

12-81

Season's Greetings from
Full Gospel Business Men's **Voice**



The Miracle of the
White House Santa

Presidential Santa Claus

Robert George, Anaheim, CA





Christmas has always been special to me. As one of 11 children growing up in Lexington, Nebraska I enjoyed the family gatherings filled with prayer and talking of the Lord.

That's the way I was raised by my Greek Orthodox parents—to love and respect God. My father, a grocer by trade, read the Bible to us every day. We never sat down to a meal without first praying. And we were always taught to pray for others.

After high school and an army stint I became a barber. I owned a business in Cozad, Nebraska when, in 1949, I dreamed that God wanted to put the true spirit of Christmas into everyone. I even envisioned myself at the White House, dressed as Santa. Even though I was only 24 years old at the time, I took the dream very seriously.

I went right out, bought a Santa suit for \$7.50 at the dime store, and began visiting door-to-door, wishing people a merry Christmas. Curious as to who I might be, the townspeople set a "trap" and had a photographer and two policemen unmask me during my rounds. After they pulled off my wig and peered under my fake beard they laughed, "Oh, it's only Bob the barber."

However, I was invited to ride in our town Christmas parade. During the next few years I played Santa around the local area. As my reputation grew, so did my contacts. Before many years passed I was able to share my dream with Carl Curtis (then senator from Nebraska), who arranged my first White House visit in 1956. That's when Ike appointed me the presidential

Slowly President Eisenhower's limousine drew near to where I stood with Vice President Richard Nixon, Mrs. Nixon and Nebraska Senator Carl Curtis.

Suddenly Nixon pushed me toward the car. "Here he comes, Santa. Go get him."

I was so surprised that I forgot my previous instructions from the secret service not to initiate any contact with the president. Racing toward the limousine, I flung open the door for Mamie. She threw her arms around me, then kissed and hugged me. I shook my belly like a bowl full of jelly for her and she loved it.

Then Ike came over and put his arms around me. He remarked on my blue eyes and said, "You are the best-dressed Santa I've ever seen. I hereby appoint you the official Presidential Santa Claus." That was back in 1956 during the Christmas Pageant of Peace in Washington, D.C., and I've been the official Santa ever since.

Santa, just as I had envisioned seven years earlier.

I've been back to Washington nearly every year since, participating in the pageant and the lighting of the national Christmas tree. My role is voluntary and I pay all my own expenses. My income comes from sleigh-rides and personal appearances. My wife works part-time and that also helps us. All I desire is enough income to be able to go where I'm needed to spread Christmas cheer.

While in Washington each year I deliver gifts, entertain members of Congress, the White House staff, and other dignitaries and their families.

I always ask each president what he wants for Christmas. Eisenhower wanted a new top hat; Mamie, a fur coat. Jack Kennedy wanted my sleigh.

By the time he was president I had acquired a 42-foot sleigh with 152 blinking lights and five mechanical reindeer. Kennedy drove it down Pennsylvania Avenue, then he asked if he might keep it for Christmas. Of course we all ho-ho'd about that. Then he told me what he wanted most was world peace.

Each president had his own personality and I found Kennedy among the warmest. I also enjoyed visiting with the Carters. In fact, the day before the 1977 Pageant of Peace my wife and I flew to Plains, Georgia for dinner with a Carter friend. We

presented members of the president's family with a cake in the shape of my sleigh. I'm preparing now to be at the White House this year with the Reagans.

In between Christmases, I do shows using my sleigh, decorated with prayers and Bible verses I learned as a child. As I travel around the country giving rides to children and adults I always ask, "Moms and dads, boys and girls, did you say your prayers last night? Did you go to Sunday school this week?"

Touched, the parents respond with "God bless you, whoever you are." My heart feels full, bringing happiness to others.

There have been traumatic moments. Once I was doing a show in Sacramento, California when a gang of ruffians approached the sleigh, intending to rip it apart. Quickly I announced, "Boys and girls, our choir has arrived." The gang was so stunned they actually *did* sing for us and we had no trouble at all. I believe God gave me that thought, and that His gentleness turned the trouble-makers' hearts around.

I've had sad times in my life, too. Seventeen years ago my first wife died of cancer and money could not buy her health. I felt so lonely I asked God to bring me another partner. Before long I met Stella, an escrow officer in a bank, and I pestered her until



These photos bring back precious memories to Bob and Stella George of visits with (1) President John F. Kennedy and (2) the sleigh he jokingly requested; (3) celebrities appearing on the TV program "Hollywood Squares"; (4) President and Mrs. Richard Nixon; (5) President Gerald Ford; (6) President Jimmy Carter.

she married me.

Right after our wedding Stella bought herself a white wig and the next Christmas she accompanied me to the White House as Mrs. Claus. She has ever since.

We celebrate Christmas every day. That's why we keep our Anaheim apartment decorated with little trees and hanging ornaments. I don't believe the spirit of Christmas should be seasonal.

As I said, I believe Jesus Christ is the true Spirit of Christmas. But even though I was raised to love God it was not until 1975 that I learned how real and personal Jesus is. I was in intensive care in a Pasadena hospital with ulcers and a nervous condition. A friend came to visit and asked, "Santa, have you ever accepted Jesus into your heart?" I told her I was a devout Greek Orthodox. She explained how we can love God and be religious, and yet not have a personal relationship with Christ.

