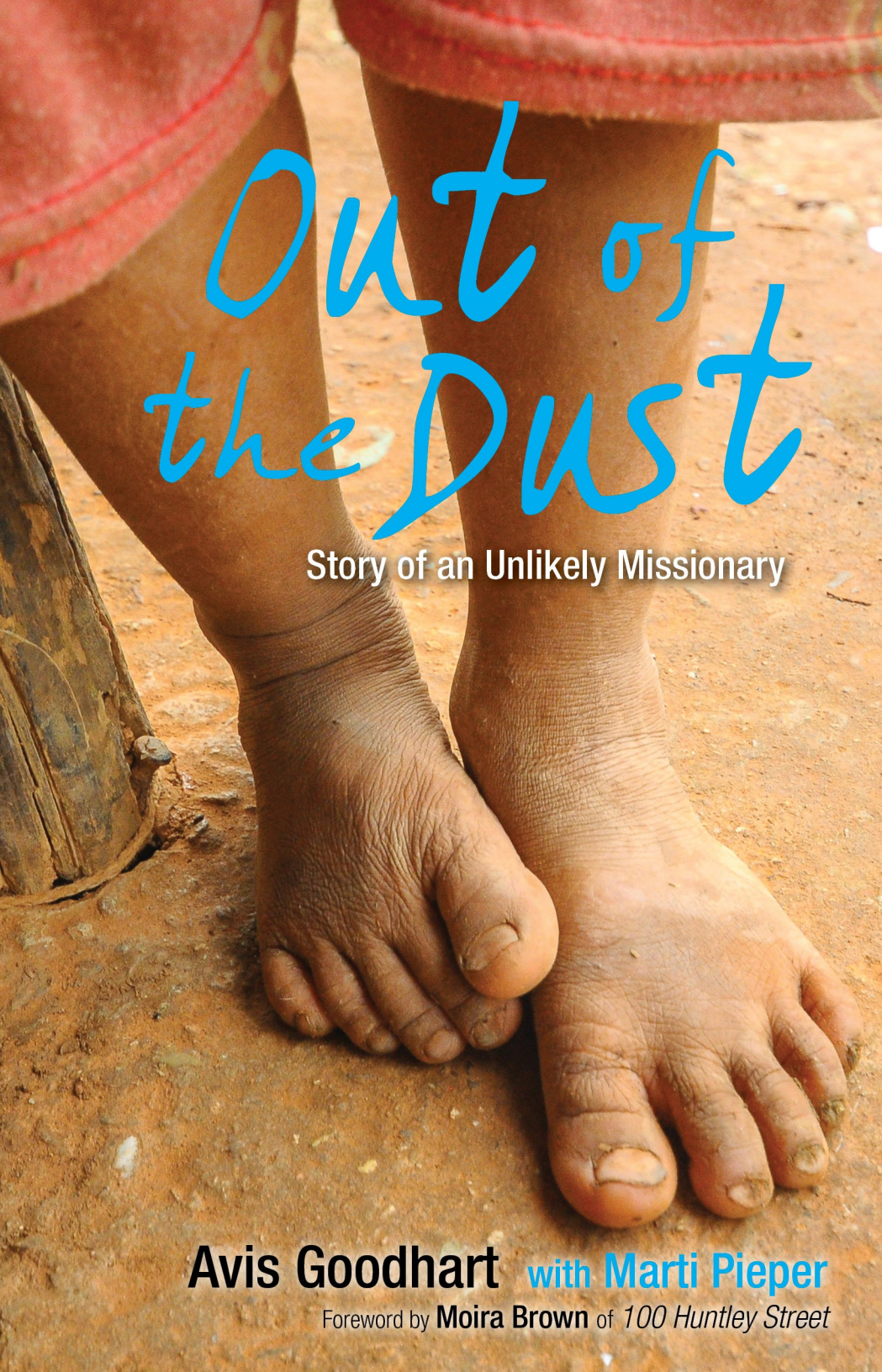




Out of the Dust

Story of an Unlikely Missionary

Avis Goodhart with **Marti Pieper**

Foreword by **Moirá Brown** of *100 Huntley Street*

Out of the Dust

Story of an Unlikely Missionary

Avis Goodhart
With Marti Pieper



ANEKO Press

CHAPTER 13

Hurricane!



