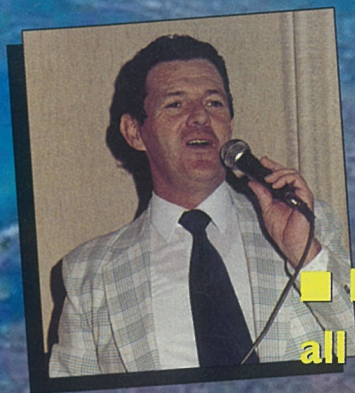


FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIAN

VOICE

NUMBER 6



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Transformed and Delivered

Eric Johnston (Adelaide)

The Alice Springs city engineer in central Australia Eric Johnston was able to hide his alcoholism and depression, but not his life threatening illness brought on by being permanently inebriated. In the city's hospital in July 1976 the doctors told him he had a week to live and that he should go home to die. There was nothing more they could do for him.

He contacted his former wife, June, in Adelaide, and said he wanted to see her and their five children at the airport and say goodbye. She met him but without their children. He was angry but fading fast. She gave him a book : Merlin Carruthers "From Power to Praise."

"I knew that if she gave me a book that in the first three pages there would be a reference to alcoholism and God. There was. I boarded my aircraft to fly to my hometown of Melbourne to die. I threw the book on the seat opposite but not before I read that God can change anyone's circumstances."

"I checked into a cheap unit in Melbourne. I was desperate and believed that the bed I was about to lie down in would be my last. I had attempted suicide. Alcoholism and depression had almost killed me. That day, the 19th of July was my 47th birthday. The doctors had told me that I was finished. They were not able to lower the alcohol level in my blood and I was dying of alcoholic poisoning. My response was 'Thank God, this will all be over.'"

"I felt I had nothing left in the world. My life had been a tale of failures. When you drink you have no conscience. I just didn't care what I had been doing to other people."

"I had attempted suicide with a knife and a miracle happened. Someone came up behind me and hit my arm knocking the knife out the window. I was so drunk that I had no recollection of anything else except finding myself in the police lock-up. I was charged with attempted suicide. [At that time it was a chargeable offence, whereas today people are offered care not jail.]

"The local magistrate may well have had a similar problem and was sympathetic. My case



Eric and June Johnston

was held in camera. I was a very sick man and hadn't been sober for four years. He asked whether I would do it again and when I told him no, dismissed the case. That brought on the break-up of my second marriage..."

But 30 years of alcoholism and misuse of prescription drugs had taken its toll.

"I used to start at 4am and begin drinking myself to oblivion. Alcoholism was the main reason for my marriage break-ups. I was rebellious as a child, although I had attended Sunday school. But I must point out one important thing. I have a dear relative, Salvation Army Officer Brigadier Emily Day...in 1960 she had started to pray for me every day. I told her once; 'Don't waste your time on me..' For 16 years she prayed faithfully for me.

"There is the key for salvation, never give up praying for the lost. I love her dearly for her faithfulness."

Eric was born in Melbourne in 1929. Had traumatic life with multiple problems. At nine months he contacted TB and 65 years ago that was a notifiable disease and sufferers then were not released until dead. He defied the odds and survived. He attended a Methodist Sunday School. He had problems learning at school as he suffered from dyslexia and was classified as lazy. He became a very rebellious young man. He found his solace in alcohol.

"But here I was sick and dying in 1976. There was no indication that I would live more than a week. I continued to drink even in hospital getting people to smuggle in more grog...but in my cheap hotel in Melbourne I began to realise a very important thing. I knew I was going to hell unless I could get my sins forgiven. I began reading that book and found a statement that said I could come to God as I was."

"You must understand that I hadn't had a drink since 3 o'clock that afternoon. Quite a long time for me, six or seven hours...I began to see that God accepted me. This was a real revelation. I had attempted to reach God in my strength and it had never worked."

"I was a very unsavoury person...I was bleeding internally and was losing control of my bowels. I got out and knelt at the side of the bed. For some reason the Lord started to bring past my memory all the filthy things I'd done. This went back to the earliest recollections. I knew I had to be clean and I had to repent...I started naming names I thought I had forgotten. I kept getting in and out of bed to confess more things..."

"By 5am the next morning I knew I had a cleansing that I could not explain. I knew I was thoroughly born again. The mattress at which I had knelt was absolutely saturated with my tears of repentance. On that night I had two birthdays; my 47th and my new birth coming into the Kingdom.

"The next miracle was that I awoke at 7am and I felt absolutely fresh. I had no desire to drink and I went to the toilet and there was no blood. The Lord had chosen to graciously perform a miracle. I now knew that Jesus was my saviour."