That evening she came to visit me again. This time she brought her minister. They explained salvation to me and I prayed for Christ to forgive my sins and become my personal Saviour. Then they prayed for God to heal me and within two hours I was out of intensive care and home the following day.

A few months ago I had another miracle healing. I was scheduled for a hernia operation and friends asked me if they might bring by another couple and pray for me. Standing in a circle in my living room, hands joined, we prayed. I felt a hard thump in my

stomach. After prayer I raced upstairs and checked myself over. The hernia had disappeared. The next day the doctor dismissed my case.

My beard is another miracle. A couple of years ago I felt God wanted me to grow my own beard. It grew in black and red at first, but then began to grow in white. My hair and eyebrows are also white, so I don't have to be a phony. My figure is ideal for a Santa, and I dress in red, always prepared to bring Christmas without worry about wigs or costumes. (Of course, I don my official Santa suit for public appearances.) I've enjoyed being on many television shows, including "Dinah Shore," "Hollywood Squares," "What's My Line?," "To Tell the Truth," "Real People" and "Good Morning America."

I take my job seriously and work at it year round. As I travel the country I keep thinking of all Jesus did for me at Calvary. Now I want to do for Him. I believe He made me "the real Santa" so that I can bring His message to mankind.

It thrills my heart when I hear comments like, "I didn't used to believe in Jesus Christ or Christmas—but thanks to you, I do now."

I'm 57 years old now, still going strong. God gave me a vision and He's the one who puts it into reality. My mother once dreamed I was going to be president of the United States. I may not make that goal, but I surely can bring the spirit of Jesus Christ to Washington, D.C. every holiday season. And that's what I intend to do.

Merry Christmas!





Gift of Forgiveness

Rey Soto, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

I took one look at the demolished pickup truck and anger swelled up inside me. It was our truck.

I had been in another office of our Dodge dealership when Lois, my wife, received a phone call from an insurance company representative. "One of your Datsun trucks has been involved in an accident with our insured," the agent reported.

Lois was puzzled. "We don't have any used trucks in our demo service. Are you sure it's our truck?"

About this time I walked into Lois' office and caught the tail-end of the conversation. When Lois checked the files she discovered that two weeks

before we had taken a Datsun pickup on trade. There was a possibility that the truck involved in the accident was ours after all.

After identifying its pitiful remains, we began to piece the story together. Kelly (a young employee) had changed license plates and taken the car for a joy ride. Afraid someone would see him return it to the lot, and unwilling to face the repercussions that would follow, he had kept it for two weeks before being involved in the accident.

Back at the dealership, my temper got the best of me as I explained to my service manager what had happened. "Ken, that kid is never going to



Kelly Storum and Lois and Rey Soto, together in the Lord.

work for me again." I paced through the showroom and back to Ken's desk. "I tell you, Ken, I don't want him to set one foot on this lot." I stomped back to my office and dropped heavily into my chair to stare glumly out the window. Snatching the phone, I punched Ken's extension. "Ken, I don't want you to let Kelly—"

"Yes, Mr. Soto, I know, I know. You've already told me—several times."

The next day Kelly came to turn in his uniforms and to pick up his last paycheck. When Lois discovered he was on the grounds she came in to ask if I wanted to talk with him. "No, I don't even want to think about him anymore."

"Rey, he has a tender spirit," she coaxed.

"Tender spirit, huh! I'd like to tenderize him!"

"I want to minister to him, Rey. Have Ken send him to the prayer chapel." We had converted one office into a chapel, which we had dedicated to God. Lois went in and began

to pray. In a few moments Kelly walked in. Looking up, Lois asked, "Kelly, how can we help you?"

Obviously caught off guard, Kelly blurted out, "Why should you want to help me after all I've done to you?" He struggled to hold back the tears.

"Because we love you." Lois went on to explain the love of Christ that was in her; that God in His infinite mercy had offered her the perfect gift of forgiveness for her sins through His Son, Jesus Christ. All she had had to do was accept God's mercy and ask Jesus to live in her heart. Then she offered Kelly the same gift of God, and—miracle of miracles—he knelt and prayed with her to receive Christ into his heart. Kelly was now a child of God.

"I think Rey should come in and talk with you, too," Lois told him, wiping tears of joy from her cheeks. But Kelly was hesitant. "I don't think your husband wants to see me." Kelly had a difficult time believing it, but finally he consented on the grounds that Lois would talk to me first.

Lois found me at my desk, trying very hard to look as if I hadn't been thinking about that prayer chapel. "Rey, Kelly has just accepted the Lord."

"He's what?" I tried to sound surprised, but I was really feeling pretty uncomfortable.

"It's true! He knows the Lord has forgiven him and that I have, but I feel it's important that he knows *you* forgive him, too."

In my heart I was hearing, "God loves Kelly and He loves you too, but you haven't been such a red-hot Christian these past couple of days." Then a verse of Scripture came to my mind: "But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark 11:26). That cut deep into the place where my anger had been feeding. "Okay, Lord. I've decided to forgive the kid, but You'll have to take away my hostility and bitterness." It worked! A supernatural love for Kelly seemed to pour into my soul. Anger replaced by love—only almighty God could do that. Even Lois was amazed by the sudden change in me. "All right, honey, let's go to the chapel. I'm ready to talk to Kelly now."

