

## Chapter 1

### The Little Dreamer Boy, Henry Feyerabend

“Every institution is the lengthened shadow of one man” - Emerson

Winter winds howled around the icy eaves of a country schoolhouse in Waldheim, Saskatchewan. They'd lost none of their bite in blustering across the bald prairies and whipping through the little town. Thirty-five miles north of Saskatoon, Waldheim had train service once a week. Otherwise the place was only a whistle-stop on a northern branch of the Canadian National Railway.

In the dark school yard patient horses stamped their feet in the powdery snow that squeaked dryly under their hooves. The empty sleighs made black shadows against a wilderness of sub-zero whiteness. The schoolroom windows, however, glowed an inviting warm orange. Despite the frosty etchings around each pane, the inside temperature bettered the outdoor by at least 100 degrees.

The black potbellied stove in the middle of the room spread warmth from wall to wall, front to back where the country people found Elder Dietrich Neufeld's evangelistic meeting an oasis of rest, both physically and spiritually, in the harsh routines of Saskatchewan farm life.

Time charts and pictures of grotesque beasts hung over the blackboards, covering up the penmanship alphabets and the dusty records of the week's business at the schoolhouse. Old Uncle Dee Dee, as he was known to most in the community, warmed to his subject, and his long white beard fairly vibrated with his enthusiasm as he expounded the prophecies which pointed to that day for which he'd lived for the past sixty-five years - the second coming of Jesus.

In spite of his heavy German accent, betraying his birth in the forests of the Crimea, the eloquence of his speech held his audience spellbound. A self-made evangelist, he'd never gone to college. But when he'd heard God's call to go into the ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist church, he laid down his blacksmith's hammer with a will and exchanged the anvil for the pulpit with never a backward glance.

No one paid any particular attention that night to Uncle Dee Dee's little nephew. Henry Feyerabend sat beside his mother, his skinny, four-year-old legs dangling from the bench. He never took his hazel

eyes off his wonderful uncle. He was the marvelous man next door who would rough and tumble him in the sweet grass on a summer day or swing him up into the sleigh to go out on a winter night like this.

Henry couldn't follow the drift of the doctrinal discussion, although the prophetic animals were fascinating. Primarily, he caught the power of the sermon and its sense of vitality. He knew that here was something urgent, something important.

Henry nudged his mother. At first she pretended not to notice the poke through her thick worsted coat. But the agitation increased. "No, Henry, we're in the meeting now. You've got to be quiet."

"But, Mama, I - " His voice trailed off, but only for an instant. The urgency welled up in him once more, and he poked his mother again.

"What do you want, Henry?" Anna Feyerabend bent down and smoothed back the unruly, sandy hair of her youngest child.

"Mama, you know something?" He pulled her down close and announced in a hoarse stage whisper, "Mama, some day I'm going to be a preacher like that." Then he remembered how Uncle Dee Dee's evangelistic campaigns ended, and he amended his resolution. "I'm going to be a preacher and a baptizer."

Life as the son of Waldheim's favorite storekeeper kept Henry in the mainstream of town life for the next twelve years. H. Feyerabend's General Store was a social thoroughfare. Still more important to Henry, however, was the big Atwater Kent radio which father had installed in the living room back in the winter of 1931. Henry had grown up with it. On clear, cold nights it picked up many stations far south of the border.

One evening over the airwaves came chimes and the sound of music - a quartet singing "Lift Up the Trumpet." Always entranced by music, Henry listened, enthralled. Then a faraway voice said, "This is the 'Voice of Prophecy' coming to you from Los Angeles, California."

Father Feyerabend got up and stretched his lean, bony frame. "You know, son," he said, looking down at Henry sprawled out on the floor before the radio. "I think that may be a Seventh-day Adventist radio broadcast. It really sounds like it to me."

Determined to hear it again, Henry, at 9 o'clock the next Sunday evening, turned the dial. Sure enough, the richly blended voices of the quartet singing "Lift Up the Trumpet" once more filled the little living room in the Feyerabend home in Waldheim, Saskatchewan. When reception faded, Henry ran outside of the house with a bucket of water to pour on the radio's external ground wire. Then the voices boomed

in again strongly. Sometimes he had to make two or three trips with buckets of water so that the family could hear all of the broadcast. The Feyerabends had, in fact, tuned in on what were the first national-network programs of the "Voice of Prophecy."

From that time on Henry became a devoted fan of the "Voice of Prophecy." While his friends collected pin-up pictures of ice-hockey heroes and movie stars, Henry papered the walls of his bedroom with pictures of H.M.S. Richards and the King's Heralds quartet. Then, in this setting, he'd fold up the rusty angles of an old music stand so that it became a "microphone." Standing before it and facing the white muslin curtains of his bedroom window, he'd intone the magic words: "This is the 'Voice of Prophecy' coming to you from Los Angeles, California."