Over the years, I've faced both physical and spiritual storms. But Hurricane Mitch was one I almost didn't survive.

Gladys spent her summer as we'd planned, helping me get all my mission work organized. She got word in late October that her father was ill. She had to return to Honduras right away.

That turned out to be God's providence, because just after she reached her family, Hurricane Mitch hit. Overwhelming though it was, she would never have wanted to be away from them during this time. The massive amounts of rain caused everything from flooding to mud slides to earthquakes.

Listening to the news, I couldn't imagine the devastation in this country I'd come to love. Water lines broke, bridges blew out, sewage flowed onto the streets, and in many places, communication was destroyed.

The mayor of Tegus and other city officials went up in a helicopter right after the hurricane hit to survey the damage. When it crashed, everyone inside was killed. The city had no leadership left.

Once again, God gave me the word: "Go." The members

of my Tuesday morning prayer group all agreed: I must obey. They also agreed to help in any way they could.

As usual, I wanted to take more than myself to the country. *Everyone's talking about Hurricane Mitch. Surely they'll donate food and supplies.*

One of my prayer group friends contacted Tyson Foods, who agreed to send a brand-new, fifty-three-foot semi-truck along with a driver who would help me get to Brownwood, Texas. There, I would load whatever I collected on a ship bound for Honduras.

On Wednesday, Tyson parked the semi in the nearby town of Lincoln, and I spread the word. I peered inside the truck bed the next evening to find one lonely flat of supplies clear down at the far end. "God, you've got to give me more than this."

I'd gone all over our town trying to drum up support. But when I saw the near-empty trailer, Satan ripped me up one side and down the other. "You have a whole semi, and nothing to fill it with. You won't be able to help anyone!"

He and I fought it out through the entire night. By the next morning, a radio station had somehow heard about my plans. They sent a reporter out to the lot where the semi waited. "Even if you get it filled, how do you plan to take it into Honduras?" he asked me. "They won't let it cross the border!"

"Oh, yes, they will," I told the reporter. "I'm going with it!"

"You're kidding!"

"No, I'm not. I'll go – and it'll get in," I promised. "But for now, we need stuff: clean clothes, rolled up and ready to go. Think about what it's like to be in a flood and have all your clothes stripped off you – to have nothing." I knew those words would connect with the radio audience, since many had survived floods themselves.

But God wouldn't let me stop with clothes. "These people need food, too: good food, and lots of it. And if you give me

a can, give me a can opener, too, because everything's gone. We need meat and peanut butter. We need water and bleach." I paused again to emphasize my point. "Don't give me your junk. These people need help!"

No sooner did I finish the interview than supplies began to pour in. But I knew God wanted more. I went to the Farmers & Merchants Bank and asked to speak with an officer.

"We don't have any food, Mrs. Goodhart."

"No, but you have money, and that buys food."

I left with a check.

Next, I went to the phone company with a similar speech. Then I stopped by the local grocery store. They did have food, and gave us \$500 worth right away.

Two of my prayer partners knew God wanted them to give. Mr. Dean, not a wealthy man, told his wife: "Write a check for \$1000. We'll cash it, go to the canning company, and buy as many flats of food as we can."

Every time I went back to the semi, I found people dropping off supplies. Friday morning, my friend Lorene stopped by. A former bookkeeper for the University of Arkansas, she liked to keep things in order. The chaos she saw in the semi horrified her.

"Avis! They've got stuff all over the place," she said. "Would you like me to organize it?"

Would I? "Sure!" Lorene hoisted herself onto the truck bed and went to work. If clothes were on hangers, she folded and put them into boxes. If four different pallets held green beans, she moved them all onto one. Nothing went into the truck without her sorting and labeling. Her work let us fit many more supplies into the semi and freed me to keep asking for more.

