

## THE GUARDIAN

It is said by those who understand the changes that come with age that in your twenties you are learning your trade, in your thirties you are getting, in your forties you defend all threats to your achievements, in your fifties you mentor your successor whilst in your sixties and onwards your role is to guard the vision.

Therefore in my newly discovered age-adjusted role as one of the 'guardians' in the DCI movement I will say that what we guard are the words that God spoke to us in 1977, again in 1982 and later still in 1985. By guarding the words that God gave to us we will keep our focus and his favour in a future that contains many different choices yet few signposts. Let me tell you how it happened.

In a small gathering of rather naïve young men back in 1977 God said from Deuteronomy 15.6 that "*the Lord your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none.*" Different sensitive believers brought the same appealing verse to us in those early days and despite numerous coffee-break debates and not a little fanciful speculation, the meaning remained hidden at the time. Nevertheless today, we at least from that small group lend to '*many nations*' every single day.

In March 1982 God spoke to me, alone in an empty church hall in Madrid, just a couple of weeks after Pilar and I were married, the story can be read elsewhere. God appeared when least expected but perhaps when most needed and said from the first two verses of Psalm 105, "*Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done,*" and in doing so underlined the original and still mist-shrouded promise from 1977, setting the direction for Misión a Los Pueblos in Spain which a little later would become the DCI movement.

In August 1985 I leaned on a hump-backed bridge over a pencil straight railway line which stretched from one infinity to another. In the shimmering midday heat of rural Spanish Aragon I reflected that although God had surely spoken three years earlier what he said was like one of those self-assembly packs of IKEA furniture which come with allegedly simple instructions in several languages none of which make any sense at all, not even your own. As I said so to my perplexed self I ever so casually opened my pocket New Testament at Psalm 37, and God passed by saying that, "*I will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause shine like the noonday sun.*" I looked at my watch, it was just after 12 o'clock and the sun was unbearably bright. I understood.

The globally strategic move of God loosely known as DCI has come about through people taking the risk of believing not only that it was God who spoke on those three days but also that what he said was trustworthy and true. As men guard priceless treasure we in our sixties will also do well to keep these words safe because for more than 25 years they have revealed an amazing presence and provision of God which we are confident is fully transferable to everyone who is called to follow in our footsteps.