"I had said that if Jesus would heal me, I would do whatever I could for him for the rest of my life. I still thought that I may only have three days of life left because my internal bleeding had been so serious. I laughed at the Lord and

said 'You've only got three days' and here I am working for him 20 years later and the Lord is still laughing."

"I was transformed and delivered. I walked past a hotel shortly afterwards and stopped. I could hear the sounds of the pub, the smell of familiarity and I looked up to God outside and I gave him my alcoholism. People walking past thought I was mad...I have never had a drink since."

Eric still had some important issues to face including greed after money and lust. But the Lord has worked these through in his life. He remarried his first wife June in February 1977; the first time they married was without God, the second with God as their strength. In 1978 both gave their lives for service with the Salvation Army.

"I followed David's example and said as in Psalm 51 which begins; 'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.' and I accept that as Romans 12 verse 2 says that I no longer conform to this world, 'but I am transformed by the renewing of your mind...'

"I have found that God answers my prayers for help when I beg. While I knew in 1976 I was forgiven I still had all of my negative characteristics. It has taken many years to have these changed. God's word has been my answer, but I have had to find them."

Eric and June work in Adelaide with a rehabilitation program providing support and counselling for people suffering alcohol and drug related problems. Eric knows that he caused a lot of damage when an alcoholic and even today longs to be reconciled to all of his children. He finds that a difficult burden to carry, but it helps him understand the needs of others when counselling.

"I weep inside for my children...and I can share the burden with those who suffer as I did. But I know now that God has given me life and life more abundantly and he has given the song in my heart for the 20 years that I never expected to have. He is a great God."

Eric Johnston is a current member of the FGBMFI Adelaide North Chapter, having joined in February 1992.

Music Transcends all Denominations

Jerry Exton (Brisbane)

Money was my God and I found that I could make a lot of it as a nightclub singer until I found that it is God who gives us our songs.

“God is the song, I’m not sure whether I sang because I was happy or I was happy because I sang. I just know that if you wake up in the morning with a song in your heart thanking God, then you can never be depressed. Money means little to God. When we become new creatures in Him, it is His love and joy that means everything”

“My greatest claim to fame, apart from becoming a Christian, was that I was the first entertainer to be seen on Brisbane TV on Channel 9 in 1958 on the Coca Cola Bottlers Show with Johnny James. This was followed by many TV, radio and club appearances.

“My Dad was a wall and floor tiler, and in the 1950s there were few trades which paid as well. I hated the feel of cement on my hands, but the love of money overcame that, so I became a tiler. My brother, Des, at 12 was billed as Australia’s Bobby Breen, an American boy soprano, and Des was earning more money than my Dad...because I loved money I thought that was the way to go. I became a singing-tiler.

“So I was tiling by day and singing by night, which made me a lot of money because I believed that it was not what you made that mattered, but how much you could save of what you made. So I hoarded it all up.

“I saved it towards getting married to Elaine.. But three months before that I had a major accident when I was blown up by some highly volatile tiling adhesive which I had been heating. I was blown out of the kitchen and suffered first and second degree burns to my arms and face. I was in hospital for three months and used most of my money. God was very gracious and I didn’t suffer any



Jerry and Elaine Exton

permanent scars.

“Even with that God didn’t get my attention then.. It wasn’t until we had our three little girls that I started thinking about their future. I thought that girls needed an edge because boys seemed to be somewhat of the monsters and I remembered what I was like. So I thought with God in their lives they might beat the odds.

“I had made a promise to Elaine that I wouldn’t do the nightclub circuit, it had a bad name, but there was an economic depression. I was paying 32 pounds a month on my latest Holden....that was a phenomenal amount to keep paying when the tiling fell away. I was forced back into singing.

“Well, it was really through my daughters that I came to find God. They were going to the Assembly of God Sunday School and the pastor decided that was a good enough excuse to visit us.”

“He said; ‘Have you ever thought of taking God into your business?’ and I said ‘How do you do that?’. He showed me Malachi 3 verse 10 : “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this.” says the Lord Almighty “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room for it.”

“Well I didn’t understand it much then. The pastor was a motivator and that was his fulltime job outside the pulpit. He used to come around every Friday night and want to know how I was going and I would say ‘Terrible’. He would then say come to church on Sunday night because I’ll be giving a fantastic motivational talk which will cheer you up. Of course he was preaching the gospel. Anyway I took the bait and have been going to that church for the past 28 years.