Henry got his first glimpse of his heroes at the Saskatoon camp meeting he attended when he was about twelve years old. He sat on the front row for every meeting and never took his eyes off the men. "I don't think they noticed me, but I tagged them every step they took." He could have been a pest, but instead he watched and worshiped in silence. Shortly thereafter he organized his first quartet, made up of the only three other boys in his church.

Henry's dreams really began to merge into reality as several of his older cousins took up amateur radio. He hung around with them until he found out how to build his own crystal set. Under the tutelage of Cousin Don Neufeld, who became an outstanding Bible teacher and scholar, but was then a young minister in a neighboring town, Henry made continual improvements on his receivers and learned the basic arts of radio.

After a steady pressure about the matter, his parents allowed Henry to enroll in a home-study radio course from Chicago. It constituted a major family decision, for in those depression years five dollars a month could not be dispensed lightly for commodities that weren't absolutely essential. Henry, of course, was the only one who perceived the radio course to be absolutely essential at that time.

His bedroom "studio," alive with wires and spare parts, became a sacred spot not subject to most of the demands of ordinary housecleaning. Neither his older sister Ruth nor even his playmate, Annamarie, dared disturb that exclusive room at the top of the stairs. When he begged for a 6-volt battery and nothing else as a Christmas gift one year, everyone knew that a certain irreversible pattern had already built itself into Henry's life.

From his first year away at boarding school at Canadian Union College, he belonged to a quartet, singing a mellow first tenor. In the years that followed, if there happened to be no quartet to join, Henry, now a young man, created one wherever he happened to be.

The years brought a variety of work to Henry. He taught elementary school for a time, sold Christian books, worked in the Southern New England Conference, became a singing evangelist, and even did a turn as dean of academy boys during his senior year at Atlantic Union College in Massachusetts. All of these things merely served as an apprenticeship for what was to follow, and the resolve taken in Uncle Dee Dee's meeting in the schoolhouse back in Waldheim never wavered in Henry's mind.

Meanwhile, he met, courted, and married Emma Martin, a neat and competent little secretary from Saskatoon. And who but Uncle Dee Dee should perform the wedding ceremony? Already well into his eighties, the old man fumbled through the service, reading from his minister's manual verbatim: "Do you, Name-in-Full, take this woman, Name-in-Full, to be your lawful wedded wife?"

Somehow, amid some mirthful confusion, the whole matter got concluded and legalized. But Uncle Dee Dee felt remorseful. "Ah, Henry, I spoiled your wedding!" he said.

Putting his arms around his uncle, Henry said, "Not at all, Uncle Dee Dee. We're married, and we wouldn't have wanted anyone but you." After all, Uncle Dietrich had brought Emma and her family into the church, so he'd wrought that day far better than he could have guessed. But he didn't live to see much more of Henry's future unfold.

After college the job offers related to work in New England. Financially they weren't very attractive. Although Henry and Emma were game for anything, they hesitated over their future work plans. They consulted Professor Gerald H. Minchin, one of Henry's favorite professors. Henry had been his reader and assistant and accounted him a wise friend.

"This looks like a mighty hard bargain to me, Henry. A mighty hard bargain." The older man, himself a former missionary, studied them with steady blue eyes. "Have you thought of mission service?"

They hadn't, but they felt confident that his concern and experience would mean only good for them.

A short time later, apparently as a result of Gerald Minchin's enterprise, a call came for the Feyerabends to work in the Santa Catarina Mission in Brazil. Presently Dr. Siegfried Hoffman, both a

medical doctor and conference president, visited them. Henry couldn't resist the friendly persuasions of this man, a vivacious extrovert, who would so influence his life for the next eleven years.

"And it is the truth," Dr. Hoffman said in his thick, broken English, while visiting with them the first time, "coming to Brazil will not make spoiled your dream to enter public evangelism. I promise you dis."

On a snowy Sabbath morning in November 1958, Henry and Emma stood on the deck of a Brazil-bound ship, rubbing their hands in the cold and watching the Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline fade into the gray horizon. Henry felt empty. "Emma, I suppose many missionaries have gone this route and have thought all of our thoughts before us," he said with a heavy sigh.

"I'm sure they have, Henry. But the Lord with us, we have as much chance of success as any of them had," Emma said as she looked up at Henry. Their eyes met. He looked at her with pride and affection, his most loyal little supporter.

The next three weeks on shipboard gave them ample time to think, to wonder, and to worry. Also to speculate and to hope. Then suddenly one sunny Sunday the ship docked in beautiful, hectic Rio de Janeiro.

