

## HOW GOD BLEW MY MIND!

(Communicating with the deceased in Russia?)

As I was growing up, my favorite band was Uriah Heep. My favorite in the group was their main songwriter, Ken Hensley, who also played keyboards, guitar, and sang some of the lead vocals. Over the years he had 300 of his songs published and sold more than 40 million records. One of his YouTube songs has more than 25 million views! I liked his thinking and song writing so much that for years, I actually prayed for him to become a follower of Jesus Christ. As you can imagine, I was ecstatic to learn he had become a Christian in 1993. God made the connection for me to begin corresponding with him via email to encourage him in his new faith. That led to a friendship spanning more than 25 years including an extensive email exchange of some 200 emails. As you may recall from the Perihelion, my friend, Ken, passed away in Nov. of 2020.

So, *there I was on a July evening*, listening to one of Ken's YouTube video concerts. It was a 2013 solo concert in Russia. I was casually having a snack as I watched it on our living room smart TV. Just before preparing to do his classic song *July Morning*, all of a sudden, Ken mentions "an American friend" (my mind quickly thinks of wild unlikely possibilities . . . like I wonder if he could possibly be thinking of me . . . but even if he was, I am sure he would not say the person's name so I would forever have to wonder and speculate if he could possibly have been referring to me during this concert) . . . "*So I told Larry . . .*" (Wait, WHAT! Did he just say "Larry" in the middle of his concert? How many guys named Larry from the US could he possibly know?) "*No matter how old you are, you'll never catch me.*"

So I pulled up my very old Netscape email program and sure enough, on that same day in 2013 we had a very deep and extensive conversation in the midst of his "Russian tour" about why they were so receptive to him and positive about the Christian message of God's love. He shared some specific thoughts during the concert as well as in his email to me, like how "*God gives me everything, though He owes me absolutely nothing . . . without Him I would not be here . . . it is great to have a Friend who is always there for us!*" He ends the email to me with the exact quote about me never catching him in age. I am overjoyed while simultaneously having *tears in my eyes* as I miss his friendship. It was quite a surreal and mind-blowing experience to think Ken was talking about me and sharing his faith in Jesus Christ at a concert in Russia! AND . . . now more than 23,000 people have also viewed that concert on YouTube. I'm pretty sure it's mainly because he mentioned me! 🤪

Here are some touching, insightful excerpts from that email as well as a couple others from when he was doing concerts in Israel, Russia, etc.

*Hi Larry,*

*I really enjoyed the last Perihelion and have the latest one here in my laptop, ready for this morning's 3-hour drive. I especially enjoyed the section on selfishness, hoarding, etc. and Job came to mind too. I doubt there was ever a more selfish, materialistic ego-maniac in the universe than me! And I know that, as I kicked and scratched my way into The Kingdom, He never gave up . . . so I had to! Isn't that amazing? Now all the right qualities come as natural as breathing and the joy and fulfillment I am blessed with leave me in awe, especially as the Spirit gives me the occasional glimpse of my old self!*

*As I go on in this marvelous journey, I become more and more dependent on the Lord and my faith just grows in ways I never expected. I can't define this Larry and I no longer try to understand it. In simple terms I just let it happen.*

*If that's not vague enough . . . in my solo shows, I invite the audience to ask me questions and that's always interesting and amusing. But, every single show, through one type of question or another, I am presented with an opportunity to witness. That's when I take a deep breath, say a quick prayer, and allow the Spirit to do the talking.*

*Each night I offer the show to the Lord and ask for His strength and His voice so His music can be an instrument of His love and His peace and especially that I remain within His will so that all of it will be to His glory. Straightforward stuff, I suppose, but to witness here requires more courage than I have . . . so He gives me His!*

*Last night's leading question came in the form of "Please tell us where you get your inspiration." My answer to this is always the same . . . "God"! And guess what Larry . . . the audience usually applauds. This would not happen in Germany.*

*The audiences here in the former Soviet countries (I am touring Georgia, Ukraine and Russia at the moment) are totally receptive to this and I am not kidding you when I say I frequently have to fight back tears. God knows this is His music and not mine. I am clear about that and grateful beyond words.*

*I continue to pray for you and Kristen, for your ministry, and for all of your endeavors. If I don't see you here, I am happy to know I will see you "there."  
HIS! Ken <><*