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BIBLICAL ALLUSION IN NICK VUJICIC'S <u>TESTIMONY "MAN WITHOUT LIMBS: LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS"</u>: AN INTERTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

By

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Abstract

The study attempts to investigate Nick Vujicic's testimonial monologue (www.lifewithoutlimbs,org) on the basis of Fairclough (1992)'s *Discourse and Social Change* on Intertextuality to find out the modes and strategies of intertextuality.

The study reveals that three modes of intertextuality are employed, namely sequential intertextuality (41.38%), embedded intertextuality (5.18%), and mixed intertextuality (53.44%), implying that the text was a self-reflection. With respect to the strategies of intertextuality, five strategies are employed, namely discourse representation (43.12%), presupposition (27.58%), negation (12.06%), metadiscourse (6.89%), and irony (10.35%), implying that Vujicic wanted to form his own discourse. Finally two types of biblical allusion are adopted, namely direct allusions (5.17%), indirect allusions (48.27); the rest (46.56%) is self-reflection, implying that Vujicic's text was proselytizing in nature. Meanwhile, the pedagogical implication is that intertextuality is indispensible in writing or public speaking.

Key Words : Allusion, Testimony, Intertextuality, Proselytizing

INTRODUCTION

The newly born baby 'Nick Vujicic' was seemingly unfortunate due to his being without limbs. However, God actually assigned him to do something beyond anyone's imagination. Vujicic's testimonial speeches manage to hypnotize the world,

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just to justify that God did not create anything for nothing. There must be blessing in disguise.

With this in mind, I would like to investigate one of his texts entitled 'MAN WITHOUT LIMBS: LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS' with the following research questions.

(1) What modes of intertextuality does Nick Vujicic adopt to assemble the biblical information into his testimony?

(2) What strategies of intertextuality does Nick Vujicic adopt to assemble the biblical information into his testimony?

(3) What proselytizing registers does Nick Vujicic adopt in his testimony in terms of linguistic and pedagogical perspectives?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is based on the theoretical framework of Hallidian Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in which language is used to make meanings: **ideational, interpersonal** and **textual** meanings. In terms of registers as a result of the context of situation, language is used to create **field** (what is talked about), **tenor** (relationship among langue users) and **mode** (type of language, spoken or written) as described in Eggins (1994). With respect to intertextuality, it is theorizes s follows:

Intertextuality refers to a number of relationships that the text in question may have with those which in some ways have been used, referred to or exploited either indirectly or directly in the construction of the text in question (Bhatia 2004:126). It is further argued that there are possibly six internal relationships of a text (intertextuality) as outline below (Bhatia 2004:126-127):

- text providing a context (a letter to which the one in question is a replay)
- text within and around the text (a chapter in the context of a book)

- text explicitly referred to in the text (references in academic journal)
- text referred to implicitly in the text (*The Sun never sets over Lufthansa territory* used in an advertisement, with an implicit reference to *The sun never sets over the British Empire*)
- text embedded within the text (conversation within a story)
- texts mixed with the text (quotations)

Thus, in constructing a text, any of the situations described above may apply, depending on the style of writing of individuals and on the context within which one constructs a text.

It is therefore arguably true that never can a single text be created on earth without relating to other texts, as also stated by Foucault (1972:98) that 'there can be no statement that in one way or another does not reactualize others. Thus, at discourse level, there involves a number of texts combined following the conventional rules of lexicogrammar into a single unified text of contemporary nature. Such a phenomenon further highlights what is referred to as intertextuality, a term coined by Kristeva (1986).

It is further argued that 'texts and utterances are shaped by prior texts they are 'responding' to, and by subsequent texts that they 'anticipate' (Fairclough 1995:101). In Bakhtin's terms (1986), it is arguably true as cited in Fairclough 1995:101-102) that all utterances, both spoken and written, from the briefest of turns in a conversation to a scientific paper or a novel, are demarcated by a change of speaker (or writer) and are oriented retrospectively to utterances of previous speakers (be they turns, scientific articles or novels) and prospectively to the anticipated utterances of the next speakers.

