

# A Glimpse of Eternity

## Ian McCormack's near-death experience



One night while diving for lobster on the small Island of Mauritius near New Zealand, Ian McCormack was stung by five deadly jellyfish of the kind that are among the most venomous creatures on Earth. By the time an ambulance arrived his body was totally paralyzed and necrosis had begun to set into his bone marrow. On route to the hospital, Ian began to see his life flash before him. At this point in his life he was an atheist and he wasn't sure what death would bring. As he lay there dying, he saw his mother in a vision praying for him, encouraging him to cry out to God from his heart so that He would hear and forgive him (his mother was the only Christian in his family.) After being taken to the hospital, Ian died for approximately 15 - 20 minutes and had an extraordinary near-death experience.



I knew there was a release; the battle to stay alive seemed to be over. No one told me what had happened, no one said, "You just died son." I didn't know that. All I knew was that the battle to try and keep my eyes open and stay alive was over.

I knew I'd gone somewhere, it wasn't like closing your eyes and going to sleep, I knew I'd gone somewhere. I had been having a floating away feeling for the previous 20 minutes in the hospital anyway. I'd been hanging on to my body with everything I had trying not to float away anywhere. And yet when I closed my eyes, I wasn't floating away, I was gone.

The Bible says in Ecclesiastes, that when a man dies his spirit returns to God who gave it and his body returns to the dust from which it came.

Well, I knew my spirit had left, I had gone somewhere, and yet I didn't know I was dead. I seemed to arrive in a huge, broad place like a void of pitch-black darkness. I felt like I was standing up. It was like I had woken up from a bad dream in someone else's house, and was wondering where everyone had gone. I looked around trying to orient myself to these new surroundings.



Have you ever woken up in the middle of the night and tried to find the light switch? Well, I was trying to find the light switch, and I couldn't seem to find it. I was trying to touch something, and I was moving round and there was nothing there. I was not even bumping into anything. I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. I lifted my hand up to find out how much I could see. I lifted it to where my face was and it went straight through where my face should have been. It was a terrifying experience. I knew right there and then, I was me, Ian McCormack, standing there, but without a body. I had the sensation and the feeling that I had a body, but I had nothing physical to touch. I was a spiritual being, and my physical body had died, but I was very much alive, and very much aware that I had arms and legs and a head, but I could no longer touch them.

God is a spirit, an invisible spiritual being, and we are created in his image.

I was thinking in my heart, "Where on earth am I?" And as I was standing there in the darkness, I sensed the most incredible coldness and fear coming over me. Maybe you've walked down a lonely street at night, or you've come home by yourself and you feel as though there is someone looking at you. Ever felt that? You sense someone's looking at you in the darkness but you can't see who it is. I began to sense evil in the darkness. The darkness seemed not just physical but spiritual. I felt like I was being watched. A cold encroaching evil seemed to pervade the air around me. I knew there was something around me. Slowly I became aware that there seemed to be other people moving around me, in the same predicament as me. Though I didn't speak out loud they answered my thoughts. From the darkness I began to hear voices screaming at me: "Shut up!" "You deserve to be here!" I thought, "I'm in hell, this could actually be real, but how did I end up here?" I was terrified – afraid to move or breathe or speak. As I thought about it I thought, "Yep, I could have deserved this place."

People have this picture of hell, of party time and great enjoyment. I used to think that too. I thought that you would do all the things there that you're not supposed to do on earth. That is absolute trash. The place I was in was the most frightening place I've ever been. The people there could not do anything that their wicked hearts wanted to do, they couldn't do anything. And there's no boasting. Who could you boast to down there? "Oh yeah, I raped, murdered, plundered, pillaged." Well whoop-de-doo boy! There's nothing down there to talk about, nothing. And they know that judgment is coming.

There is no relationship to time in that place. The people there can't tell what time it is. They can't tell whether they've been there ten minutes, ten years or 10,000 years. They had no relationship to time. It was a frightening place.

The Bible says that there are two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Darkness, which is ruled by Satan, and the Kingdom of Light. The book of Jude says that the place of darkness was actually prepared for angels that disobeyed God, not for people, ever.

And it was the scariest and the most frightening and the most terrifying place I have ever been in. I would never wish or hope that even my worst enemy went to hell.