On Saturday, November 7 (the day after my birthday), Tyson sent the truck driver, who turned out to be a pastor's wife, one more confirmation that God was preparing our way. We chugged out of Lincoln at noon with more than forty-five

thousand pounds of supplies – from diapers to blue jeans, from cases of water to canned goods. “Praise God!” I kept saying. “Hallelujah!”

Early the next afternoon, we reached the Brownsville dock. A forklift driver made quick work of the trailer’s contents, and my sister in Christ took off on another run.

The next part of my adventure began when the owner of the shrimp boat spotted me on the huge dock, where he had already started sorting out the supplies. “Whoa, what are you doing here?” he asked.

“I’m with the stuff,” I told him. “I’m going to Honduras too!”

He made it clear he didn’t want me on the dock. And he definitely didn’t want me on his shrimp boat.

“I’m not leaving,” I said. *Time for another prayer walk.*

“God, you called me. Fixing this situation is up to you.” I climbed down in front of the dock and marched back and forth. Singing one of my favorite hymns, I grew louder with each pass: “The cross before me, the world behind me! No turning back, no turning back!”

It didn’t take long before He used my singing to help me see what He already knew: I was going to Honduras. He was in charge, and He would get me there.

Before long, Captain Kent from the shrimp boat appeared. “Come home with me,” he urged. “Spend the night with my family.”

It was getting dark, so I did as he said. We had a great evening of dinner and conversation.

When we returned the next morning, things were looking up. Captain Kent, his two crew members, and I hand-packed all my supplies over the next three days. They all had to go on the deck because the hold (the area underneath the boat) was full. We moved the supplies off one pallet and hoisted them onto

the barge. There we put them onto another pallet and, once it was full, sealed it using huge rolls of plastic wrap.

Those few days taught me two things: a boat must have permission to leave the country, and everyone on board needs a reason to be there. In order to leave the U.S. legally, I had to go to the port office and register as the cook.

As it turned out, my new friend Captain Kent was also the port captain, in charge of bringing ships in from the ocean to the dock. He hadn't been out to sea in four years.

By now, the boat owner's wife and I were fast friends. We finished up in the late afternoon our last day in port. "Let's go get something to eat," she said. The owner, his wife, and I went out for a delicious Mexican meal.

After our hard work, I'm sure I overate, a small choice with big consequences. The crew was putting the last-minute maps and charts on board. The sky looked gray, but all we saw on the ocean were gentle waves.

Once we left the harbor, though, everything changed. Our peaceful boat became a roller coaster. The crew members went into yellow-slickered action, tying stabilizers in place and doing everything possible to keep the boat safe.

As a first-time sailor, I sat, taking it all in. *It's getting rough out here.* A wave washed onto the deck right then, splashing over me and out the other side. And as fast as the wave had come, a stream of vomit shot out of my mouth. I looked around, wanting to apologize for the mess. Another splash of sea water washed it all away before I could say a word.

My stomach emptied once again. I looked around only to realize no one cared. They were too busy trying to keep the boat upright. A wave roared across the deck for the second time and swept away my mess.

Everything was rocking and rolling. All I could do was collapse in the doorway and try to breathe. One of the men

dragged me farther into the cabin next to a pallet of boxes. “Just stay here,” he urged.

“Euuuuuhh,” I moaned in response.

I stayed in the same spot for three days. I was lying next to the bathroom, but I was so sick I didn’t realize it until the third day. Then, Captain Kent came over and yelled down at me, “Mrs. Goodhart! Mrs. Goodhart! You stink!”

He shoved me into the bathroom along with a pair of big, baggy pants and a sweatshirt. I sat on the floor and let the stream of the shower flow over me as the boat pitched and rolled. Finally, I managed to shut off the water and pull on the clean clothes.

What I couldn’t do was open the wooden bathroom door. Captain Kent eventually heard me struggling and rescued me again. Yanking open the door, he tossed me into the bottom bunk a few feet away. He hung a sheet from the bunk above me as a crude curtain.