Modes for Intertextuality

In order to be able to investigate the intertextuality of a text, it is necessary to devise the modes for intertextuality as described below

(1) Sequential intertextuality

Sequential intertextuality is referred to as the production of a text where different texts or discourse types alternate within a text (Fairclough 1992:118). In this respect, a writer takes different texts from different sources alternatively, and integrates them in his or her own text. Normally, it is only the ideas that are taken from those different texts by means of paraphrasing. A good text writer will be able to adopt the ideas without necessarily picking up the same lexical items from the original texts. An novice text writer, however, may still pick up the same lexical items from the original text with possibly altered sentence structures

(2) Embedded intertextuality

Unlike the first form of intertextuality, embedded intertextuality is a text construction where one text or discourse type is clearly contained within the matrix of another. This is particularly true in direct quotation of a text into a writer's own text. Thus, in this case, he or she simply puts the quoted ideas in quotation marks, without changing anything. Or it can be in the forms of dialogues in novel writing where each turn of the participants in the story is displayed in quotation marks

(3) Mixed intertextuality

In mixed intertextuality, it is difficult to separate the quoted texts from the original text since several other texts or discourse types are merged in a more complex and less easily separable way. This can only be done by professional textbooks writers or rhetorician where he or she manages to manipulate different texts or discourse types in his or her own text.

Strategies for Intertextuality

Regardless of which modes for intertextuality is adopted by a particular writer, Fairclough discusses manifest intertextuality in relation to discourse representation,

presupposition, negation, metadiscourse and irony (1992:118-123) each of which will be discussed below.

(1) Discourse Representation

Fairclough (1995:118-120) has described at some length the term discourse representation or speech reportage. In short, in a discursive event (report), various issues are involved, such as what is quoted when, how and why, different cultural aspects, and diction. Take for example, a journalist from a particular newspaper wrote 'a cruelly killed rapist'; he or she represented a particular discursive event (raping) in which the rapist was killed by a group of anti-rape criminals. Since the rapist was considered to have committed a serious crime, he was for instance mutilated. Unfortunately, the journalist was also sort of anti-rape crime, then he or she came up with the trouble phrase 'cruelly-killed' to qualify the noun 'rapist'—as somehow indicating a disgraceful attitude toward the rapist.

(2) Presupposition

It is argued (Fairclough 1995:120) that 'Presuppositions are propositions which are taken by the producer of the text as already established or 'given'…and there are various formal cues in the surface organization of the text to show this'. For instance, the use of definite articles represent 'existential' meaning, such as in 'the girl's devoted love' presupposing that there was a girl who devotes herself to love.

With respect to intertextuality, presuppositions may be accounted as non intertextual way (Levinson 1983) or as merely propositions that are given for and taken for granted by text producers. With this position, there are problems, for example the sentence, 'The girl's devoted love is a myth.' is semantically contradictory, because the text producer would be simultaneously taking for granted that there was a girl who had devoted herself to love. On the other hand, an

intertextual presupposition is assumed as a way of incorporating the texts of others, there is no contradiction in this case: the expression 'the girl's devoted love and the presupposition it cued come from 'alien' text (following Bakhtin's term) which is negotiated or contested.

(3) Negation

Negative sentences, comments are often used for polemic purposes. For instance a newspaper wrote 'Government Won't Raise Oil Prices.' as the headline. This negative sentence presupposes the proposition in some other text, that the Government may indeed raise oil process. So negative sentences carry special types of presupposition which also work intertextually, incorporating other texts only in order to contest and reject them (Fairclough 1995:122).