As we stepped into the chapel together it was like meeting Kelly for the first time. I was no longer being torn up inside by anger; instead, I was ready to consider his needs and encourage him in his decision to let God change his life for the better.

Lois and I instructed him in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, counseling him that since the Lord had forgiven

him and we had forgiven him too, now he must forgive himself. Soon he received the infilling and was praying joyfully in tongues. With that additional blessing came the reassurance from his heavenly Father: "I do forgive you, My son."

Recently as I shared this lesson on forgiveness at a Los Angeles peace officers' meeting a man interjected, "That's quite a testimony. But tell me Mr. Soto, does that young man still work for you?"

I answered, "I said he would not work for me, but that was the old Kelly. I never saw that guy again. We gave the new Kelly a new set of application papers to fill out, and our service manager interviewed him. The new man in Christ—Kelly—got the job."

Forgiveness of one who has done you harm is the greatest, most creative action a person could take. God counsels us in Ephesians 4:26, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Anger and bitterness harbored in one's heart is destructive, not only to its object, but to the self. God's gift of forgiveness made it possible for us to turn a destructive situation into an opportunity for shared blessings. In Kelly's case, instead of condemnation he found acceptance and a new beginning. It was God's gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that made possible his salvation, my salvation, and yours. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14). □

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Vocabulary
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An astounding insight with significance for Christmas was shared in a staff chapel service at FGBMFI World Laymen's Headquarters by Anthony Dibiase, a fifth-grade teacher

from Niagara Falls, Canada.

Anthony related this amusing schoolroom experience: "While I was teaching my fifth-grade class one girl kept talking. Even my stern teacher

... And If You Don't Love Me I'll...

look had absolutely no effect. As I walked to the back of the room I noticed her passing a note, so I took it, put it in my pocket and forgot about it.

"That night I came across the note by this 10-year-old girl. It read something like this: 'Dear Grant, I love you very much. When we are in social studies I am always looking at you. When we change for reading I wait for you in the hall. When we go to lunch today I want to sit next to you because I love you so much. Love, Denise.' Just below her name she added this P.S.: 'And if you don't love me, I am going to hate your guts.'"

Amusing, isn't it? But what a powerful contrast between this child's conditional love and the unconditional love God expressed at Bethlehem. The Bible declares that God loved us while we were yet in our sins, and the best-known verse in the Bible states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

The love we adults express so frequently isn't like that. Ours is apt to be more like the unvarnished feelings of the fifth-grader—except that time and hurts have taught us to cover our true feelings with a protective veneer.

Human love frequently hinges on fragile feelings rather than firm commitment. The *rewards* of a

relationship—what you do for me, how you make me feel, what I can get from you—constitute the thin ice on which we skate together.

A pastor came with a personal problem to an older minister. "I no longer love my wife," he began, then, expecting sympathy, detailed his situation. Instead, with the boldness that belongs to the ministry, swift came this reply: "You're about 10 years and four children too late to reach that conclusion. *Choose* to love her!"

Love is a decision, not just an emotion. That fact is at the very heart of the Christian message. God invaded history 2,000 years ago. He took the initiative in loving you and me. He *chose* to identify with us through the manger birth. The angel's announcement to Joseph was, "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Unconditional Love

Dr. Lloyd Ogilvie, pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church, was seeking to witness in a restaurant to a man whom he had not met previously. "I am not a religious man," retorted the new acquaintance, expecting that remark to terminate conversation on the subject of Jesus. "Neither am I," was Dr. Ogilvie's surprise reply. He then proceeded to explain that all religions are the result of man's attempts

to find a way to God. Christianity, however, is not a religion. It is uniquely different from all the religions of the world. *It is God's attempt to find a way to man.* That is precisely what Jesus was saying when He declared, "I am *the* way, the truth, and the life: No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The historical fact that Jesus was born in a stable and cribbed in a manger is God's graphic way of telling us that He comes to us right where we are, whatever our condition—discouraged, despondent, ashamed, unworthy. He doesn't wait for us to clean up, straighten up, change our ways, or prove ourselves. He initiates love.

The testimony of a White House Santa in this issue of *Voice* beautifully illustrates this truth. The fact that Robert George played Santa to five presidents of the United States is relatively unimportant compared to the glorious truth at the very heart of his testimony.

When he was dying in an intensive care unit God sent someone to tell him about Jesus.

Again, years later, when Bob was backslidden, God brought a Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship member with his wife into his home, and through the prayer of faith "Santa" was instantaneously and miraculously healed. Praise God!

No Fear of Rejection

As you read the note of the fifth-grader at the beginning of this article, did you identify with the panic that gripped her as she dotted the last

period of her "love note"? She has risked rejection. She has a crush on Grant and in her own handwriting has penciled "I love you." But what if he doesn't love *her*? What if he shows it to classmates? What if they laugh? At first it seemed like a good idea, but now her feelings stand naked, exposed. Quickly she wraps herself in that protective P.S., "And if you don't love me, I am going to hate your guts."

We all fear rejection. The fact that God knows all about us—thoughts, deeds, motives, everything—makes it extremely difficult to believe that He loves us, but He does.