I stayed there another two days, hardly moving. Every so often, the cook urged me to drink some hot milk: “It’ll be good for your stomach.”

I don’t know if I drank any milk or not, but I did wrestle a bottle of Coke from my backpack and take an occasional sip. But on the fourth day, I opened my eyes to calm instead of chaos. Captain Kent carried me out onto the deck and into a peaceful scene.

Everywhere I looked, I saw the beauty of the Lord, including creatures I’d never seen: flying fish. These stunning, silvery beauties skimmed a few feet above the water, traveling as far as thirty yards in one movement. A few landed on the deck. “Lord, I’m so happy to be here,” I prayed aloud. “It’s beautiful! Hallelujah! Praise God!”

By this time the crew was laughing at me, or maybe with me. “Thank you for your goodness, Lord,” I continued. “Hallelujah!”

Whether they liked it or not, I was having my own little praise party there on the deck.

That night, we sailed into more rough waters, following the storm as it made its way across Honduras. The squall had destroyed most of our navigation instruments, including the depth- and distance-finders.

Night fell, and the water pushed in. The men dropped the anchors, but my stomach was already rolling. “God, can you just get me out of here?” I prayed. But another thought came: *If I die down here, nobody will know where I am. What about Dean? What about my kids?*

But then I remembered: *God’s in charge*. The crew stayed up almost all night to keep us safe. And the next morning, we reached a small island, Guanaja.

One word described it: *barren*. Trees without leaves. Houses without roofs or walls. Everything was blown everywhere.

But then I remembered: God’s in charge.

As soon as we lowered the anchor, people rushed the boat. I tried to go call my friend Gladys, waiting for me in Tegus, but I couldn’t navigate the crowd. People started throwing items off the deck, but their supplies were all in the hold. Captain Kent stopped the riot, barking orders and pushing back the crowd.

The Port Authority soon showed up. That quieted one situation and presented another. Because we’d entered their port, the officials wanted fees. Captain Kent had an answer: “We brought all this stuff to your people. Don’t ask us for money too!”

He and the officials somehow reached an agreement. We offloaded the supplies from the hold, pulled up the anchors, and left Guanaja as soon as we could. We had no ministry base there, and for all we knew, conditions in Tegus were just as bad or worse.

Finally, we were on our way, the forty-five thousand pounds

of supplies on the deck mostly intact. As night fell, I started noticing tiny lights like fireflies in the water. At first, I saw only flickers down by the bow, but they kept growing. "Captain Kent," I called. "Why do I see fire in the water?"

"That's sea fire, or phosphorescence," he said. "Some of the sea creatures leave phosphorous in the water. The first boat that goes through afterwards releases it, and it glows."

I didn't care too much about the science, but I knew who made the sea and its creatures. "Hallelujah! Praise God!" I repeated as I gazed at the starry beauty flashing from the sea.

I praised God throughout the eighteen-hour trip. Tegus isn't a port city, so we landed in Puerto Cortes instead.

Once again, the sight was nothing short of unbelievable. Huge vessels made our shrimp boat look like a toy. Germany brought in massive water tankers because the hurricane had destroyed so many water lines. Mexico docked a gigantic hospital ship with a helicopter flying from it to a camp city in downtown Tegus where a medical team performed triage. Dead bodies lay everywhere.

Once we reached the harbor, the Port Authority refused to admit us. I told them about my letters, supply list, and anything I could think of. "I'm meeting Gladys Montoya. Her husband is the major of police in Tegus," I added.

Nothing seemed to work, so I kept praying as Captain Kent negotiated and six men lined up to keep us on the boat. A small pickup soon arrived. A short, official-looking man got out and marched toward us.

As I watched, he stopped. "Sister Avis!" he exclaimed. Nothing could hold me back. I leaped over the railing and gave him a hug. Not only was he in charge of all the officials there, but his wife was Maria, the administrator at Gerizim Church. She visited my home with Pastor Roberto when he came to

the U.S. Gladys had told them I was coming, but the three-day delay confused everyone.