(4) Metadiscourse

Another form of manifest intertextuality is called metadiscourse in which the text producer distinguishes different levels within his or her own text, and distances him or herself from some level of the text, treating the distanced level as if it were another, external text. There are several strategies of metadiscourse, namely 'hedging' (Brown and Levinson 1978) with expressions such as 'sort of', 'kind of' to mark a semantic scaling of focus in Appraisal System (Martin and Rose 2003).

(5) Irony

Irony is referred to as 'saying one thing and meaning another'. This is often the case of using euphemism, that is to cover the fact with words. For example, it is often stated that Indonesia is a developing country for which the meaning is that Indonesia is not (yet) developed.

It is also possible to use irony to express 'anger' or 'sarcasm' which is normally expressed in a particular tone of the speaker's voice or using double quotation marks in written language (Fairclough 1995:123) .

It should be noted, however, that for good intertextuality, a text has to be cohesively linked—its cohesion. It is simply how clauses are linked together into sentences, and how sentences are in turn linked together to form larger units in texts (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday 1985). Cohesion of a text can be achieved through a number of ways (Fairclough 1995:77): one is using vocabulary from a common semantic field, repeating words, using near synonyms, and so forth; another is using a variety of referring and substituting devices (pronouns, definite articles, demonstrative, ellipsis of repeated words , and so forth); still another is using conjunctive words (therefore, however, but, and) to achieve various rhetorical schemata according to which a group of statements may be combined.

Biblical Allusion

The lexical definition of allusion is an indirect reference. McArthur (1992:29-30) elaborated that the term formerly included metaphors, parables, and puns, but now generally means implicit use of someone else' words. Whereas quotations usually come with acknowledged sources, allusions are indirect, even cryptic, sometimes dropped in passing, with little thought, sometimes used with care, so that a speaker or writer can share an understanding with certain listeners or readers.

Therefore, biblical allusion, such as made in Vujicic's testimonial text is the process of intertexuality in which he implicitly used biblical verses in his testimony. As it was an allusion, sources were sometimes not cited as to which verses of the Bible were quoted. The text simply flowed with ease from his wise mouth.

Religious Proselytizing and Register

The term 'register' can be approached in two different aspects, as one focusing on the use, and the other focusing on the users (Harris and Morgan (1979:42). The focus on use can be identified in terms of different occupations, such as law, physics, to mention only a few, and of different contexts, such as mother talking to children, telephone conversation, cocktail parties, etc. (Surachmi 2005:22).

With respect to the term 'proselytizing', it refers to 'any activity in which a person is trying to convert another person or a group of people from not believing and acting in accordance with a certain set of religious beliefs, to accepting them and acting accordingly (Thiesen 2000 cited in Surachmi 2005:22). Similarly, Seaver (2000, cited in Surachmi 2005) also defines 'Proselytizing is to try to persuade someone to change their religious and political beliefs or their way of living to your own.' Still another view of proselytizing is that under the First Amendment to the U.S Constitution, 'religious proselytizing is the act of attempting to convert another person to your religion.' The proselytizing of Prophets to mankind is conveyed to reveal someone's inner feeling so that he/she will believe faithfully just in God. Proselytizer, the messenger of proselytizing speech, certainly gives a conviction belief that what he / she propagates is vision from God to man and who accepts it will surrender to God (Surachmi 2005:23).

Proselytizing is, therefore, similar to rhetoric with respect to its purposes and means. In doing so, a proselytizer or rhetorician certainly is knowledgeable about what he/she is saying by carefully picking up suitable vocabulary interwoven in carefully selected grammatical metaphors and delivered in a good tone of voice. In other words, proselytizing can be both linguistically and pedagogically viewed.

In linguistic perspectives, proselytizing language should be persuasive, entertaining, and yet straight-forward, or to the point so that the audience can be emotionally touched and thereby understand the morale teaching contained in the

speech. This can be achieved by means of appropriate lexicogrammatical constructions which, in turn, result in a text expressing the three domains of meanings: ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings, interwoven in a unified whole at discourse semantic level.