Jesus suffered rejection. The prophet Isaiah writes, "He is despised and rejected of men" (Isaiah 53:3). And the writer of Hebrews explains, "But Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest who has gone to heaven itself to help us; therefore let us never stop trusting him. This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, since he had the same temptations we do, though he never once gave way to them and sinned. So let us come boldly to the very throne of God and stay there to receive his mercy and to find grace to help us in our times of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16, LB). And Jesus promises that "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

The Christmas message from God for 1981 is: *I love you so much that I sent My only begotten Son to earth to die for you. I love you and I want you to love Me—but if you don't, I'll love you anyway.*

THE EDITOR

CONVENTIONS EASTERN AND WESTERN REGIONS

ALASKA REGIONAL

December 3—5, 1981

Captain Cook, Anchorage
Write: Mr. Guy Whitney
P.O. Box 60489
Fairbanks, AK 99706

GERMAN REGIONAL

December 5, 1981

Braunschweig
Write: Mr. Eberhard Muhlan
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Germany

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

REGIONAL

Dec. 30—Jan. 3, 1982

Hyatt Regency
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Suite 118
Phoenix, AZ 85021

HAWAII REGIONAL

January 6—9, 1982

Pacific Beach Hotel, Honolulu
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Honolulu, HI 96814

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RALLY DAYS

January 15—16, 1982

Harley Hotel
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Fort Wayne, IN 46818

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Miramar Hotel, Santa Barbara
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Santa Barbara, CA 93105

WINTER COUPLES

ADVANCE

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FULL GOSPEL BUSINESS MEN'S CHAPTER OUTREACH

As this issue was being prepared for publication, the following chapters were submitted as having been recently chartered. The president's name and telephone number are included in this list for your information. Write for information regarding the date and location of a chapter meeting in your area.

AUSTRALIA: Innesfail Chapter, Charles Gullo 070-611685; Maribyrrnong Chapter, Dr. Robert L. Aghan (no phone); Melbourne Italian Chapter, Ronald Fabri 2331953; Latrobe Valley Chapter, Arthur Kennington 051-6221161. **ENGLAND:** Birmingham North Chapter, David Millward 021-351-1195; Newby Bridge Chapter, Colin Winfield 0229-53964; Shrewsbury Chapter, George H. Wood 0743-55394; Worcester Chapter, Ronald Price 095-60763. **FRANCE:** Chamberry Chapter, Furgier Michel (50) 443484; Valence Chapter, Claude Peyrent (75) 421096. **PANAMA:** Panama City Chapter, Enrique Leong 25-56-81. **PHILIPPINES:** Clark Air Force Base Chapter, Lawrence Obebecke 40448. **UNITED STATES:** CALIFORNIA: Roseville Area Chapter, John Edgett (916) 791-0243. KANSAS: Burlington Chapter, Melvin Johnson (316) 427-4105. MINNESOTA: Hastings Chapter, Bud Kummer (612) 437-9012. MISSOURI: Louisiana Chapter, James Allen (314) 898-5603. NEW YORK: Flushing/North Shore Chapter, Anthony Buonfiglio (516) 872-9577. OKLAHOMA: Claremore Chapter, Jerry Smith (918) 341-6358. UTAH: Bountiful Chapter, Leon Burrows (801) 292-1832.

A WAY TO GO

Wayne P. Grimme, Florence, KY

Christmas music rang from the department stores and sounds of "O Holy Night" drifted across the downtown Paducah streets. But another sound drowned out the beauty of the music—a voice in my head that kept repeating, "Wayne, you're no good. Your life has been worthless. You're a failure."

After phoning my district manager in Bowling Green, I checked into a motel.

Closing the door to my room behind me, I loosened my tie, removed the two large bottles of pills from my pocket and tossed my jacket in the vicinity of the chair. As I placed the bottles on the bedside table I thought, "What an easy way to die."

Perspiration trickled down the side of my flushed face and I was aware again of the fever that had been with me for three weeks now, and the throbbing pain in my head. What I had assumed to be a persistent case of the flu was walking pneumonia. My illness had only worked to deepen the depression from which I had suffered for months.

"Reach out and take those pills." The thought grew more insistent. "Send yourself into oblivion—away from the pain and the failure." Somehow in my confused state I began to believe the thoughts I was receiving were from God. I didn't understand His love for me, or the fact that He

had gone to the cross to bring life to a sin-dead world. Instead, Satan was using my physical and emotional weakness to try to rob me of my life.

My problems had begun nine years earlier when I had hurt my back in the service. Taking a medical discharge in 1970, I went to work as a salesman for the Parke-Davis pharmaceutical company. But after undergoing a third back surgery in December, 1970, I was dismissed from my job.

Although the back pain was extreme and almost constant, I continued to look for work whenever I was able to get out of bed. Once a prospective employer had seen my medical history, however, he wouldn't even talk about hiring me. Unable to support my family, I spent the next six years either in bed or in the hospital. Hunched over and shuffling like an old man, I felt defeated and powerless.

Then one Sunday morning my wife Beverly was watching a healing service over TV. "Oh, Wayne, let's go to that meeting!" she exclaimed.

"Those healing meetings are nothing but mass hysteria," I responded cynically. "The people who get 'healed' at those things weren't really sick to begin with." But she managed to talk me into going after all.

The auditorium was packed out. Even the aisles were jammed with people on crutches or in wheelchairs.



I made sure we got a seat in the topmost row. None of those fanatics would get me up there, I thought.

But during the meeting a man told how he had been healed of leukemia, and I began to wonder silently if God could do something for me. Then all of a sudden the evangelist pointed in our direction and exclaimed, "There's a man up there with back trouble and God is healing him right now!"