I had no idea how to get out of this place. How do you ever get out of hell? But I had already prayed, and I was wondering why on earth I'd gone there, because I'd prayed just before I died, and asked God to forgive me of my sins. I was crying and I literally cried out to God, "Why am I here, I've asked you for forgiveness, why am I here? I've turned my heart to you, why am I here?"

The only way I could leave is because I'd repented before I died.

It's too late to repent once you get down there. You can only repent before you die. You can't pray your way out of hell and no one on earth can pray you out of hell, no one. You have to have prayed yourself. The Bible teaches that no one can pray for dead, departed souls and get them out of hell. They have to repent before death.

Then a brilliant light shone upon me and literally drew me out of the darkness.

The Bible says that a great light has shone into darkness, on those walking in the shadow of death and darkness, and has guided their feet into the paths of peace and righteousness.



As I stood there an amazing beam of light pierced through the darkness from above me and shone on my face. This light began to envelope me and I began to sense a weightlessness overwhelm me. I then began to feel myself lift off the ground and begin to ascend up into this brilliant white light.

As I looked up I could see I was being drawn into a large circular shaped opening far above me. I didn't want to look back too much in case I fell back into the darkness. I was very happy to be out of that darkness.

Upon entering the tunnel I could see that the source of the light was emanating from the very end of the tunnel. It looked incredibly bright, as if it was the centre of the universe. It looked literally like the source of all power, of all light. It was more brilliant than the sun, more radiant than any jewel, any diamond, brighter than a laser beam light. Yet you could look right into it.

As I looked I was literally drawn to it, drawn like a moth into the presence of a flame. I felt myself being drawn through the air at an amazing speed towards the end of the tunnel. As I was being translated through the air I could see successive waves of thicker intensity light emanate off the source and start traveling up the tunnel towards me. The first wave of light gave off an amazing warmth and comfort. It was as though the light wasn't just physical in nature but was a 'living light' that transmitted an emotion. Half way down another wave of light passed into me. This light gave off total and complete peace. I had looked for many years for "peace of mind" but had only found fleeting moments of it. At school I had read from Keats to Shakespeare to try and get peace of mind. I had tried alcohol, I had tried education, I had tried sport, I had tried relationships with women, I had tried drugs, I tried everything to find peace

and contentment in my life, and I'd never found it. Now from the top of my head to the base of my feet I found myself totally at peace.

My next thought was "I wonder what my body looks like?" In the darkness I hadn't been able to see my hands in front of my face. I thought "I must be able to see clearly now that I'm in this light." So I looked to my right and to my amazement there was my arm and hand but I could see straight through them. I was transparent like a spirit, only my body was full of the same light that was shining on me from the end of the tunnel. It was as if I was full of light. The third wave near the end of the tunnel was total joy. It was so exciting that I knew that what I was about to see would be the most awesome experience in all my life.

My mind couldn't even conceive where I was going, and my words couldn't communicate what I saw. I came out of the end of the tunnel and seemed to be standing upright before the source of all the light and power. My whole vision was taken up with this incredible light. I immediately thought of it as aura. Then as glory. I had seen pictures of Jesus with a little wee tiny halo or little glow around his face.

Yet Jesus Christ died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right-hand of the Father, and is glorified, surrounded by light and in him there is no darkness. He is the King of Glory, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Lords and the King of all the Kings.

I saw what I believe was the glory of the Lord.

In the Old Testament, Moses went up Mount Sinai for 30 days and he saw the glory of the Lord. He came down and his face shone. Moses face shone with the glory of the Lord, and he had to put on a veil, so that the people wouldn't be afraid. He had seen the light of God, the glory of God. Paul was blinded by a glorious light on the road to Damascus, the glory of Jesus.



And I was now standing there seeing this incredible light and glory.

As I stood there, questions began racing through my heart; "Is this just a force, as the Buddhists say, or karma, or yin and yang? Is this just some innate power or energy source or could there actually be someone standing in there?"

I was still questioning it all. As I thought these thoughts a voice spoke to me from the centre of the light. The voice said "Ian, do you wish to return?"

I was shaken to learn that there was someone in the centre of the light and whoever it was knew my name. It was as though the person could hear my inner thoughts as speech. I then thought to myself "Return, return – to where? Where am I?" Quickly looking behind me I could see the tunnel dissipating back into darkness. I

thought I must be in my hospital bed dreaming and I closed my eyes.

"Is this real? Am I actually standing here, me, Ian, standing in real life here, is this real?"