In pedagogical perspectives, a speech is said to be proselytizing when it has educational values which can convince the audience of the truth and validity. Occasional reference to the Holy Book pursuant to the religion of the audience is one way to achieve the goal of proselytizing. Meanwhile quoting trustworthy people as references is another. Thus, intertextuality plays an important role in the production of proselytizing texts.

METHOD

The text entitled 'MAN WITHOUT LIMBS: LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS was downloaded from www.lifewithoutlimbs,org. It was then retyped in MS Word2003 for ease of text fragmentation during the analytical processes. The categorical items in terms of modes (three categories) and strategies (five categories) of intertextuality were developed into which the text was fragmented and classified to find out the frequency of distribution (%) for further interpretation. With respect to biblical allusion, two types of allusion (direct and indirect) were used to justify that the text was proselytizing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Modes of Intertextuality

As theoretically proposed (Fairlough 1992), there are three modes of intertextuality, namely sequential, embedded and mixed modes of intertextuality.

In the current study, with reference to Appendix 2, the distribution of the modes of intertextuality over Vujicic's testimonial text has been identified and tabulated below.

Table 1 Distribution of the Modes of Intertextuality

No.	Mode of Intertextuality		%
1	Sequential	24	41.38
2	Embedded	3	5.18
3	Mixed	31	53.44
	Number of Clauses	58	100

Table 1 above indicates that the use of the mixed mode of intertextuality is the most dominant (53.44%) as compared with the sequential mode of intertextuality (41.38%) and with the embedded mode of intertextuality (5.18%). This is normal in a monologue where the speaker simply expressed his or her feelings, experiences, expectations, predictions, etc. and so did Nick Vujicic. Throughout his testimonial text, he expressed his feeling towards the audience with regards to the fate of being a man with disabilities. He expressed his despairs prior to finding out his self-identity. He also expressed some hopes and expectations from God's miracle, just to survive in this temporary world.

However, as he is a devoted Christian according to his statement 'I gained complete peace knowing that God had a good purpose for my life' (Cl.35)[1], in his testimony, he occasionally referred to what he was saying to some biblical verses either directly or indirectly. The indirect reference of the Bible was shown in the sequential mode of intertextuality (41.38%) through which he demonstrated to be a good rhetorician as he also said 'I am also a motivational speaker' (Cl.44).

Only 5.18% of his statements did Vujicic make use of the embedded mode of intertextuality in which he directly quoted the Bible as in 'The verse in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him," spoke to my heart (Cl.34). In this respect, it can be assumed that the minimum use of

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[1] Clause No.35

the embedded mode of intertextuality is due to the fact that he wants to be himself, resulting in few but convincing biblical quotations.

From the findings above, Nick Vujicic is a considerably matured rhetorician in which he performed his rhetoric very convincingly with 41.38% sequential mode of intertextuality by indirectly relating what he was saying to the teaching of Bible. This is also an evidence that he has thorough knowledge of Bible in terms of proselytizing registers. He can hypnotize and upgrade the audience's current trust in God.

Despite the dominant use of the mixed mode of intertextuality as self-expressions, he managed to demonstrate such a rhetorical product so skilfully that this did not ruin the testimony. Rather, his self expressions had become a kind of flavour over the whole testimony so as not to be dull and monotonous, but convincing and even hypnotizing.

Strategies for Intertextuality

The distribution of the strategies for intertextuality can be viewed form the following table.

Table 2 Distribution of the Strategies for Intertextuality

No	Strategy		%
1	Discourse Representation	25	43.12
2	Presupposition	16	27.58
3	Negation	7	12.06
4	Metadiscourse	4	6.89
5	Irony	6	10.35
	Number of Clauses	58	100

Table 2 above indicates that discourse representation dominates (43.12%) throughout the text, followed by presupposition (27.58%), negation (12.06%), irony (10.35%) and finally metadiscourse (6.89%). From this point, it is clear that Nick Vujicic tried to develop his own discourse, thereby the title of his testimony is Man

without Limbs ; Life without Limits (1). Thus, Vujicic has proved himself to be capable of creating his own discursive practice out of a number of discursive practices (interdiscursivity) by means of intertextuality s quoted below.