At her words I felt something like a current of warm air flow through my body. My back was no longer stiff. As I moved about I discovered that it no longer hurt to move my legs. Expect-

ing wrenching pain to shoot through me, I bent over and touched the ground. Nothing happened. *I was healed.*

I walked out of that meeting happy to be healed in body, but with my heart and life unchanged. I spent the following year doing things just as I had always done them—and nothing turned out right.

Even though I was healed, no one would take a chance on me. Work I found as a tax consultant melted away with the 15th of April. A job I took cashiering in a grocery store didn't bring in enough money to live



The Happy Grimmes, Beverly and Wayne and their children (standing, from left to right): Phillip, Tina, Paul and Wayne Jr., and (seated) Bethany and Trisha.

on. Then, following a civil service exam, I landed a fulltime job as health inspector. The only hitch was that we'd have to move to Bowling Green.

Bev and I bought a home there, then were unable to sell our home in Florence. That meant my family had to remain while I was forced to live out of a suitcase in Bowling Green.

While doing yardwork at the new house I caught cold. A high fever slowed me down somewhat, but I didn't realize I had developed pneumonia.

During the entire Christmas season I dragged around, with the sickness gnawing at my mind. Then back pain started again. I knew how to handle that; I armed myself with a huge supply of pain pills. During the drive to Paducah I began to feel worse and

worse. That was when the urge began to take my own life.

As I stared at the medicine bottles, the pills inside seemed to grow, expanding and pushing themselves out at me. All the time an inner voice continued to insist, "Do it now. Get it over with. Hurry up."

Like a starving man I shoved the pills into my mouth—10 at a time. As I gulped them down, my head whirled and vision blurred, but even as my legs buckled under me I continued to thrust pills into my mouth. Finally the room began to revolve, darkness flooded thought from my mind, and I sank down, down, down into the arms of death.

When I failed to phone home Bev called my regional manager, who knew the name of the motel where I usually stayed. Realizing by now that something must have happened to me, and failing to contact me by phone, Bev and my dad drove to the motel. I had just begun to come to my senses and was stumbling blindly around the room when they knocked on the door. Forgetting why I'd locked it in the first place, I threw it open and let them in.

They rushed me to the emergency hospital, where my stomach was pumped. Amazingly, most of the pills I had taken hadn't dissolved. It had to be the mercy of God. I'd taken enough medication to kill a horse. Beverly then had me admitted to a Cincinnati hospital where the pneumonia was discovered. My deep depression

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Christmas— A Reminder



Christmas reminders are common—pick up the turkey, buy a present for Uncle Joe, mail the greeting cards. We may need a string around our finger to remember every item. But Christmas itself is a reminder.

The festive Armenian food which my wife Rose prepares, and the traditions that we cherish, are reminders of our rich heritage. God spared my grandparents from the onslaught of the Turks in 1914, when more than 1½ million Armenians were slaughtered, including everyone remaining in the village of Kara Kala. God's protection and blessing have been upon our family ever since they came to America. Remembering all this fills my heart with gratitude.

Decorations in our home from the many countries where we have ministered, and greeting cards from friends around the world, are reminders of the mighty move of God through the Fellowship and of thousands who have accepted Jesus as personal Saviour.

Most of all, the beautiful pageantry—the creche, the star, the animals, shepherds and wise men, all remind us of this profound truth: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Christmas is a reminder that the Babe who came to Bethlehem is coming soon as Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Every prophecy of His birth was fulfilled exactly. Now Bible prophecies regarding His return are rapidly coming to pass. World events cause me to wonder if we might not celebrate next Christmas in His presence. What a joyful prospect!

But millions are not ready for His return. That is why we continue to grasp every opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

As Rose and I, along with all of the International Directors of the Fellowship, extend heartfelt greetings to all *Voice* readers, we commit ourselves anew to the unfinished task of proclaiming the good news: Your Saviour has come, and He's coming again.

Demos and Rose



The crisis struck on the day after Christmas, 1978.

I awoke that morning unable to move my right arm and leg. Sometime during the night I had suffered a severe paralysis. The left side of my face had also been affected.

Cold sweat formed on my brow. Fighting for breath, I struggled to swallow, my mind racing in confusion. What was happening to me? Gradually the fear lessened as I began to search my heart for the reassuring comfort of the presence of God.

CRISIS AT CHRISTMAS

Howard Jameson, Ph.D., Drexel Hill, PA

It seemed to me I had belonged to Him all my life. I was only six years old when I knelt on wood shavings in the prayer room of a rustic campground intending to ask Jesus to come into my heart.

(I still vividly remember the woman who came to pray with me. She must have had an onion sandwich for dinner because when she leaned over to instruct me, her obnoxious breath disgusted me. Ready to gag, I turned away. But the next evening another worker—one who believed in mouth-wash—led me to a new life in Christ.)

Just two years later at the same camp the Lord Jesus baptized me in His Holy Spirit, and such love bubbled up in my child-heart that I enthusiastically hugged each person who had prayed with me. In my exuberance I even embraced a tree on the way to my tent, and once there, threw my arms around the tent pole!

God's hand stayed upon me. At 12 I preached my first sermon. Later I visited jails and hospitals and held street meetings. At 15 I bought radio time with my paper-route money and preached the Gospel on Sunday mornings.