“But it was three months before I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Saviour. There had been a number of altar calls at church but it

was at a Billy Graham crusade in 1968 at the Exhibition ground that I went forward.

“I tithed for seven years and gave gladly to the Lord and God blessed me for it. But there wasn’t much change in me spiritually. Nothing really changed until 1974.

“I had become quite ill. I had a main arterial by-pass operation and it was unsuccessful. It was a blood disorder and I had a blood clot in my leg and they had to operate. I had moved into real estate and it seemed my business was going down the drain. There was another economic slump and I was bluffing that God could get me through. We had been building something like about 100 houses each year.

“So financially broke, strapped and physically poor, Elaine and I decided to go on a Viva California tour while the company still had the money to afford it. I couldn’t walk more than about 100 metres without getting a cramp. We went to a Kathryn Kuhlman Crusade at the Shrine Auditorium in Los



Jerry and Elaine Exton and four daughters

Angeles. I got marvellously healed. I could then walk any distance I liked without any problem and I checked later with the doctors and found that my blood disorder had gone.

“You see God does teach us some spiritual lessons. I got stuck into God’s word and found all the passages about healing. I meditated on His word. I tell you I have had a complete healing, with no problems at all.”

“But this is what I have found; prayer is not the real answer to financial struggles. The answer to finances is giving. When it comes to healing, the answer is that He sent his word to heal you and deliver you from destruction. You can be supernaturally healed in a meeting but if you don’t change your ways then its not worth having.

“Three months later I lost my healing. Within two weeks, Fred Price came to minister to our church. The first thing he said that made me pay attention was that many people get healed in Kathryn Kuhlman type meetings but lose their healing because they don’t know how to maintain it by faith. He began talking about a faith walk, which I had never heard before, that you get healed by believing in His Word. In Psalm 107 verse 20 it says, He sent His word to heal us...

“Some people, when they receive God’s blessings, say ‘Thank you Father’, put the Word down, walk away and live as if nothing has changed. All of His promises are dependent on my getting back into the Word. And as I did, I got my healing back. I realised that to maintain my healing I had to stay in His Word. Today I have divine health and I am teaching others what God has taught me.

“For the past 12 years I have been speaking this message that we must change by what God does in our lives. I have felt at times that this has fallen on deaf ears. I got frustrated that I couldn’t get the message across and what God had done for me.

“But I have found this ministry in singing.

And I know the meaning that the joy of the Lord is our strength.

“I have visited the US 12 times in the past 15 years because I see myself as a missionary to them. They have done so much for me I want to give back every good thing they have blessed me with. I preach and sing mostly around New York State to whoever wants to hear. Music transcends all denominations.

“Before I became a Christian, I used to be a request vocalist. I could sing most popular pieces. In truth I guess I’m what you would call an operatic tenor if I practised. I’ve got a comedy flair which lends itself well to entertainment. Some of my songs used to be a bit risqué but I wouldn’t do that now.

“I’ve got a range where I can sing most things. I grew up with jail house rock to ‘Help Yourself’, ‘Its not Unusual’, ‘Rags to Riches’ and more. I’ve put Christian words to them. On Sundays, when I’m not preaching at church I sing from the back of a truck at the Mt Gravatt flea market. Everybody stops and listens to the sounds and the different words.

“That’s how Wesley got started. He said; ‘Why should Satan have all the best music?’ I really like Tom Jones music, the best thing that has happened to music recently. I’ve grabbed a lot of his music...I’ve done eight recordings recently and just produced ‘The Holy Ghost Happy Hour.’ on cassette and CD... My favourite piece of music is still; ‘How Great Thou Art.’

“God uses the Holy Spirit to cut right through to the soul with music. God wants to pour blessings upon us. The Bible says that our innermost beings shall flow with rivers of living water. God intended us to be a new creation and talks about putting in new wine. In an old vessel it leaks out. Only if we change into new vessels can the new wine stay in. I try to encourage everyone that through finding Jesus Christ they too can put a new song in their life. Money can never buy that sort of joy.”

Jerry Exton is a Past President of the FGBMFI Springwood Chapter, Queensland, and has ministered in word and song at many Chapters and Conventions.

God Can Be Trusted

Dinko Miocevic (Perth)

There was an emptiness in both our lives, we may have appeared to have had a lot but we lacked fulfilment, so we both began searching.... That was about 30 years ago and God has shown his great love and mercy ever since.” Dinko Miocevic, a consulting mechanical engineer in Perth, says as he looks back on when he first encountered the Lord.

For Dinko born in Perth, of Croatian parents who had migrated to Australia in the early 1920s, this was the beginning of his search with his wife, Mavis, for God.