> My parents knew well the oft-quoted verse from James 1 : 2 : "Consider it pure joy, my brother, whenever you face trials of many kinds." Dad, as pastor of our church, had often taught on this virtue. However, on the morning of December 4, 1982, in Melbourne, Australia, the words "Praise God!" were far from their lips. Their first born son had been born without limbs! There had been no warnings, and even the doctors were shocked. They had no answers (Corpus Data).

In the above discourse representation, Vujicic started with presupposition strategy in an embedded mode of intertextuality by quoting a biblical verse in Clause 1 which says 'My parents knew well the oft-quoted verse from James 1 : 2 : "Consider it pure joy, my brother, whenever you face trials of many kinds." From the presupposition, he began working out his discourse representation through several discursive practices (interdiscursivity).

> The whole church mourned over my birth, and my parents were absolutely devastated. People questioned why a God of love would let something like this happen, especially to dedicated Christians. My Dad thought I would not survive for long, but tests proved that I was a healthy baby boy-just with a few limbs missing (Corpus Data).

The above paragraph of Vujicic's does not present another discourse. It simply elaborates the newly developed discourse by means of **presupposition** as in Cl.6 'The whole church mourned over my birth, and my parents were absolutely devastated.', **irony** as in Cl.7 'People questioned why a God of love would let something like this happen, especially to dedicated Christians.', **negation** as in Cl.8 'My Dad thought I would not survive for long, but tests proved that I was a healthy baby boy—just with a few limbs missing.

The following paragraph indicates his life and academic achievement and when compared to other normal individuals

> I am now 24 years old and have completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in financial planning and accounting. I am also a motivational speaker. Because of my experiences with low self-esteem and loneliness, God has implanted a passion for sharing my story with others, especially youth, to help them cope with whatever challenge they have in their lives, and let God turn it into a blessing. I also frequently share my testimony in the corporate sector (Corpus Data).

Thus, without doubts, Vujicic has proved himself useful for the people all over the world, sharing his testimony. He has visited several countries for this sole purpose. He has developed his own website which everyone can browsed at www.lifewithoutlimbs.org.

Biblical Allusion as Proselytizing

Most significant of all, apart from strategies for intertextuality is how Vujicic made use of biblical allusion (Appendix 4), the distribution of which is tabulated below.

Table 3 Biblical Allusion

No	Biblical Allusion		%
1	Direct	3	5.17
2	Indirect	28	48.27
3	*None*	*27*	*46.56*
	Number of Clauses	58	100

Table 4-3 above indicates Vujicic's testimonial text consists of more biblical allusions other than non-biblical allusions (contextual or situational). As the title suggests, I will only deals with biblical allusions which consist of direct allusions

(5.17%) and indirect allusions (48.27%). The non-biblical allusions (46.56%) are left to the readers to figure out.

James 1:2; Romans 8:28; and John 9:3-4 were directly quoted for proselytizing purposes. Meanwhile, James 2:14-20, James 2:4, Hebrew 11:1-4, Hebrew 11:17, Samuel 17:45, Genesis 22:7-8, Job 23:10, Kings 19:4, Chronicles 1:10-12, Isaiah 41:10 were quoted indirectly from Bible to create proselytizing language.

The current study is both linguistically and pedagogically motivated, I would like to discuss proselytizing registers in the perspectives of linguistics and pedagogy.

Linguistic and Pedagogical Perspective

In linguistic perspective, Vujicic's text can be categorized as proselytizing in that he tried to convert people from faithless to faithful within one religion 'Christian' and inter-religion as he said:

> 'Wherever God leads, I want to follow. With His help, I hope to achieve some dreams in my life: to become the best witness I can be of God's love and hope and to become an international inspirational speaker in both Christian and non Christian venues (Corpus Data).

