by the old numbers' game! Scouting, on the professional side, was a salesman like job, and I was never good at selling things for me or others!

Q: What is Gamesmanship Therapy?

A: It was a one-week course at the Menninger Institute in Kansas City, that taught us all about the use of games as therapy for both socially troubled kids and physically/mentally disabled kids. It was a long time ago, and my job with the State of Nebraska, and the Juvenile Justice Grant I worked under, mandated that all five-county coordinators attend at least one week of related training each quarter. This allowed me to pick from an impressive list of courses from around the country and Canada that offered training and certificates in teen-related coursework! This was one of my more memorable classes.

One thing they taught us, was a rather new idea for its time, and that was that the games played had "No losers!" Everyone participating in the games and events we coordinated were not to compete against one another, but against their own weaknesses, and they'd be rewarded for being there and trying as hard as they

could, to have a good time and practice sportsmanship! Of course, coming from a person into athletics, I had a difficult time adapting to a competition free agenda but it was actually refreshing to see EVERYONE leave a winner!

One funny thing happened to me. I arrived late (after midnight) the night before the course was scheduled to start, and the hotel, they put us up in, was also where the training was held. Any ways, I got my room key, and headed to the room wanting a shower and to get a few hours of sleep before breakfast. To my surprise, the room was already occupied by two women, who didn't scream and throw things at who they thought was an intruder, until I had the door opened and switched on the light. I had to duck a few lipstick containers, and an empty soda can, and while it was a scary thing for all of us, looking back it was kind of funny, as one lady was on the phone screaming to the desk clerk, 'We're going to be raped?' And the other one hiding behind a pillow, waiting to throw her last weapon at me, a hand-held mirror.

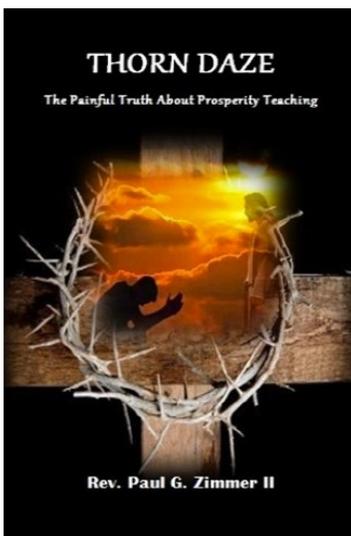
It caused a tremendous stir, and security and the desk clerk came up and apologized to the ladies and myself, and gave me keys to another room.

Well, the comedy of errors didn't stop there. This next room was occupied by an elderly man, who was about to get out of bed and beat me up! I immediately closed his door, and went back to the desk. This time, I demanded that the clerk accompany me to the room and make sure it was, in fact, empty and ready for me! Well, this room was empty, but I used the desk chair to hold the door closed should the night desk clerk make another error and I be the one fearing for my life and virtue!

Looking back, it was something that may never happen to a person once in a lifetime, let alone twice in one night! I am lucky to be alive, and those women were happy that their virtue was still intact!

Q: You work with youths mostly. What brought about your interest in helping youths as opposed to individual or family therapy/counseling?

A: Actually, Cindy, it seems as though I worked more with kids than families, but the truth is, I spent a lot of time doing both. For instance, when I worked with licensing of child-care facilities, I also spent time working a few nights a week as a crisis counselor for four local Parents Anonymous groups. It seems like I always found a way to work with both groups. I got the most out of the time I had, after all, like with scouting, I started late with my career, and had a lot of catching up to do!



And the last job I held down, a job I hated to call a job because I loved doing it so much, and felt guilty for getting a paycheck for, was with the State of California Department of Social Service/Community Care Licensing. It was here that I received a prestigious award from the Riverside County Office of Education for being the Youth Advocate of the Year. I received a similar award while in Grand Island, NE from the Grand Island City Schools Teachers Association while heading the Juvenile Justice Grant for developing and operating the Hall County Youth Services Bureau, but it didn't have the fanfare and press coverage of the RCOE award.

A few years before being forced to take medical retirement, I was honored by the Child Care Licensed Home Providers Association for a job well done. One must remember; this group was one that was under extensive scrutiny by my agency for following guideline, statutes and laws mandated by the State for those running a licensed care home. This award was like the community recognizing a local traffic enforcement officer for running radar on t as they drive up and down the streets and highways! This was an honor, but I worked hard to make sure my unit, and myself worked closely with licensed providers to help them be the VERY best childcare provider possible. It was never our intention to cite these folks for doing

poorly, but being proactive to make sure they remained in compliance and knew how and why to stay the best child-care provider ever!