The first hour ashore was rendered more unsettling than normal because of the total language barrier. Moreover, almost before he'd cleared the ship, Henry had to be rescued by the captain from charges of smuggling. The two suitcases he carried were for some reason or other suspect. It took awhile to straighten that out. Finally they found themselves at Sao Paulo at the college there. Henry and Emma lived in the girls' dormitory for the next few weeks. Part of Henry's mission orientation included figuring out how and when to take his showers in the public bathroom.

Finally, the couple went to Santa Catarina, arriving in their new home in the city of Florianopolis on Christmas morning. There Dr. Hoffman took them in charge. A medical doctor who loved preaching above all else, Dr. Hoffman took Henry with him on preaching tours. He also hired a private teacher to give the new missionary couple three hours a day of Portuguese language lessons.

Today, Henry's grasp of Portuguese amounts to a gift of tongues, even though he'll always retain a foreign accent. "The Portuguese think I'm Brazilian, and the Brazilians think I'm American," Henry says with a laugh.

Within his first week in Brazil Henry learned a Portuguese song and bravely offered it to the public. "The people were very kind," he said. "They told me that the song was perfect. But I knew better. I'd come to the end of the music and still had about fifteen words left over."

Eager to get on with his preaching, Henry had his teacher translate one of his sermons and record it on tape. Then he memorized it word by word. He walked the streets, putting sentence after sentence into his head. One paragraph done, he'd move on to the next until he had packed in the whole sermon.

He began preaching without even knowing the meaning of most of the words he was saying. Sometimes in the middle of his delivery he'd feel foolish declaiming ideas he couldn't understand himself. But the people ate it up, amazed and moved by the message. "God really worked it through for me," he declares.

After he had used two memorized sermons rather extensively, the charm failed. Henry spent a weekend at a remote church which had had no minister for quite a period of time. On Friday night he delivered his first memorized sermon. Then he went to the door to dismiss the meeting and shake hands with the people. Nobody moved. They wanted another sermon. They insisted on it. So Henry preached his second memorized sermon.

Now he had the problem of finding a third sermon for the next day. He stayed up all night picking sentences out of the first two sermons to create a third. With the delivery of next day's sermon, however, he made his language breakthrough and never memorized a speech again. In that night of sweat and apprehension, he discovered that certain sentence patterns could be recycled. By changing nouns and verbs he could make the sentence say something different and could, at the same time, be grammatically correct.

Henry had been in Brazil only five months when Dr. Hoffman suggested to the conference committee that "we ask Brother Feyerabend to go on itinerary and take a series of meetings." Having read Henry's heart and knowing that above all else the freshman missionary longed to get into independent evangelism, the doctor sent him out with the committee approval. From the very first God took over so that Henry's broken Portuguese carried the message with a power that brought results.

Today Henry Feyerabend feels at ease preaching in Portuguese. The language comes fluently, and he can think in it too. The sticky matter of gender remains his chief area of error, for in Portuguese

everything must be certified masculine or feminine. Educated Portuguese listeners, however, commend his admirable command of their tongue and his very rich vocabulary. Truly, he has surprised himself too. Henry Feyerabend has received a linguistic gift which has become a priceless asset.

Over the next several years Henry learned a dramatic variety of lessons in faith. In the city of Santo Antonio in Rio Grande do Sul state, he discovered that the energetic young ministerial intern, Harry Castro, was right when he predicted that all 2500 chairs would be filled in the dance hall that he'd rented for evangelistic meetings. Henry morbidly envisioned perhaps a few hundred people rattling around in the vast empty spaces. But, with radio advertising, a live telecast from Londrina (four hazardous road hours away), an airdrop which blanketed the town with handbills, and much prayer, the four-week campaign ended in triumph. The local church attendance moved from a mere handful up to 400.

Then there was the city of Cagador, Santa Catarina, where twenty-eight Sabbath School members represented the entire church company. How could twenty-eight people - even if they each brought many friends - fill the 500 chairs in the hall that Dorvolina Ribeiro had hired?

But the room filled to the doors and to the windows as well. Still new to the language, Henry trembled as he rose to speak. The people listened intently as the words began to pour out. And the preacher knew that he was not his own man. "I was amazed at the freedom I felt, and I began to use Portuguese expressions I didn't know were a part of me." Today, a lovely, large church stands in Cagador.

Henry's spiritual adventures broadened and deepened his experience with every itinerary and every campaign. But now another change of direction came to set him on the way to a still wider ministry, one that would surpass even the largest dance-hall crowd he'd ever preached to anywhere in Brazil.

Roberto Rabello, the speaker for the Brazilian "Voice of Prophecy" program, for twenty years had been going to Los Angeles to record his sermons and use the King's Heralds quartet for his music. His beautiful speaking voice and his message had virtually made him a national hero. Radio announcers imitated him, and Catholics, Protestants, and even atheists revered him as the broadcast was transmitted over 330 radio stations.

Now in 1962 Rabello's dream was fulfilled, and he had his own studio. As he planned for his own quartet, he spoke to Henry. "Would

you be interested in joining our “Voice of Prophecy” team as quartet member and technician?”