High school years over, I filled my hours with studies, pursuing a doctorate in theology and earning degrees in English and speech. Every hour of my day was crammed with academic

activity: commuting to other cities to teach at colleges and universities, and maintaining a brisk preaching schedule.

But it all finally caught up with me and waves of fatigue forced me to curtail some elements of my rugged schedule. It was about this time that I began to feel God's nudge into fulltime Christian ministry. I argued vehemently with myself, "How can I resign when it's my teaching salary that supports my family?"

God was dealing with me, but I was apparently getting the wrong message. "Maybe if I give Him more of my time God will strengthen me," I rationalized. So I took on more preaching engagements without letting go of university duties. The strain took a heavy toll on my health.

I couldn't seem to slow down. The needs of people in distress kept thumping my conscience. I decided to devote myself to the study of medicine in order to help them. While I was at medical school in Puerto Rico an aegypti mosquito bit me, giving me a severe case of dengue fever. Spasms of pain racked my body, forcing me to give up the training.

Still resisting God's call into fulltime ministry, I took on a new teaching position and opened a Christian medical center as owner and manager. Then the sudden paralysis

dealt a withering blow to the right side of my body, leaving me crippled, with the grim outlook of hospital care before me. Even with the best of doctors I grew steadily worse.

One day a severe setback dashed my limited hopes of recovery. Labored breathing, elevated blood pressure, and double vision crushed my morale. A stark sense of imminent death infected my whole being.

I had never heard voices or seen visions and usually doubted those who talked about such things. But in that deepening crisis, as doctors and nurses attended me in intensive care, a voice at the right side of the bed called my name.

I turned my head and saw the Lord, His arms outstretched toward me. The incredible depth of love that radiated from His countenance melted my heart. "Don't be afraid," Jesus said to me. "I'm with you, my child. Just trust Me. I've come to bless you." As I continued to gaze on His beauty suddenly He restored my vision—I could see normally. How I praised Him.

Even this marvelous encounter with Christ did not result in my immediate, total healing. More testing loomed before me and I wondered if I could endure it. Transferred to another hospital, my condition grew worse until New Year's Eve I found myself once again in the intensive care unit. The physician was listening to my heart just at the stroke of midnight. Outside, fireworks boomed to welcome in the new year.

Alarmed, the doctor kept the stethoscope to my chest. Finally a look of relief crossed his face. "Thought I heard an erratic sound from your heart, Dr. Jameson. Just the fire-crackers." Then his eyes softened. "This is not the best place to spend the holidays. But be thankful you're alive. Some others in this same unit today didn't live to see the new year." And I was grateful to be alive, but that thankfulness disappeared the next day when the devil began to pour discouragement into my mind. "Do you know why the Lord wants to bless you?" the evil voice said. "You're going to die."

Disheartened, I called my wife and began to set my house in order. But Elsie refused to give in to my despair. "You're going to *live*, Howard! God has more for you. Resist the devil and trust God to heal you."

Doubt invaded my thoughts all day long, the devil saying one thing, Elsie another as she encouraged me with promises from the Bible. As a rule I rarely listened to my wife but this time her message from God reached my spirit. That evening I agreed with her—I would live and serve God.

Three days later I left the hospital. My life was spared but the after-effects of the illness clung to me, with my right arm still afflicted, my right foot deviating to the left. Even using a cane, I could only clump along the street.

At home while I hobbled around on my cane the devil taunted, "You're a man of God, huh? You've prayed for

“Look at yourself,” he taunted. “You’ll never preach again!”



others to get well. Now look at you. You'll never preach again."

It galled me to hear the devil's mocking. Finally, in desperation I said to Elsie, "Is there a meeting tonight where someone could pray for my healing?" She could discover no services that night except a Full Gospel Business Men's dinner meeting at the Holiday Inn.

I limped into that meeting and managed to eat my dinner before they called me to the front. Henry Baxter, chapter president, asked me to take a seat in front of the head table. As I made my way forward I became aware that something great was about to happen.

When Brother Baxter offered a prayer of faith I fully expected to experience some sort of physical sensation: heat or electricity, goose bumps, flashing lights. But I felt nothing—no warmth, no excitement, nothing.

Then suddenly someone exclaimed, "Praise God! Look at his foot!" Although I hardly dared open my eyes, when I did I saw my foot slowly move from its crooked position and become normal. Astonished, I lifted my right arm. The paralysis and weakness were gone! Completely healed, I rose to my feet. That night I left the meeting carrying my cane over my shoulder.

In the fall of 1979 I appeared on the "Phil Donahue Show." Phil had requested healing testimonies from people with solid upbringing. With my academic background people were less likely to call me a fanatic.

That morning 50 million people all over the country heard Phil ask me, "Dr. Jameson, how much did you have to pay the preacher who healed you?" My answer stirred the audience. "The man who prayed for me was not a preacher or a famous healer. He was a plumber."

As Henry Baxter, a Spirit-filled plumber, prayed for my healing the Lord had miraculously restored me to perfect health.

That Christmas crisis did not mean that God had left me. On the contrary, He drew me closer to Himself, renewing my first love for Him. His faithfulness taught me absolute trust and confidence in His power.

Through these experiences God has also showed me the real meaning of "fulltime service." God will use any

man, whatever his education. He'll employ any woman, whatever her circumstance. The Lord taps *available* people and makes them a blessing.