I must mention one more thing about why I was a success. No matter what it was that I did, Shelly was always there to work with me and not stand in my way of helping others. On those four nights a week, she'd find something to do, and never complain, "Paul you're always gone!" Later, when it came to driving all over Riverside County to teach course to childcare providers, she drive me [do to my disability] and we'd always end the night with a dinner. It was a date night, and again, never one complaint about me being gone more than I was home! It is not a lie, that behind every good man is one fantastic lady! Shout outs to Shelly!

Q: How long did you live in the Nebraska and what is your favorite memory?

A: I moved to Grand Island, Nebraska in 1976, and Shelly and I met and married in May 1980. Following an F-5 tornado on June 3, 1980, my grant closed up, and the Department of Social Services relocated me to Omaha, and I was an Assistant Unit Manager with an Adult Protective Services agency for Lincoln County DPSS. I moved from that job to run a short time grant, funded by Warren Buffet. He gave six million dollars [in matching funds] to the Omaha Girls Club, and I spent a year there developing a transportation program [including buying buses and vans]; setting up a counseling and training program to r=prevent molestation and identify offenders and victims; and a junior Youth Employment Training program for inner-city girls! Yes, I was busy!

Greatest memory, or memories, were the two opportunities to work for and with kids. Both Grand Island and the Girls Club gave me vast exposure to developing programs from the bottom up, and I grew tremendously during those five years!

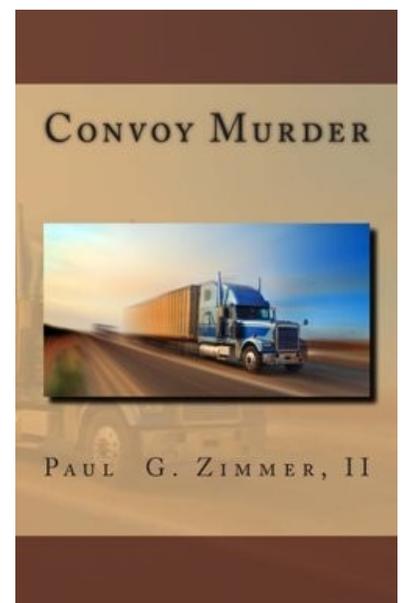
Q: You and your wife, Shelly, write & sing Gospel music. You also have an album. Do you both have a background in music?

A: Nah. We were rather novice when it came to this. It was more or less a hobby that we enjoyed doing together. I did major in music for two-years, and I played trumpet, guitar and piano, but the truth is I wasn't going to be playing Carnegie Hall with my gifts! Shelly had high school vocal training, but that is it!

We would take pop songs from the 60, 70 and 80s and re-write the words to glorify Jesus. We could do these thanks to karaoke music being available. All we had to do was get the background music, and plug in our new words, and viola! We were a hit from churches to youth groups and camps, to Christian clubs and schools!

Some songs we did over were Sonny and Cher's - "We got you LORD!" and the "Greed goes on!" Kids and adults alike loved our remake of the Beach Boys song that we called, "Churchin' U.S.A." One of my favorites was Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Good" and Ricky Nelson's "It's late." Of course, wherever we went, people would stand up and clap and dance around to our remake of several Elvis song like "All Shook Up" and "Don't be Cool." Of course, Shelly was good at rewriting the less funny songs, and she really blessed the people and moved them to tears singing Foreigner's "I Want to Know What Love Is!"

As for the album. That was a blast, and an experience I'll never forget. It took several months to do, and the engineer actually played lead guitar and ran the drum machine on two tracks, while I played rhythm guitar and piano and synthesizer on several other tracks. Filling out the other tracks, was a good friend Alice, who sang harmony, Shelly sang lead and also backed me



up when I sang lead. We put out a good product, and I couldn't be more proud of it, as it glorified God in many ways!

Looking back at how I answered your question, I guess one could say that after 24 years of fine-tuning our hobby and ministry, we became somewhat proficient at it!

Q: Does anyone else in your family write or sing?

A: My dad was called the poor man's Frank Sinatra. He had an excellent singing voice, and in Germany during the end of WW2, he'd entertain the guys in his unit with a song here and now. The rest of my family are pretty good at turning on a radio, stereo or popping in a disc!

Q: With your 3-book Daze series, you had quite a story to unfold for the reader with so much to reveal and inspire us. What prompted you to tell your story?

A: That series was ALL God. He laid those themes on my heart, and wanted me to share my experiences in order to inspire others. The truth is, Final Daze: God's Way or the Highway! It was always going to be my first book, but you and I know that when God is the source of your inspiration, what we do is totally up to Him.