“Come with me,” said my new friend. He made phone calls, filled out paperwork, and got the ship cleared to unload with two big trucks to transport the supplies. We hired men from the dock to offload everything. It was nearly dark before they finished, and here came Gladys at last.

She had waited and waited three days earlier, but when I didn’t show up, she went home. We were so happy to see each other, and now I had a partner in praise. She and I went in one truck and Maria’s husband in another. The hurricane had destroyed many bridges and roads on the 115-mile drive to Tegus.

At sunrise, we reached our destination. Because of all the post-storm looting, the city was under martial law. When Gladys showed her I.D. to the soldiers who stopped us, they changed from rough and tough to “Yes, ma’am!” We were the first relief workers to get through to that whole area of town. Although more than nine thousand people lost their lives in this tragedy, not one person from Gerizim Church was killed. We thanked God for His protection and knew He would use us to minister hope.

By daylight, all we could see was destruction. The slick roads were covered in mud. Almost every treetop had furniture or other household objects lodged in it, and any houses that remained had suffered horrific damage. Hurricane Mitch’s terrible power had stripped most people’s clothes from their bodies. They covered themselves with blankets or anything they could find.

I remained in Honduras for two more weeks. We’ve had some terrible disasters in our country, but the Hondurans had no insurance, no savings, no anything. Yet they still managed to smile.

Gladys and I went out to the refugee camps set up in the

state schools, where the scenes were equally unbelievable. People were trying to cook in old paint cans or discarded pieces of tin. The hurricane filled the outhouses with water and mud, but everyone needed them. Gladys and I dumped bleach in each facility to help prevent disease, working like crazy to help in any way we could.

On one of the first afternoons, I saw a big Coca-Cola truck heading up the mountain. “Look at them, taking advantage of people who have nothing left,” I told Gladys, sure the company was making money through disaster relief.

Later that day, one of the area men told us about the visit from the truck. “They handed out bottles of water and soda,” he said. “No one had to pay.”

There amid the tragic scene, I had to stop and repent. My words reflected my poor attitude. I judged the company without knowing the truth. Later on, God would remind me of this incident whenever I was tempted to question someone’s motives. There are always things we don’t know.

I stayed in the refugee camps as long as I could to distribute supplies. Once the airport re-opened, I flew back to Arkansas. I would be off on another mission trip to another country in only a few more weeks. Missions was becoming more than a summer activity. It was becoming my life.

Later that year, I returned to Honduras, and I couldn’t understand why I received such special treatment. Many churches invited me to speak, and people offered anything I needed.

When I started speaking at the first church, the people interrupted. “This is good, but we want to hear about the boat.”

The boat? I didn’t come on a boat.

“Tell us about when you came on the shrimp boat to help our people after Hurricane Mitch,” they insisted. *That was months ago. How do they even know about my crazy trip?* But I told the story anyway.

The woman who drove me back to my hotel that day had tears in her eyes. “You shame me,” she said. “You cared more for my people than I did. You *did* more for my people than I did. But no more!”

It was then I knew God had taken the story of one unlikely missionary and used it to wake up His people. More and more, I sensed His calling to serve overseas full-time. I knew I would do it.

And it wouldn’t take another storm to wake me up.

Tia's Story

Mom’s mission work wasn’t much of a family issue at first. My brother and I had lives of our own, and our stepdad always supported her in anything she did.

I started to get a clue about how serious Mom was about missions when she started doing trips down the Amazon. But the first time her mission work caused a real problem was during Hurricane Mitch.

Long ago, I decided she had a few blank spots when it came to safety. She’d go into a part of town where anyone I knew would be on guard. But Mom would just march right in as if she had no idea of the danger.

I really thought she was naive. It’s taken years for me to realize this is part of the way God made my mother. He used it to prepare her for what she’s doing now.

The trip after Hurricane Mitch brought a new level of concern. Because I’d served in the military and still had connections there, I always had a Plan B. If something happened, we could find a way to locate my mother. But this time, I wasn’t sure it would work.