In 1967 they were invited to an Easter service at the local Baptist Church in Wembley Downs. It was shortly afterwards that they found God’s grace and sustaining power in the death of their second son.

“That’s where it began for us. We were so mightily touched that we knew we had found the answer to the eternal emptiness that is in everyone. We had found a personal relationship with Jesus.”

Dinko had no religious upbringing, as his Croatian father felt only bitterness towards the church for the way he considered it had treated him in his homeland. While nominal Catholics they did not attend church nor show any religious interest.

Mavis had attended a small Sunday School at Swan View. She didn’t continue but always felt that was where the answers could be found. She had enjoyed it very much and according to Dinko “that was what encouraged me to go along with her when she was seeking as well. I’d spent about 30 years in the wilderness, then this remarkable change occurred. in our lives”

“We had been unable to have children at



Dinko and Mavis Miocevic

first and adopted two lovely girls. Then in 1968 we had a son. Our second son was born three months premature in late 1971. He only lived for three weeks. It was a real struggle, but it was during that time that we saw the love of the Lord through the Christian people around us. It was the people who did it. We had not had a great vision of God before that or of his quest for our lives, but it was the love of God’s people coming alongside during that time...the personal sacrifices they made to help us.

“In a way it released us because we had another son, Michael, in 1975. It was the loss of our second son that made us really come to the Lord in a new way”.

In the mid 1980s Dinko decided to go into business for himself. He was invited to a FGBMFI meeting in Perth by a friend to share his testimony. His friend encouraged him to join the Chapter and he has been a member ever since.

“Around about that time we were searching for something more in our Christian lives. We had served faithfully in the Baptist church, but hadn’t got a complete release. Friends of ours had said that visiting evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke, was a great man of God and that we should hear him speak.

“He made an appeal for people to come forward to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We both rushed out and were virtually the first in line to be prayed for. It took awhile for this to have the full effect as we had been trying to achieve it in our own strength rather than simply releasing ourselves and letting God deliver us. We had felt incomplete and, while working for the Lord, felt that we lacked power in our lives. We certainly were born again but now we were brought into a new fulfilment”.

For Dinko this meant taking on a leadership role both in the local Chapter of FGBMFI and, together with his wife, leading a home group. He began meeting once a week for prayer with other men.

“I guess I was pushed into a leadership role and helped establish the local Chapter (Stirling). This occurred by application and absorbing the word of God and receiving the gifts by faith...We originally thought that you could go somewhere and see somebody to give you these things. But we found that by going into God’s word more and more, His word led us into a walk of faith.”

“I had found when I was converted and came to know the Lord that we put a lot of things aside. We were able to walk away from a lot of things we were involved in. They were not major things like I hear sometimes, but they were enough to keep us out of God’s kingdom...I guess we haven’t got much to say that way except that I just praise God for what he has done in our lives...”

They now attend the Churchland Vineyard Christian Fellowship in Perth. Dinko’s leadership gifts have led him to become a Regional Director of the FGBMFI and given them both the faith to step out and do things they previously would not have done.

Because of the way they conduct their business, God has blessed that too. As a consulting engineer for cranes and heavy lifting equipment, he is required to provide

advice and second opinions on safety standards.

As Dinko says; “My business was established by God because of my desire to get away from a series of company takeovers. We had a little farm which we sold and were able to establish our own consulting practice from the proceeds. By word of mouth people came to us and that’s the biggest miracle. God kept sending the right people through the door. He has built our business”.

“One of the challenges is that we are sometimes pressured to give in on standards, but I always let people know where I am coming from...I won’t operate that way. I know that some of our expert advice has saved lives. And I know that if I deal honestly with people, God will send others.”

This even gets down to only charging for services actually rendered and pointing out to suppliers if they have missed billing us for items.

“I believe that if we honour Him in the small things, He will honour us in the big things. That’s the way it has been in our business all the way along, just giving people the best advice and service, and they keep coming back. We scrapped advertising. It was a waste of money, and it got us all the wrong people. God only sends us the right people. He never opens the next door until we walk through the first one.. We have found that walking by faith is hard but God can be trusted.”

“He has given us a beautiful family, four children, and me, a lovely wife, and we have three grandchildren. We have run a home group and ministered to people in a pastoral role which I would never have thought, in the natural, we could have done. It is clearly God’s hand in our lives.”

Dinko Miocevic joined the FGBMFI in 1988 and has now renewed with a 5 year membership to the year 2002.