I really was cautious about wanting to share my testimony, especially how I had come to Jesus, and then through anger with Him over the failure of my first marriage, my spiral downward into the pit of lust, porn and sexual sin! But, as Shelly and I traveled throughout the southern California area, singing and sharing about Jesus; God finally moved me into giving my testimony about how I came to Him, the miracle of returning to college, my early days in the ministry; my failed marriages; and everything that transpired after I fell into that deep pit of sin leading up to my attempted suicide was so moving with the congregations and audiences everywhere we went [because people asked if I had a book], and it was apparent that this was what God wanted me to do.

The rest is history, as they say! That book flowed like a deep river through a canyon. There was no stopping it once I put my mind to the writing of it!

Thorn Daze also replaced my original desire to write and publish Final Daze; so once again, I was moving as He led, and the book just happened. Once I got Thorn Daze into print, I turned to God in prayer, and like a little child, asked, "Father, is it no okay if I write the book I always meant to write in the beginning?" His answer is in the book and of course, I learned an important lesson about being in God's will, and that was to never forget who is truly in charge!

Q: How did the move from the Nebraska area to California come about?

A: Well, that is a long story, all of which is fully detailed in the book. Personally, I never wanted to return to California, basically due to the availability of porn on every corner, and the fact that it still controlled me! So, following marriage to Shelly in May 1980, and the F-5 tornado in June ... Nebraska DPSS and DOJ ended the youth service grant, and because they valued me as an employee, they got me into a position with Lincoln County DPSS in Omaha. The problem was; I loved that job with the Youth Services grant, and nothing was the same after that. So, when we discovered that Shelly's ex was still trying to find her - and he was a scary dude that meant to harm her as well as me - we decided to put several states between us and him. This was necessary in order to protect her from an abusive, vindictive individual that was stalking us. So, and it was "California, here we come!"

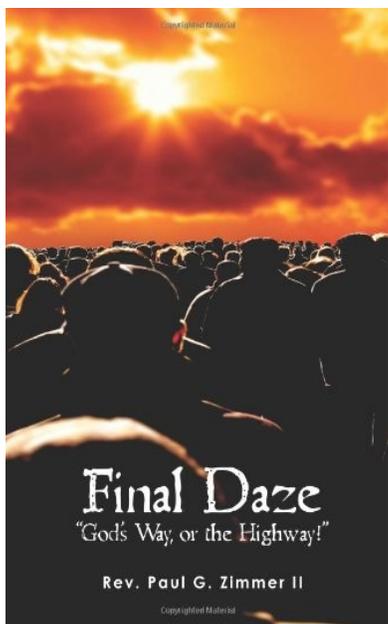
Q: Of all the books you've read, which is your favorite?

A: There is one book that I've read maybe fifty, sixty or seventy times now. It was written by my namesake, Paul E. Billheimer. The book? "Destined for the Throne." I first met Paul while watching him as a guest on the Trinity Broadcast Network's Praise the Lord show. For many believers, the content of the book may appear, at least at first glance, radical and Word of Faith like but after hearing him talk about the book and the principles surrounding the fact that we are all "Destined for the Throne" I wanted to know more, so I bought the book, which has a forward by Rev. Billy Graham, and couldn't put it down. In fact, I think I read it maybe five times in a row, and started to prayerfully apply those principles in my walk for Jesus!

In his book, Paul covers the things that should be our number-one concerns as we follow Him toward the goal of fulfilling the goal of being wed, as the Bride of Christ, and taking our rightful seat next to Jesus once we get to heaven. He talks about many things that should be of interest to all of us, things like the Church being the ultimate goal of the universe. To see that the Father, through His Son created the body of believers to be the church, which were the central object and goal of history. And by doing this, he provided us, the church, not only the Holy Ghost but the infallible word of God.

He shares that God had in mind for us, the church to hold the badge of supreme rank, here on earth, and devotes the entire third chapter to the "Mystery of Prayer." That one chapter helped to improve my prayer faith and life, as Paul spoke about things like God is helpless if we won't pray. He uses this chapter to tell us that pray is part of our spiritual badge of rank. Telling the readers that God will not and cannot act unless we pray, and that prayer is meant to be the main business of the church. In a word, Paul says that church prayer is the "Key" but today's church is too busy to use that key to unlock blessings. He has for us.

The one thing Paul says about the process of sanctification - which is twofold: When we are born-again, we are first, set apart from the world around us; and even more importantly.... because sanctification is the spiritual process through which we grow [shedding the flesh and becoming more Christ-like], and this is the part I could really wrap my brain, heart and FAITH around, he tells us that after we're born-again into the family of God, we are enrolled in an ongoing "On-the-Job-Training" program! That makes a ton of sense to me. Maybe because I administered Federal Jobs Training Program Grants early on in my career, and I understood the concept of CETA taking a person trained and skilled in one area of expertise and teaching them a completely new career for which one day they would be qualified to be employed in!