Then the Lord spoke again. "Do you wish to return?" I replied "If I am out of my body I don't know where I am, I wish to return." The response was "If you wish to return Ian you must see in a new light."

The moment I heard the words “see in a new light,” something clicked. I remembered being given a Christmas card which said, “Jesus is the light of the world” and “God is light and there is no darkness in him.” I had meditated upon those words at that time. I’d just come from darkness, and there was certainly no darkness here.

So this was God! He is light. He knew my name and knew the secret thoughts of my heart and mind. I thought, “If this is God then he must also be able to see everything I’ve ever done in my life.”

I felt totally exposed and transparent before God. I felt ashamed and I thought “They’ve made a mistake and brought the wrong person up. I shouldn’t be here. I’m not a very good person. I should crawl under some rock or go back into the darkness where I belong.”

As I began to slowly move back towards the tunnel a wave of light emanated forth from God and moved towards me. My first thought was that this light was going to cast me back into the pit. But to my amazement a wave of pure unconditional love flowed over me. It was the last thing I expected. Instead of judgment I was being washed with pure love.

Pure, unadulterated, clean, uninhibited, undeserved, love. It began to fill me up from the inside out. I thought, “Perhaps God doesn’t know all the things I’ve done wrong,” so I proceeded to tell him about all the disgusting things I’d done in the cover of darkness. But it was as though he’d already forgiven me and the intensity of his love only increased. In fact, later God showed me that when I’d asked for forgiveness in the ambulance, it was then he forgave me and washed my spirit clean from evil.

I found myself beginning to weep uncontrollably as the love became stronger and stronger. It was so clean and pure, no strings attached. I hadn’t felt loved for years. The last time I remember being loved was by my mum and dad when I was at home, but I’d gone out into the big wide world and found out there’s not too much love out there. I’d seen things that I thought were love. Sex wasn’t love; that just burnt you up. Lust was just a raging fire inside you, an uncontrollable desire that burnt you up from the inside out.

As I stood there, the waves of light stopped and I stood encased in pure light filled with love. There was such stillness. I thought to myself, “I’m so close. I wonder if I could step into the light that surrounds God and see him face to face. If I could see him face to face I will know the truth.” I was sick of hearing lies and deceptions. I wanted to know the truth. I had been everywhere to find the truth, and no one seemed to be able to tell me. I would talk to anybody who could tell me the meaning to life, the truth, what was going on, something had to be the truth. I thought if I could step through and meet God face-to-face I’ll know the truth and I’ll know the meaning to life. I will never have to ask another man, woman or child ever again. I’ll know.

Could I step in? There was no voice saying I couldn’t. So, I stepped through, I put my best foot forward and stepped through the light. As I stepped into the light it was as if I’d come inside veils of suspended shimmering lights, like suspended stars or diamonds giving off the most amazing radiance. The light continued to heal the deepest part of me, like it was healing my broken inner man, healing my broken heart.

I aimed for the brightest part of the light. Standing in the centre of the light stood a man with dazzling white robes reaching down to his ankles. The garments were not human fabrics but were like garments of light. As I lifted my eyes up I could see the chest of a man with arms outstretched as if to welcome me. I looked towards his face. It was so bright; it seemed to be about ten times brighter than the light I'd already seen. It made the sun look yellow and pale in comparison. It was so bright I couldn't make out the features of his face, and as I stood there I began to sense that the light was emanating a purity, a holiness. I knew now I was standing in the presence of Almighty God – no one but God could look like this. The purity and holiness continued to come forth from his face and I began to feel that purity and holiness enter into me. I wanted to get closer to see his face. I felt no fear but rather total freedom as I moved towards him. Standing now only a few feet from him, I tried to look into the light surrounding his face but as I did he moved to one side. As he moved all the light moved with him.

Directly behind Jesus was a circular shaped opening like the tunnel I had just traveled down. Gazing out through it, I could see a whole new world opening up before me. I felt like I was standing on the edge of paradise, having a glimpse into eternity.



It was completely untouched. In front of me were green fields and meadows. The grass itself was giving off the same light and life that had been in the presence of God. I saw no disease on the plants. It seemed as though even if you were to step on the grass that it would just spring back to life. Through the center of the meadows I could see a crystal clear stream winding its way across the landscape with trees on either side. To my right were mountains in the distance and the sky above was blue and clear. To my left were rolling green hills and flowers, which were radiating beautiful colors. 'Paradise'. I knew I belonged

here. I had traveled the world looking for paradise, and knew I had found it. I felt as though I had just been born for the first time. Every part of me knew I was home. Before me stood eternity, just one step away.