A New Creation

Jon Terpstra (Sydney)

Through a failed business, Jon Terpstra, adopted a new identity and lived the high and dangerous life in Sydney thinking that no one knew of his double life. God did and changed it like he never expected.

Jon was born in Holland where he lived until he was 25. He and his wife Marty came to settle in Adelaide in December 1966. They moved to Sydney in 1973. It was there, after a business collapse, that his double life began until God stopped him short; but not before he lost everything including his wife, family, self respect and almost his soul.

He didn't have a good start. Born in 1941, (he jokingly said he started World War II) in the province of Friesland in the coldest and most northern province of Holland, he was a severe asthmatic and was often close to death. His family were from the Reformed church (from the time of Calvin) and Jon would often pray and make bargains that if God could deliver him from his latest asthma attack he would serve him. He generally forgot his promises shortly afterwards. But at age 15 the first miracle in his life occurred. The faithfulness of his father going from hospital to hospital finally resulted in the doctors successfully diagnosing the cause of his asthma to dust allergies and triggered by emotional upsets. He was treated successfully.

"I had a creative flair and at the age of 23 was offered a management position and was one of the youngest creative art directors in Europe at that time. I married a lovely Christian girl, Marty, that I had met in Amsterdam who was also from Friesland. I was trained in Christian schools so I knew of the Bible and memorised catechisms and hymns. I became the head of many things. While I was involved in church and President of two Christian Youth Clubs, we were also regular visitors to the nightclub scene. It was



Jon with his wife Mary who faithfully kept praying and loving. We are joined together for eternity!

the 1960s and we were changing old traditions.

"Marty got pregnant, we married, and had a lovely daughter Kirsten. She was a great joy to us. But we then had a great drama in our lives. At seven months in Amsterdam she died in a cot death. That was the second major crisis of my life; the first had been my overcoming asthma. Kirsten's death hit us really hard but we knew that she was with the Lord, which gave us comfort."

They decided to migrate to Australia and settled in Adelaide. Marty worked as a hairdresser and Jon in advertising and both did very well for eight years. They had two more daughters; Kerensa now 28 and Kirsten 26, both happily married and have a one year old grandson. "We got our own home and became well known in the advertising world and set up own business. I helped a few people become millionaires and did well myself. My allergy started to play up again because South Australia had severe dust storms and the doctors advised me to move.

We were part of the church and were in a period when we were fostering a number of children, mostly Aboriginal children, and that was very emotional. So we decided to move...we shipped to Sydney.” By 1975 they settled in Blacktown and shortly afterwards became successful again using his recently acquired skills in Holland and setting up his own agency. I was working with the Reformed Churches in youth leadership and many other things. I thought I was a pretty good Christian.

“Everything was beautiful, I was working in the promotional design world and had accounts running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In 1981 two main clients collapsed. It had a domino effect. For three years I fought off court cases but eventually by 1984 we got notice that we had to sell up everything. The sheriff came to the front of our house and ordered us out. We lost everything.

“By that time I was very angry, hated my wife, the girls and the church, but I didn’t show it and being a creative guy devised a plan to get back at everyone. I took on another identity and made a new world. It was quite easy. I began working as a freelance art director under a new name. I was playing a double game. Marty didn’t know, nor did they at church. I lied to everyone and avoided all my former contacts. I used to sit in church and pity those around me who didn’t know how clever I was.

“In 1988 I helped design some books including the Australian Heritage Cookbook which within eight months had sold over a million copies. I moved away from Marty and the family. They didn’t know about my double life even then. I was playing around and became known as Don One and Don Two...Our company became successful worldwide. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed living in the fast lane. I was a member of the rich set around Sydney and many other places in the world. I often shouted free drinks at most of the clubs and hotels. I tipped the doorman and the barman, anyone serving, amounts up to \$1000. This went on until 1989.

“I had no inkling that my daughter would catch me out when I was in the mountains at Katoomba with other women. Afterwards I

said to my wife, ‘So you have discovered me, now you can keep everything’ and I walked out. The daughters ran after me calling ‘Dad, Dad, Dad...’ To my amazement I began to cry. That hurt me and I never thought that I would.”

Events began to catch up with Jon as did God’s word planted in his heart so many years ago. He kept having scriptural texts come into his mind. He found his business partners were using astrology to guide their decisions on how to handle him. That made him angry.

More importantly he hesitatingly made contact with his estranged wife Marty again. She agreed to go out. She said that she and two other women had been praying for him constantly for seven years because “she didn’t want me to go to hell, she wanted me to go to heaven.”