Simply said, we are removed from sin, retrained to one-day rule as the Bride of Christ, even to the point that we will one day sit in judgment [supervision] of angels. That is heavy when you think about it. This entire life as a child of God is spent preparing us for the Kingdom reign with Jesus as His holy bride!

Another important concept Paul covers is when he compares us to a sheriff's deputy. In this life, the Father is the like the county sheriff, and all of us have been deputized and fully trained and "Empowered" to carry out the work of the sheriff under his authority. This means we are fully deputized to speak and represent the Father here on earth. Deputized to pray in His name. Heal in His name. Cast out demons in His name. Basically, we have been granted for authority to represent our boss, here and now.

He also has a chapter dedicated to the mystery of unanswered prayer and the problem with the church, exhorting us not to forget we have been called to "Praise His name!" and how that praise is so effective in our supernatural battle with Satan.

I even taught a special adult Sunday School class on the book. It is a gem, a spiritual nugget that keeps on giving, and I have returned to its pages many more times than I can remember, to refresh my mind on the principles he writes about, and to underscore my faith!

Q: Because our pet “family” can be so entertaining, and have such unique personalities, have you ever considered writing a book about your life with yours? I ask because my husband and I have always been dog lovers and thinking back, each one has been a joy and not one has been like another one. Oh, the stories I could tell!

A: I think you, and your husband are on a similar track with my wife. Shelly thinks I should write about my many adventures with our dogs and cats. If I were to write a book about the fur kids, it would be more in the genre of children books complete with drawings and story line! The truth is, right now, I am so involved in my cyber ministry on Facebook; that time is precious, and it eats away at the time I need in order to write my second novel, and put together a book of devotions together. The book is essentially written, and saved on my PC in the form of monthly devotionals I call Narrow Path Trail Mix.

Maybe you should consider writing that book. Like you said each is so different than the other, and they are all special in my heart of hearts. Now I don't know about you, and I do know that many theologians would say what I am going to say next, is not the least bit possible; nevertheless, I believe all of our cats and dogs, and birds, will be waiting in the brand ne condo, Jesus went to prepare for us when we leave this world to cross over Jordan.

In fact, I have developed a ministry page for pet parents to post their kiddos on and when they need a prayer for the health or well-being of their pets, the Kickin' Back with Skittles community is available to pray with them! Kickin' Back with Skittles is on Facebook, and anyone can join the page by hitting the “LIKE” button, and posting photos of verses or whatever is on the heart, about their kiddos!

Q: Convoy Murder was a twist in genres for you. Are you planning to write some more in the near future? I really enjoyed reading that one!

A: Yes, but I need to tear myself away from Narrow Path Ministries and devote time and effort to putting all the research and ideas down on paper. It will be a Christ-centered mystery of the sci-fi genre. I think it will be a big hit, but that is what I think about all my books! Still, if it comes out like I am thinking, it will be full of thrills and chills, and a powerful message of faith and the Word of God to wrap it all up with!

Q: How did you come up with the story plot for Convoy Murder?

A: You may not believe this Cindy, but the actual first chapter came out of an example I used in Final Daze, and the main character of that example was Jake. Well, after Final Daze was published, along with Shelly and a tome of others who read the book and knew me, wanted to know whatever happened to Jake and if he got the job? Well, the story started from there, and I developed it as I progressed in writing it! I had no idea, whatsoever, who, what or where would happen in the book, it is like telling a story to a group of kids around a campfire, you have a basic premise, and you just build on it!

God is good! And I appreciate your words of encouragement about Convoy Murder! Coming from an accomplished author like yourself, that means a lot!

Q: Where can readers find out more information about you and your books and where are your books available for purchase?

A: Actually, your site, Authors Express covers this completely and flawlessly. Anything the readers may want to know about my four books, and future books can be found exclusively on your site! I hope we can continue to keep people, interested in any of my works, up to date on everything and anything they may want to know about me!

Q: Thank you so much for taking the time to let me interview you today, Paul. Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: Cindy, I've known you for, what? Four, five years now? The thing I love about Cindy Bauer is her thoroughness. You truly seemed to cover everything I could think of at this time, and I sincerely appreciate the time you take to make all your authors not only look their absolute best. I think if there is anything else to add, you will surely make room for me to share, and who knows, maybe you will come up with a second interview on your authors to keep your fans and theirs, out there for the world to read about. Maybe a one-year anniversary interview, to catch your readers up to date on the comings and goings of your authors over the past 12 months!

I appreciate the opportunity, and ask god to grant you His unconditional favor in this exclusive ministry to promote authors!