Jesus put together an unlikely crew of apostles: fishermen, tax collectors, political zealots. They had one common ingredient: willingness. God has impressed that truth on me.

He took Rees Howells out of a coal mine in Wales and used him on three continents. He has made me willing to focus all my energies in following His will for my life.

By the same token, God put His blessing on the fulltime attention and obedience of plumber Henry Baxter. And He has used this man, whose profession is cleaning unruly drains, to bring healing to me. □

Correspondence Quotes

"As a student at Alan Hancock College, I picked up a copy of *Voice* magazine at a local Jack in the Box. I have recently received Christ as my Saviour and this is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me in the entire 18 years of my life."

A.E., Santa Maria, CA

"I wanted to witness to my employer years ago but did not know how he would take it, so I sent him a year's subscription to *Voice* magazine. One day as I read one of the men's stories, I said, 'Lord, that fits my employer exactly, so as he reads it please speak to his heart.' About three years later I met him at a charismatic meeting and saw him all aglow. He mentioned the *Voice* magazine and turned to me and smiled. 'Say, you were the one who sent that to me?' he asked. When I acknowledged it he just replied, 'Sneaky, eh? But I'm so glad you did!' Praise God, he has since sold his business and is now working fulltime for the Lord."

R.N., Kissimmee, FL

"It was through Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship that I came to know the Lord. While in prison, reading *Voice* magazine and hearing men's testimonies made me stop and take a good look at my life, and it was this past year that I came into the family of God. I just wanted to write to thank you and let you know what a good job you're doing bringing Christ into people's lives, such as mine . . . so keep up the good work!"

R.H., Tillery, NC

Race Against Death



Bruce L. Fincham, Yosemite National Park, CA

The ghostly light of dawn crept slowly across the forested hills to reveal an endless expanse of white. Giant snowflakes fell silently from the invisible sky as Steve Olsen and I maneuvered our skis across the spotless landscape. A biting, icy wind lashed at my face, and it was obvious that we were in the grip of a treacherous Sierra storm.

"They've been out in this all night," Steve said as we stopped for a moment to rest. "Not much chance of finding them alive." Steve's viewpoint was confirmed as the word came down to start looking for bodies.

We were two of several dozen Yosemite National Park rangers searching for Tom and Mary, a pair of inexperienced cross-country skiers who

had failed to return the previous afternoon from an outing. Friends told park rangers the couple was not equipped to survive a night in deep snow and subfreezing temperatures.

But Tom and Mary had at least one thing going for them: even before our all-night search began, our prayer group had started interceding for them before the Lord. As I searched I prayed, too. "Lord, please be merciful to this couple. Let this experience be to Your honor and glory."

Even though I am a firm believer in the power of prayer, I confess I was startled when I heard a quiet inner voice respond, "Trust in Me. Just trust and obey all the way. I will rescue." It seemed I could feel the prayers of my wife Carol and our prayer group



BRUCE L. FINCHAM
Ranger/Naturalist
Yosemite National Park, California

reaching out and encircling us. “Go down further to the right,” prompted the voice.

Suddenly I realized that my radio—our umbilical cord to the rest of the search party—had stopped working. I protested.

“Lord, Tom and Mary were going in the opposite direction. If we go to the right we’ll be totally out of the search pattern. And we’ll be completely out of contact with the rest of the group. We could get lost ourselves, and then we’d be in the same fix as the ones we’re supposed to rescue!”

“Trust me. Go down further to the right.”

When I told Steve where I thought we should search he protested, “You must be kidding! Look how steep that terrain is. They wouldn’t have gone there.”

I tried to explain that I felt the Lord



Yosemite, deceptively peaceful in her mantle of white—until the terrifying Sierra storm breaks.

was trying to lead us to Tom and Mary. Steve gave me a tired, incredulous look, but moments later we were skiing into the deep ravine.

In cross-country skiing, unfortunately, whatever goes down must also go up, and after a brief rest Steve and I began struggling to the top of the next hill. Weighed down with heavy backpacks, we mushed through the snow and arrived at the peak, our lungs heaving with exhaustion. Ahead of us lay another ravine, even deeper than the first.

“Lord,” I panted, “not another one! We’ll kill ourselves.” But I felt a renewing power, and the Lord’s assurance, “Keep trusting Me all the way.



Wet and shivering violently, Mary and Tom huddled together. I knew they couldn't last much longer.

Go down further to the right." I recalled the verse in Isaiah 40:31: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Down into the ravine we went, then up again. "Lord," I wheezed, "I don't think we can make it back, let alone forward!" Yet the Lord encouraged me on, impressing me to call out for the lost skiers.

"Tom! Mary!" I yelled at the top of my breathless lungs. No reply, except the heavy pounding of my heart. I shouted again and waited.

"Help!" The voice from the forest was faint and indistinct. Was it an illusion?

"Help! Ranger!" This time I was sure.



Then like a great messenger from heaven the helicopter dropped from the sky.

"Steve, I do hear somebody. It's got to be them! Come on!" We raced—if you could call it that—toward the sound, which had come from the other side of the next hill. Into the ravine we went, and at the bottom we found ourselves in the worst terrain of all. Twelve-foot mounds of snow towered all around us. The snowfall was increasing noticeably.

Steve and I were both ready to collapse. The only thing that helped keep me going was a Scripture verse that kept running through my head: "... my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Corinthians 12:9).