They began to build their relationship again. Jon went to a Fusion-run seminar which led to him dealing seriously with God and His Truth. “I knew I had to change my life, but I wasn’t sure how.”

God did that. Jon found that their business had become a sham with fictitious stock and the company was in a shambles. He knew something was wrong. There was an enormous corporate battle.

“This time I became a real Christian. The amazing thing was that God led me peacefully through the battle in 1990. In 1991 the Company was bankrupt and I was bankrupt again. In a year I was literally reduced from travelling by stretched limo to using a train ticket. During that time I told Marty everything. The lie that I had lived. We went through a very painful time. I didn’t realise that it hurt her so much. The Lord kept her sane through that time. I was constantly reminded of my false life.

“I went to another seminar... I asked God for forgiveness. I asked Marty for forgiveness and she gave it...But another big step forward was when I attended the Emmaus Walk.

“During a session of confession, combined with a Holy Supper, with sixty or so other men, I was almost the last. Most poured out their hearts in many ways and there were lots of tears. But I asked the Lord to forgive my pride and take it away and humble me. I have never

cried so much. I learnt that there is no good man under the Sun, except the blessed Lord Jesus.

"I was still hurting... I had a delightful encounter with the love of God through people, I prayed for my youngest daughter, Kirsten, who was still extremely angry with me. I wanted to have my relationship restored with her. My older daughter was not so hard. On the Sunday afternoon I received a number of letters and one was from my daughter, Kirsten. It was so beautiful that I sat down and wept...God had answered my prayer before I had even made it. She wanted to see me as soon as I got home.

"I was filled with the Holy Spirit. That has started a chain reaction. I was, and am so happy, that I found it difficult to control myself. I didn't care what people said. It is just that I know the Lord, I know He is real and I know that He has forgiven me, and restored a sinner like me. Amazing Grace! I know I am happy at last.

"God started to heal me in all sorts of ways. All scripture became clear again. I accept His word without question. God has miraculously erased my memories of my illicit relationships. This was the evidence that the power of God really works and removed something right out of my life. It was done His way and gone from my memory.

"God gave me a clear message. He said 'You are mine to do whatever I desire' and I



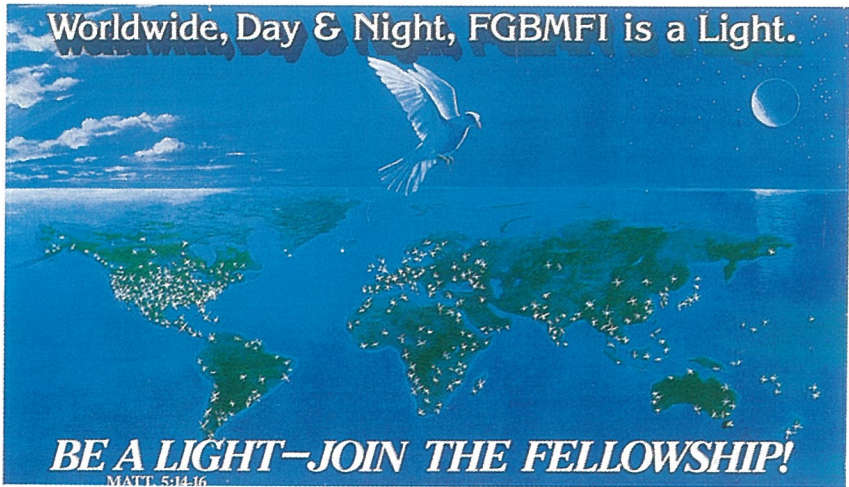
Jon with daughters Kerensa (left) and Kirsten (right). After terrible times God reunited us in much joy!

said 'Take me and use me in whatever way you wish'. God wanted me to become bankrupt so that he could fill me with His love and use all that previous energy for his purposes.

"I became a scripture teacher in the High Schools, became part of the Emmaus movement, helped Fusion with Easter marches etc, co-ordinated the Freedom from Hunger campaigns in Sydney West, visited and ministered to prisoners, worked with Parramatta Community Care services, became President of the FGBMFI Hills Chapter, and I teach Church History/Catechism to teenagers in my Church. I currently run a business designing and publishing primarily cookbooks. I also teach Graphic Art at a business college. Marty is still hairdressing in four retirement homes.

"I believe the FGBMFI is an ideal place to bring the gospel. I cannot stop telling people about Jesus and I still do, in aircraft, on the train, in the streets. I will ask if they are a Christian? I tried to make myself into a new identity but God did better than that, He made me into a new creation."

Jon Terpstra joined the Fellowship in 1993 and recently became a LIFE member.