In the text fragment above, he wanted to show to the world that his testimony not only belonged to Christian but also to other religions or a universal faith. I am of the opinion that what he wanted to do was to convert from faithless to faithful, which is applicable to any form of religion. In other words, whatever religion the audience may have, the goal is to make them believe in God more than ever. Thus, Vujicic spoke of multiculturalism and multi-believers. He did not address individualism but covered different types of races, cultures, religions. His main aim was to make people aware of the existence of God, and all His manifestation.

The proselytizing elements can be identified in (1) the use of God related lexical items, such as indirect and direct biblical Allusions, as discussed above, (2) the use of 'counter-expectation' clauses, such as some quoted below.

(1) My Dad thought I would not survive for long, <u>but</u> tests proved that I was a healthy baby boy-just with a few limbs missing.

(2) <u>But</u> God, always so faithful, provided them strength, wisdom, and courage through those early years, and before long I was old enough to go to school.

Most significantly, Vujicic's testimonial text is schematically structured as (Orientation)^(mounting incident 1-n)^(Climax)^(Denouement) as a normal lecturing discourse through which the audience can easily understand the text. The language is persuasive in nature by means of lexicogrammatical constructions (lexical items and grammatical rules) to successfully achieve the three domains of meanings: ideational (field), interpersonal (tenor) and textual (mode).   This is pedagogically important that one should speak or write systematically.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions are drawn from the process and results of the data analysis and interpretation pursuant to the research questions as itemized below:

(1) Nick Vujicic adopted the three modes of intertextuality, sequential mode (41.38%), embedded mode (5.18%) and mixed mode (53.44%). With the dominance of mixed mode of intertextuality, it means that the testimonial text produced by Nick Vujicic is self-reflection.

(2) With respect to the strategies of intertextuality, Nick Vujicic adopted discourse representation (43.12%), presupposition (27.58%), negation (12.06%), metadiscourse (6.89%), and irony (10.35%). With the dominant strategy of discourse representation, it is clear that Nick Vujicic wanted to develop his own discourse—testimonial discourse.

(3) Linguistically, Nick Vujicic's testimonial text is schematically structured in terms of diction (including biblical and non-biblical allusions) and grammar, and thus fits the category of proselytizing. Pedagogically, the

text bears moral values, namely converting faithless into faithful, and again fits the category of proselytizing.

Pedagogical Implications

From the above points of conclusions, pedagogical implications can be drawn and presented below.

(1) Mastery of academic writing and public speaking is required in order to make use of the three modes of Intertextuality.

(2) Mastery of academic writing and public speaking is required in order to be able to use the five strategies of Intertextuality.

(3) Mastery of lexicogrammar is required for the production of linguistically acceptable text at discourse semantic level. Product knowledge is extremely important to support the text to achieve a specific discourse, such as testimonial discourse.

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APPENDIX

The Text

NICK VUJICIC' TESTIFYING SPEECH:
Man without Limbs ; Life without Limits

If God has an assignment for us, He is not concerned about our ability. He only needs our availability.
By Nick Vujicic

My parents knew well the oft-quoted verse from James 1 : 2 : "Consider it pure joy, my brother, whenever you face trials of many kinds." Dad, as pastor of our church, had often taught on this virtue. However, on the morning of December 4, 1982, in Melbourne, Australia, the words "Praise God!" were far from their lips. Their first born son had been born without limbs! There had been no warnings, and even the doctors were shocked. They had no answers.

The whole church mourned over my birth, and my parents were absolutely devastated. People questioned why a God of love would let something like this happen, especially to dedicated Christians. My Dad thought I would not survive for long, but tests proved that I was a healthy baby boy-just with a few limbs missing.