Would he be interested? Henry’s mind flashed back to his childhood studio in Waldheim with “Voice of Prophecy” pictures covering the walls. He could hardly breathe for excitement. Surely this would be the culmination and consolidation of all his dearest dreams! “If you give me the call on Tuesday,” he assured Pastor Rabello, “I’ll be there the previous Monday night.”

It took some time for the call to Rio de Janeiro to be arranged, however, and for a while Henry wondered if his hopes would be actualized. With reluctance, finally, Dr. Hoffman and the conference staff let him go. “Henry, God has called you to preach. You don’t belong in a studio.” But the doctor didn’t sound convincing, not even to himself. In a few weeks Henry, Emma, and baby Judy had packed up and moved to Rio.

Henry reveled in the modern studio with its windows commanding a view of both mountains and ocean. After a month on a buying trip to Los Angeles, Henry had the greatest day of his life up to that time, when he went down to the docks to claim the shipment of precious broadcasting equipment, the best on the market. Taking any time out now for eating and sleeping seemed to be an enormous and wholly unwarranted sacrifice on Henry’s part.

Traveling occupied much of the time of the “Voice of Prophecy” team - congresses, camp meetings, rallies, and evangelistic crusades. Threats of violence and actual robberies, sudden illnesses, loss of sleep and irregular meals became part of the package. Then, at a very crucial time, a very important person joined the team and stepped into Henry’s ministry - Tracy Botelho. Tracy, an accomplished pianist and organist, became the Bible worker and secretary-extraordinary as well.

To add to the joyful complexity of this situation, the quartet also worked with Pastor Camplongo in his new “Faith for Today” telecast in Sao Paulo. It took an all-night bus ride to get there and back every week. Long and tiring as the days were, they never seemed like work to Henry. He could hardly keep himself away from the studio, even for an hour.

Then, a year later, in a most unexpected way, Henry was thrust back into preaching, but all without having to leave the radio team. An appearance of Roberto Rabello and the quartet had been announced for the basketball stadium in Anapolis, near the model capital of Brasilia. Henry had grappled all afternoon with the acoustics and had



finally gotten the sound system ready for the opening meeting. With only a half hour to spare, he hurried back to the hotel.

A message awaited him at the desk. "Mr. Rabello wants to see you in his room immediately." To his horror, Henry found his friend sick, flushed with a very high fever. A doctor had come and forbidden him to think of preaching that night.

A distraught Henry rushed out to get dressed. Then he sought the anonymity of a dark street. Looking up at the stars, like Jacob he wrestled with his God. Here were thousands of people coming out to hear the rich deep voice and perfectly polished Portuguese of Roberto Rabello. And now he, Henry Feyerabend, the gawky boy from Saskatchewan, would stand in his place - and with no preparation. Tears streamed down his face in the agony of the moment.

Footsteps came up behind him, and he turned to see Joel Sarli, the baritone of the quartet. "We're waiting for you at the stadium. It's already full. You must come."

"Oh, Joel! How could God let Pastor Rabello be sick on this, the biggest night we've ever had!"

The young singer took Henry's arm and gently steered him toward the stadium. "You mustn't worry, Henry. This must all be in God's plan. Obviously He wants to use you tonight." The two friends walked through the busy parking lot toward the hall. "Get up and preach with all your might," Joel went on. "And I'm going to be sitting right behind you, praying every minute."

The crowd almost stampeded over the quartet's singing, and the preaching was such that that meeting became the first of a twenty-three-night series. On the third night Roberto Rabello had recovered sufficiently to preach, but the next day he returned to Rio, leaving Henry and the quartet to carry on the meetings by themselves. The successes of that event carried on for years as the church continued a harvest of baptisms, by the hundreds. Certainly, the members of the quartet, Henry, Joel, Tuiz Mota and Samuel Diaz de Campos, would never forget that evangelistic series.

In the summer of 1969 the news came from Waldheim, Saskatchewan, that Mother Feyerabend had become seriously ill. Henry longed to be nearer home. The eleven years in Brazil had given him a rich, diverse education in a dozen different directions, but now he requested a permanent return to his homeland in Canada.

Henry couldn't guess the curious byways through which Providence would lead him next. But he did know one thing: his two great loves, the studio and the pulpit, had now been perfectly meshed.

The Feyerabends boarded their plane at Vira Copos International Airport on an October day in 1969. Henry looked out of the window, musing on the many friends and well-wishers who'd come to see them off. He and Emma picked pretty little Tracy Botelho out of the crowd. The tears still stood in her dark eyes. Her slender hands fluttered in front of her in a quick "keyboard motion." Her intention was quite clear: "If you need me to help with music just send for me."

At that moment of parting none of them could guess how soon it would be fulfilled.