Why should a believer join the Fellowship?

Because the Fellowship is a vehicle to help him obey Jesus' command to us in Matthew, 5: 14–16, “Let your light shine, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in Heaven”.

In more than 120 countries, day and night, God is using the FGBMFI to reach out to a hurting world.

Why not join us? We would be delighted to welcome you if you can subscribe to our doctrinal statement.

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Email: fgbmfi@ozemail.com.au

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Putting Faith Into Action

Philip Castle (Brisbane)

I was very conscious of the war as I flew into Saigon, South Vietnam, that Saturday afternoon on May 17, 1969. But I wondered what it would be like as I looked down from the 727 window on the bomb marked Mekong Delta and could see the fire bombings in the distance.

What I didn't anticipate was how God would richly and powerfully bring me back into His will. I was 23 and heading for what I knew was one of the great adventures of my life. South Vietnam at that point was still in the grip of a complex and costly war.

When I landed at Tan Son Nhut airport I was told that the Viet Cong had just recently promised that they would deluge the tightly squeezed city of 5 million with 100 rockets for 100 nights just to show they could do it. These rockets were fired from the marshes about 4 to 5 clicks away and landed indiscriminately often blowing out entire houses killing quite large numbers.

I didn't realise how real that danger was until the following nights with the solid thumps waking me as the rockets exploded and the city's artillery defences tried, mostly in vain, to hit the launching sites.

While the danger was not great, compared to some other locations throughout Vietnam, but it did teach me a life-long lesson; to pray fervently and meaningfully to God. It has been my practice for most of my life to pray before going to bed. Mostly at my bedside. The prayers that I offered in May and onwards of my two years in Vietnam were from the heart and always sincere. I asked God for safety during my time in Vietnam. He did care for me even when one rocket landed two houses away. I learnt when we pray we should be conscious we are dealing with Almighty God.

However at that point my Christian life was pretty loose. I had been raised in a Christian home and attended an Open Brethren church as a teenager. I knew the scriptures well. I

knew that my father always prayed faithfully for all of our family daily. He still does.

But life had got messed up a bit on the way and I was attracted to good times and fun. I had a disastrous broken engagement to a Christian girl which left me hurt and angry with God.

I had made a commitment of sorts about 12 when I realised what a great man and saviour Jesus was. But I turned my back on God and to this day I'm not sure whether my earlier commitment would have made much difference. I think I was very close to eternal damnation if I had died then. It's quite easy to pretend to be a Christian on the outside without really knowing God on the inside. For me it was pretty dark inside.

Being single I was asked at very short notice, 10 days in fact, to go to join the staff at the Australian Embassy Vietnam. This prompted a sudden revelation with my girlfriend at the time, Carole, that we should get engaged and see how the separation



Philip Castle (left) at Saigon Airport Ton Son Hhut with a Vietnamese orphan about to go to U.K. with British Missionary Staff



Loanne (eldest daughter), Phil, Carole, Nathan and Tara Castle

worked on our relationship.

Like many others the first few weeks in Vietnam were chaotic as was the war. It was a mess. This was shortly made worse by me getting the standard Saigon belly which meant spending hours vomiting and suffering until some white powder we nick-named "Saigon cement" settled me down.

But there was a war raging in my mind too. The temptations of what was previously known as the "Pearl of the Orient" were all too obvious. Brothels, bars, the black market and fast life styles were everywhere. For westerners money could be quickly made and anything could be bought. There were few grey areas in Saigon, you either went one way or the other.

I believe it was the Holy Spirit's quiet warning voice that kept me safe but I found it hard to know what to do. I was either too busy or too ill and exhausted to find any Christian fellowship until after five weeks in desperation I rang a christian contact and they suggested a church.

Praise God I somehow found myself in the International Protestant Church pastored by the Christian and Missionary Alliance. I could not help my tears of relief as we sang a hymn and I knew then how much I missed the fellowship of Christian people and God in my life. That was the start of a real turnaround for me. I sought forgiveness and renewal in my life which God granted.

It was the second important lesson about Christian living; we need real prayers and we need the close friendship of Christians. But there was more.

Saigon at that point was probably the world's most evil city. Sex, drugs, cruelty and violence was blatant, but to my surprise so was God's work and witness. Where evil abounded so did God's grace. I found through that church and the fire of the believers that many came into the Kingdom and broken lives were made worthwhile. Even the church's programs were staggering. I was on the church board for a year and we had the "problem" of distributing

about \$US20,000 each month from the giving and contributions sent in from other churches. That was in 1970 too.