From my years in the navy, I knew what a fishing boat was.

I tried to explain it to her ahead of time, hoping she'd realize it wasn't the best idea.

But before I knew it, she left. When we didn't hear from her for days, I called the Port Authority in Honduras. They weren't functioning, so I tried the Red Cross. "We're not in there yet," they told me. "It's not safe."

Great. I used my military connections to contact the air force base in Tegus. "We're not flying out. It's not safe."

That's when it hit me: My mom was on a fishing boat in the ending throes of this hurricane. And I might never see her again.

I kept praying about the situation and for her. At first, I was really angry with Mom. We couldn't find her, and everybody was concerned. But I finally got to the point where I realized that more than anything, this was her choice. This was what she wanted to do.

I had a mental process to go through similar to those with family members in the military. Your loved one is making a choice to put themselves in harm's way, and you can either support them or not.

I had to go through that process with, of all people, my mother – my school-teaching, church-going, casserole-making mother. This was the first time I realized she may have chosen to put herself in a situation where she could actually die.

There came a point when I had to say, "This isn't CNN, this is my mother, and she may not come home." When she finally called after about ten days, I'd already released my anger. I was overjoyed.

Even today, I let Mom have the enthusiasm God gives her about things. I have to keep giving her to Him and not live in anger or fear.

Contact Information

Go Ye Ministries

P.O. Box 1034

Prairie Grove, AR 72753

Website: goye-ministries.com:



Avis: avisgoodhart@gmail.com

Jake: hiebert83@gmail.com

Social Media Related to Go Ye Ministries

Creating Hope Web Store:

<http://www.goyeministriescreatinghope.com/>

Heart of an Orphan Blog:

www.hiebert5inperu.blogspot.com

Steps on the Journey Blog:

www.tdheartnurse.com

Facebook, In Jesus' Name Amen:

<https://www.facebook.com/casadepazperu>

Facebook, Out of the Dust:

www.facebook.com/outofthedustbook

Faithful Fifty

Just as stones are needed to build a strong foundation, Go Ye Ministries is looking for faithful people to donate a monthly gift of \$50, \$100, or \$150. Each \$50 represents a stone to build our firm foundation. How many stones would God have you commit to give? For more information, check out the Faithful Fifty link on our website (<http://goye-ministries.com/how-to-help/faith-fifty/>).



Avis Goodhart, founder of Go Ye Ministries, is a missionary, Bible teacher, and conference speaker who has blessed audiences across North, South, and Central America. Although she holds a B.S.Ed. and M.Ed. from the University of Arkansas, her primary qualifications include the pain and obstacles she's encountered along the way. These provide both insight and passion for her work in bringing the lives of countless orphans, volunteers, and others out of the dust. Avis, a widow, has five children and twenty-two grandchildren.



Marti Pieper's prayer involvement moved her to assist Brent and Deanna Higgins in telling their son's story in *I Would Die for You*, which became a young adult bestseller. Marti, who has a B.S.Ed. from Ohio State University and an M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written multiple books and often teaches at writers' conferences.

"*Out of the Dust* is like Avis herself: challenging, inspiring, and real. Her story shows how God's power transcends background, abilities, and qualifications to make the ordinary extraordinary. Read it and watch God inspire you to move out the dust of your own background and into His perfect will."

Steve Long

Senior Leader, Catch the Fire Toronto

"Avis Goodhart's incredible journey is a wonderful breath of fresh Holy Spirit wind challenging our comfortable Western generation to say yes with all our hearts and bodies to the call of Jesus. Her laid-down life, willing to go to the poor and broken with only faith and courage, is a model of true discipleship. John Wimber once said spiritual consecration is saying to the Lord, 'I'm loose change in your pocket; spend me any way you want.' Avis walks in that experiential reality. This model of a "trickle-up revival" is the New Testament pattern of Jesus and Paul. Read and be challenged, convicted, and inspired to follow the same Lord that Avis does in running into the dark, not away from it."