Suddenly, as I rounded a gigantic snowbank, I was thrilled to see fresh ski tracks. *(Please turn to page 27)*

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CA 92626.

"Steve!" I shouted. "Hurry up! Ski tracks!"

"Hurry, the man says," Steve gibed. "Remember me? I'm the guy who's been hurrying with you all night."

As we struggled over the edge of the ravine, we spotted a solitary figure in a small clearing about 50 yards away. It was Tom. Sopping wet and trembling, he stumbled toward us.

"Jesus Christ!" he swore. "Am I glad to see you guys."

As I reached out to steady the mournful figure I replied, "Yes, Tom, that's *exactly* Who led us to you, and I hope you know that! Thank You, Jesus."

Slightly further back in the woods we found Mary lying in a collapsed poncho shelter beside a small stack of wood they had been unable to light. She was alive, but extremely weak.

"Come on," Steve said. "Let's call headquarters."

My heart fell to my kneecaps.

"The radio's not working!" I moaned. "Lord," I prayed, "You've got to make this thing work. We don't have any idea where we are in this blinding snow, and even if we did, we're all too weak to ski out." I shouted into the deaf radio. Nothing. I shouted again. Suddenly the unit crackled to life! I was so startled I almost dropped it.

"Where are you guys?" the voice demanded.

"We've found Tom and Mary," I yelled back, and tried to map out an approximate location for the rescue helicopter.

"Do you think they can find us in this heavy snowstorm?" Tom asked.

"Sure." I said it more confidently than I felt it. "We've got Korean and Viet Nam vets in those choppers, some of the best pilots alive. They'll be here any minute."

Eternity began. Millions of deadly snowflakes bombarded us. Could even those sky magicians find us beneath this beautiful, lethal curtain of white?

Then, almost imperceptibly, came the whump-whump-whump of a chopper blade. The sound increased, then faded. Tom and Mary were shivering violently. They couldn't make it much longer.

"Lord, bring 'em in. You've brought us this far. I know You won't let us down."

I called out to the pilot across the crackling airwaves and began trying to talk him in.

"You're getting closer. Wait! You're fading. Come back to your right. Yeah! I think you're closing in. You're right over us. Watch those trees—they're 200 feet high!"

"Lord, can they possibly make it?" The answer by this time was burned into my heart. Then, like a great messenger from heaven, that gorgeous helicopter dropped through the albino sky onto our little clearing.

"Thank God, we're saved," someone said. I think it was me.

"You folks want to go home?" asked one of our rescuers. We voted yes, and as I scrambled aboard I was hardly surprised at all when I saw the name of the helicopter: ANGEL 1. □

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The Three-fold Purpose of 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 organism not directly associated with any specific church but co-operating with all those of like mind, and to inspire its members to be active in their respective churches.*

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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A WAY TO GO

(continued from page 16)

combined with the disorientation from the fever to set the stage for attempted suicide.

A few days before Christmas I was still hospitalized from the effects of the overdose when I had a violent seizure. But during that episode, as I struggled against the straps that held my arms fastened to the bed, I began to realize two very important things. First, *I wanted to live*. Second, *I was of value* after all. Scriptures began to flow gently through my mind. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

They seemed to be saying to me that no matter what I thought about myself, or what others might feel about me, I was of value to almighty God who "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

These were Scriptures that I hadn't read for years, hadn't understood when I read them, and had never attempted to memorize!

But while I lay in the hospital, members of my family—an aunt, a cousin and his wife—were engaged in intense intercessory prayer for me. They were asking God to heal me, body, soul and spirit, and to do it by

Christmas. God was moving in dramatic answer to those prayers.

On Christmas Day I awoke, a new person. Acting in obedience to the Scriptures as they came to me, I had confessed my sins to Christ (1 John 1:9), and accepted Him as the Lord of my life (Romans 10:9). But I was to discover that not only was He the Saviour of my soul, but my body as well.

Although the overdose of medicine had affected my liver and kidneys, a subsequent blood test showed no damage. I left that hospital healed in every way.

God opened a position for me at the post office where for two years I've been lifting heavy mail sacks, some weighing up to 150 pounds. I water ski and play baseball with my sons Phillip, Paul, and Wayne Jr., and still have energy left over for daughters Tina, Trisha, and baby Bethany.

Beverly and I are happier, closer than we ever were before; God has used us to pray for the sick, and we've watched Him heal other lives just as He did ours.

Not too long ago one of my neighbors underwent a biopsy on a growth in his throat. The diagnosis: cancer. I told his wife we would be praying for him that God would heal him. The next morning the surgeons removed the cyst and found it to be benign. Now that family too has given their lives to the Lord.

I no longer listen to voices. Instead I find life and health and solid trustworthy direction in the Word of God as I trust Him one day at a time. □

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 come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

2. REPENT: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

3. CONFESS: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9).

4. FORSAKE: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord . . . for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:7).

5. BELIEVE: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

6. RECEIVE: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11,12).

Why not make your eternal decision right now:

"Lord Jesus, I believe You died for my sins and I ask Your forgiveness. I receive You now as my personal Saviour and invite You to manage my life from this day forward. Amen."

Write us to tell of your decision. We'll send you a booklet, "Now That You've Received Christ." Our mailing address: Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International, P.O. Box 5050, Costa Mesa, CA 92628.

VOICE

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Jesus said, "...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:19,20).

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