Faith without action is dead and the Christians there were waging a very successful war against Satan. Those who attended church, and there were never less than 500, wanted to be there each Sunday. They wanted to see God working in their lives. Third lesson, when you meet together as Christians, mean to be there, want to be together and want to see God at work. I miss that church.

But I had another lesson to learn from God. I soon became involved in some orphanage visits. These tragic places were the sewer for the cast-offs of that bitter war. The maimed, lost, mixed blood children of prostitutes or just the abandoned, who had little hope of living beyond a few years. They were in places with less standards than a western zoo. They died like flies.

I got angry with God and blamed him for the poverty and misfortune of those innocents. I screamed at God on my way back from one visit and said "God if you continue to allow this to happen I don't want to know you. What sort of a God are You?"

I stayed away for a few months until a small voice spoke to me and told me that it was grieving God too. God was not to blame, this was the outward expression of man's fall and cruelty to their fellow man. No-one would escape, not even those who ignore the needs.

God showed that I could not ignore it either. I became convinced that while I could do very little for the hundreds of thousands of suffering children in Vietnam at that time, I could do something for one or two.

So I returned and in a simple way just fed a few kids often from a single can of fruit with one spoon lining them up to ensure they actually received the nutrition. If you left food there it was often stolen. More importantly a group of us showed these kids love and for some gave them almost their only adult hugs.

God taught me another principle which is best summed up in the famous statement made by the US President Roosevelt during the darkest hours of World War II; "It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness." We lit our single candles.

God granted me grace and I became the

vice-president of my church. I extended my stay in Vietnam, but not before I returned to Australia and married my beautiful wife, Carole, and took her back for the second year of my posting.

We both grew in the Lord and cared individually for some orphan children using the principle of helping in very small ways. I'm sure our impact was not very great in the scheme of things, but today we have contact and visited two Vietnamese orphans who, without fanfare, have said that we saved their lives.

Once back in Australia I felt let down by the stagnation of the church and to some extent my own Christian life. God was gracious again and gave us three lovely children. But I wanted more and entered journalism, where my witness was that, along with secular material, I write Christian material, much of which is published.

But that is God's doing. I still find that it is a daily walk. I can't rest on my service to God in my life yesterday. I know I need his power every day and I seek that by proper prayer, fellowship, searching the word and putting faith into action.

I've also had to learn that pride has no place in God's scheme. The moment I think I am great, God stops me and almost immediately shows it is only in Christ Jesus that anything really counts. A test I have learnt from the scripture's description of the Mount of transfiguration story is 'Who is being glorified here?' That is the principle I try to apply to my life and sometimes at Christian gatherings.

Like the disciples when the going gets tough I say 'To who else would we go?', as sometimes being a Christian is not easy because I know how it should be, but I try to keep faithful with the single little candle and I know, humbly, that somehow God blesses that too.

Philip Castle joined the Fellowship in 1996 and is a Vice President of the Brisbane Chapter.

SIX SCRIPTURAL STEPS TO SALVATION

Men still cry, "What must I do to be saved?" The Bible provides a clear answer.

1. ACKNOWLEDGE: "For all have sinned and fell short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23 "God have mercy on me, a sinner" Luke 18:13.

2. REPENT: Unless you repent, you too will all perish" Luke 13:3 "Repent, then, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out" Acts 3:19.

3. CONFESS: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" 1John 1:19."If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" Romans 10:9.

4. FORSAKE: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him . . . for He will freely pardon" Isaiah 55:7.

5. BELIEVE: "For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" John 3:16. "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" Mark 16:16.

6. RECEIVE: "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" John 1:12.

Why not make your eternal decision right now?

I am convinced by God's word that I am a lost sinner. I believe that Jesus Christ died for sinners and shed His blood to take away my sins. I now receive Him as Lord and Saviour of my life and will, by His help, announce that fact to others."

When you have made this greatest of all decisions, please let us know so that we may send you further information. Mail the adjacent coupon now.

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The Threefold Purpose of the full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship

1. To witness to God's presence and power in the world today through the message of the total Gospel for the total man, and by this to reach men for Jesus Christ, especially those having the same social, cultural or business interests as the person doing the witnessing.

2. To provide a basis of Christian Fellowship among all men everywhere through an organisation not directly associated with any specific church but cooperating with all those of like mind, and to inspire its members to be active in their respective churches.

The Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International does not start churches. Rather, we desire solely to be a service arm to existing ones.

3. To bring about a greater measure of unity and spirit of harmony in the body of Christ, where members are united in a common effort for the good of the whole body.



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