Dan Slade

International Coordinator, Partners in Harvest, Toronto, Canada

"Everyone needs a personal hero of the faith. I am not talking about the Apostle Paul or King David but a modern-day hero who has walked out the faith under the most difficult of circumstances. The story of Avis Goodhart will encourage, stretch and inspire your faith as you follow her journeys in *Out of the Dust*. What do you do when God gives you a vision and you watch it die in front of you? Where does faith come from when all seems lost? This is why I recommend you read and share this book. We all need a current story of someone who with God's help has turned tragedy into triumph."

Walker Moore

President and Founder, Awe Star Ministries, Tulsa, Oklahoma

"I met Avis at Casa de Paz when I brought mission teams to Pacasmayo, Peru to serve the Lord. I observed her passion in action as she told me her story and cared for the orphans of that region. It is clear that the Lord has ministered to the depths of her heart. She has allowed Him to use her time of brokenness to produce a unique understanding and love for those who are in need. The word "can't" is not part of her vocabulary. She does whatever it takes and inspires others to do likewise. *Out of the Dust: Story of an Unlikely Missionary* will inspire readers to overcome, regardless of the odds. Avis gets it. Avis lives it. Avis is the hands and feet of Jesus to those others have forgotten or ignored. Reading about her life, her story, and her journey is worth your time. Her testimony will produce new areas of surrender in yours!"

Brent Higgins

Associate Pastor, Parkview Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma;

Coauthor, *I Would Die for You*

“The various stories in Avis’s life bring to life the redemptive power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Her message is powerful and so humble. God blesses and esteems the contrite and the humble heart.”

Maggie Baratto

Father’s Heart Ministries;

Canadian Director for the International Association of Healing Rooms

“Having had the honor to know Avis for many years and to observe her love for God and for the Peruvian people, it’s hard to imagine viewing her life as anything other than completely sold out to Jesus. *Out of the Dust* takes you down that life path and allows you to witness God’s power of transformation whereby He takes an ordinary, broken person and moves His Holy Spirit over a life with amazing results.”

Jim Johnson

President, JACA Holdings, and Tethco Technologies, Inc.

“I have read about Abraham and many others in the Bible who faithfully responded to God’s calling to foreign lands without knowing all the trials (and blessings) that would follow. I have also been blessed with knowing present-day people like Avis Goodhart who are examples to us all that God hasn’t changed. He is always faithful as we respond, in faith, to His calling. For those who are persuaded that God’s story is fully contained in the books between Genesis and Revelation and that He somehow stopped functioning in biblical ways after those books were written, the life of Avis and many like her illustrate the truth: we serve a God who calls people to divine mission. He empowers and sustains them in the face of the obstacles they are sure to find as they work to advance His kingdom. Be inspired, and then seek the Lord for His calling on your life. You will be amazed, as Avis was, at how He manifests Himself in the process.”

Reverend Jim King

Chaplain (retired)

“From nothing our Creator made everything. But from dust came the Creator’s most glorious creation. Destiny is in the dust. Avis Goodhart’s story *Out of the Dust* is living proof of this profound truth. Read it, and let her take you for a joy ride of quirky connections of kingdom significance. Discover, as Avis has, how God’s presence can transform the pain, rejection, and sadness of life in ways that bring healing for body, soul, and spirit. With this revelation, Avis models the power and love of God in ways that bring the kingdom of heaven to earth. The good news is that we are all “unlikely” missionaries. And I know God will use Avis’s story to encourage you in your own walk from dust to glory. Enjoy!”

Pastor Jeff McCracken

Pastor, Selah Fire Church, Drayton, Ontario, www.selahfire.com

“What a story! We got to read the book as it was being written. We met Avis in the 1970s and became lifelong friends. We have watched her spiritual growth over the years and how God has directed her life. We have also watched her obedience to His call. No matter the price or the sacrifice, she willingly answered. Many have been blessed by her love of the Lord. Thank you, Avis, for your example.”

Herbert and Rachel Cypret

Board members, Go Ye Ministries