Understandably, my parents had strong concerns about what kind of life I would be able to lead. The first big hurdle for them was to be at peace and trust that God was in control. It took a number of months of grief, with questions and tears, before their hearts came to terms with my condition. But God, always so faithful, provided them strength, wisdom, and courage through those early years, and before long I was old enough to go to school.

Many people assumed that because of my physical disability, I was also mentally disabled. The law in Australia, at that time, didn't allow me to be integrated into a mainstream school. But my Mom began to fight to get the law changed, and God did a miracle. I was one of the first disabled students to be integrated into a mainstream school.

I like school, and I tried to live life like an ordinary kid. But during my early years of school, I felt rejected and weird, and was often bullied because of my physical difference. It was very hard for me to get used to. There were times when I felt so low that I didn't want to go to school because I didn't want to face all the negative attention. I knew that I was different, but on the inside I was just like everyone else.

During these years, my parents were my strong support. They encouraged me to ignore what others said about me and to make friends by being friendly my self. When I demonstrated this attitude, other students realized that I was just like them, and they began to be my friends.

Even so, there still were times when I felt depressed and angry because I could not change the way I was, or blame someone for my condition. I could not understand, if God loved me, why He made me like I was. Had I done something wrong? Why I was the only kid who was weird? I felt like I was a burden to those around me, and everyone would be better off if I died. I wanted to end my pain and end my life at a young age, but I am thankful for my parents and family who were always there to comfort me and give me strength.

As I grew older, God continued to teach me to seek Him above all else. When I was around 12 years old, I began to realize how greatly blessed I was. So why should I complain? The verse in Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him," spoke to my heart. I became convinced that there is no such thing as luck, chance, or coincidence. I gained complete peace knowing that God had a good purpose for my life.

At age 15 I gave my life fully to Christ. I read John 9 where Jesus explained that the reason a man was born blind was "so that the works of God may be revealed in his life." At that time, I prayed that God would heal me so I could be a great testimony of His awesome power. Later on, I was given the wisdom to understand that when we pray for something, if it is God's will, it will happen in His time. But if it is not God's will, we can know that He has something better for us. I now see that God's glory is revealed in my life, and He is using me just the way I am, and in ways others can't be used.

In recent years, I have become more independent and can now take of all my personal needs. I can do everything from brushing my teeth, combing my hair, dressing up taking care of my personal hygiene and even shaving. I get around the house by jumping around, and outside the house, I use an electric wheelchair. I love to swim, fish, and play soccer.

I am now 24 years old and have completed a Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in financial planning and accounting. I am also a motivational speaker. Because of my experiences with low self-esteem and loneliness, God has implanted a passion for sharing my story with others, especially youth, to help them cope with whatever challenge they have in their lives, and let God turn it into a blessing. I also frequently share my testimony in the corporate sector.

I also dream of … sharing my story on the "Oprah Winfrey Show"!

Wherever God leads, I want to follow. With His help, I hope to achieve some dreams in my life: to become the best witness I can be of God's love and hope and to become an international inspirational speaker in both Christian and non Christian venues. I also dream of becoming financially independent by age 25 through real estate investments, modifying a car for me to drive, and sharing my story on the "Oprah Winfrey Show"! On top of this, I would like to write several best selling books!

Some people may think these goals are too far-fetched for a person with my disabilities. However, I believe that if we have the desire and passion to do something, and if it is God's will, we can achieve our goal. As humans, we continually put limits on ourselves for no reason at all! And what is worse, is putting limits on God who can do all things. The awesome thing about the power of God is that if He wants us to do something, we don't need to focus on our capability, only on our availability. It is God who works through us, and we can't do anything without Him. Once we make ourselves available to do His work, we can rely on His capabilities.

I know God has a great purpose for my life-indeed, for every person's life! If we diligently seek Him, He will give wisdom and strength for our journey.

This article is a compilation of Nick's testimonies used with permission. To learn more about Nick and his ministries, or to order a DVD of his testimony, please visit his website at **www.lifewithoutlimbs.org**.