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## **I have never seen true evidence of God. And yet...**

by Bill Tammeus

A small c catholic

When I look back on my life, I'm astonished.

I've ridden elephants in India and camels in Egypt. I've seen Paris from near the top of the Eiffel Tower. I once woke up in Athens on New Year's Day. I've camped out near Montreal.

But I've never heard an actual voice I believed was God's. And yet ...

I've stood in a peanut field at the edge of Plains, Ga., with Jimmy Carter. I once sat at a table in New Orleans with Bill Clinton. When I was a boy, Paul Newman lived with my family for part of a year.

But never have I seen a scientific formula proving that God exists. And yet ...

I've been to a worship service on Christmas Eve in Bethlehem. I once landed safely in a snow storm in Zurich, Switzerland, after the wing of the plane I was riding in tilted to within a few inches of the runway. Had it touched, I almost certainly wouldn't be writing this.

I once heard Martin Luther King give a speech -- not Martin Luther King Jr., but Martin Luther King Sr., known as Daddy King. The Rev. Sun Myung Moon once met me -- and I him. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, once put his right hand on my shoulder as he spoke to me. His left arm was around my youngest sister's shoulders.

But Jesus Christ has never materialized in front of my eyes and asked me to touch his wounds. And yet ...

I've been in the presence of Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Hubert Humphrey, Al Gore, Bobby Kennedy, Gerald Ford, Walter Mondale. I once sat in Vice President Nelson Rockefeller's office for more than an

hour and interviewed him. I was in the chambers of the U.S. Supreme Court the day David Souter became a justice. I still miss him.

One time, I drove Chuck Colson around in my car. I've seen the snows of Tibet. I've seen Buddhist temples in Bangkok. I came close to dying in a winter storm white-out once on the New York State Thruway. I've seen the Alamo, the Taj Mahal, Big Ben and the Empire State Building.

But never has the Holy Spirit called my name so my ears could hear it. And yet ...

One time, I was on the radio in Hawaii. I've done regular commentaries for both radio and TV. My columns were syndicated for more than 10 years by The New York Times News Service, which means my words have appeared in Pekin, Ill., and in Malta, among many other places.

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I have fathered two daughters, each of whom has birthed two children. My extended family stretches from coast to coast and includes people who identify as Japanese-American, Korean-American, African-American, Chinese-American and Filipino-American. I can trace my mother's side of the family back into the 1500s in Sweden.

Still, unlike David Koresh, I've never imagined that the Book of Revelation was talking about me. Sometimes I've wondered whether it even speaks *to* me. And yet ...

I've conducted several weddings (all still married) and funerals (all still dead). I've preached in Illinois, Missouri, Kansas and Vermont. A woman in central Missouri once wrote to tell me she had someone read one of my columns at her teenage son's graveside service.

I have drunk beer in Uzbekistan, eaten rattlesnake in Kansas City, Mo., St. Peter's fish in Israel, pirogis in Poland and peacock in India. I've been hunting only once in my life, but I shot a rabbit right in the head. Dead. A stepson's pet python once was loose in my house for days. In a house I lived in briefly in Asia, monkeys would jump on the tin roof early in the morning and wake me.

But the triune God has never emailed me, called me by phone or stopped by to chat. And yet, this is the God I trust. With my life. Imagine that.

[Bill Tammeus, a Presbyterian elder and former award-winning Faith columnist for *The Kansas City Star*, writes the daily "Faith Matters" blog for *The Star's* website and a monthly column for *The Presbyterian Outlook*. His latest book, co-authored with Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn, is *They Were Just People: Stories of Rescue in Poland During the Holocaust*. Email him at wtammeus@kc.rr.com.]

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