As I tried to step forward into this new world Jesus stepped back into the doorway.

The Bible says that Jesus is the door and that if you come in through him, you will go in and out and find green pastures. He is the door to life. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but by him. He is the only way. There is only one narrow passageway that leads into his kingdom. Few find it. Most find the expressway or the highway down to hell.

Jesus asked me this question "Ian, now that you have seen do you wish to return?"

I thought "Return, of course not. Why would I want to go back? Why would I want to return to the misery and hatred? No, I have nothing to return for. I have no wife or kids, no one who

really loves me. I want to go on in." But he didn't move so I looked back one last time to say, "Goodbye cruel world I'm out of here!"

As I did, in a clear vision right in front of the tunnel, stood my mother. As I saw her I knew I had just lied; there was one person who loved me – my dear Mum. Not only had she loved me, but also I knew she had prayed for me every day of my life, and she had tried to show me God. In my pride and arrogance I had mocked her beliefs. But she had been right, there was a God and a heaven and a hell. I realized how selfish it would be to go through to paradise and leave my mother believing that I had gone to hell. She would have no idea that I'd had a deathbed prayer and repented of my sins and received Jesus as my Lord and Savior. She would have just got a dead body in a box from Mauritius.

So I said, "God, there's only one person really I want to go back for and that is my mum. I want to tell her that what she believes in is true, that there is a living God, that there is a heaven and a hell, that there is a door and Jesus Christ is that door and that we can only come through him". Then as I looked back again, I saw behind her my father, my brother and sister, my friends, and a multitude of people behind them. God was showing me that there were a lot of other people who also don't know, and would never know unless I was able to share with them.

I asked, "Who are all those other people?" And God said, "If you don't return, many of these people will not get an opportunity to hear about me because many will not put their foot inside a church".

I said, "God I want to go back and tell them all. I've come here once, I don't even really know how I got here, but I can certainly find out. If I've come here once, I know I can come back here again. And I want to make sure I come back"

I said, "God, how do I return? Through the tunnel of darkness, back into my body? How can I go back? I don't even know how I got here." And the Lord said, "If you return you must see things in a new light." I understood that I must now see through his eyes, his eyes of love and forgiveness. I needed to see the world as he saw it – through the eyes of eternity.

And I said "God, how do I go back? I don't know how to go back."

He said, "I'll tilt your head ...now feel liquid drain from your eyes ... now open your eyes and see."

Immediately I was back in my body.

My head was tilted to the right and I had one eye open. I was looking at a young Indian doctor who had my right foot elevated in his hand and was prodding a sharp instrument into the base of my foot. He was looking for any signs of life. Little did he realize that I was now alive and looking at him. I wondered what on earth he was doing, then the penny dropped; "He thinks I'm dead!" At the same time the doctor stopped what he was doing and turned his head in the direction of my face. As our eyes made contact, terror swept over his face, as though he had just seen a ghost. Blood drained from his face and he went as white as a sheet. His feet nearly left the ground.

Shaken I asked God to give me the strength to tilt my head to the left and look out the other

side. As I turned my head to the left I saw nurses and orderlies in the doorway staring at me in amazement and terror. I apparently had been dead for some 15 to 20 minutes. I felt weak and I closed my eyes, but I quickly opened them again to check that I was still in my body. I wasn't sure whether or not I would disappear again. I was so tired. I closed my eyes again and fell soundly asleep.

## Epilogue



I prayed to God that night and asked him to heal me and enable me to walk out of the hospital. That night God completely healed me and enabled me to walk out of the hospital the next day. I asked God what I had become, as I found my entire life was changing for good. God told me I was a re-born Christian and that he wanted me to read His Bible. I had never read a Bible and had never heard about being born-again. Over the next six weeks I read the entire Bible. I have never been the same, and believe that I saw our Lord Jesus Christ in His Glorified form.

I've been following Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Savior ever since this experience in 1982. I am an ordained minister with the Assembly Of God church here in New Zealand. I have worked with the head-hunters of Borneo and in refugee camps in South East Asia. I have pastored churches and my wife and I have traveled to 24 different nations sharing this testimony. - Ian McCormack